

LONGMAN

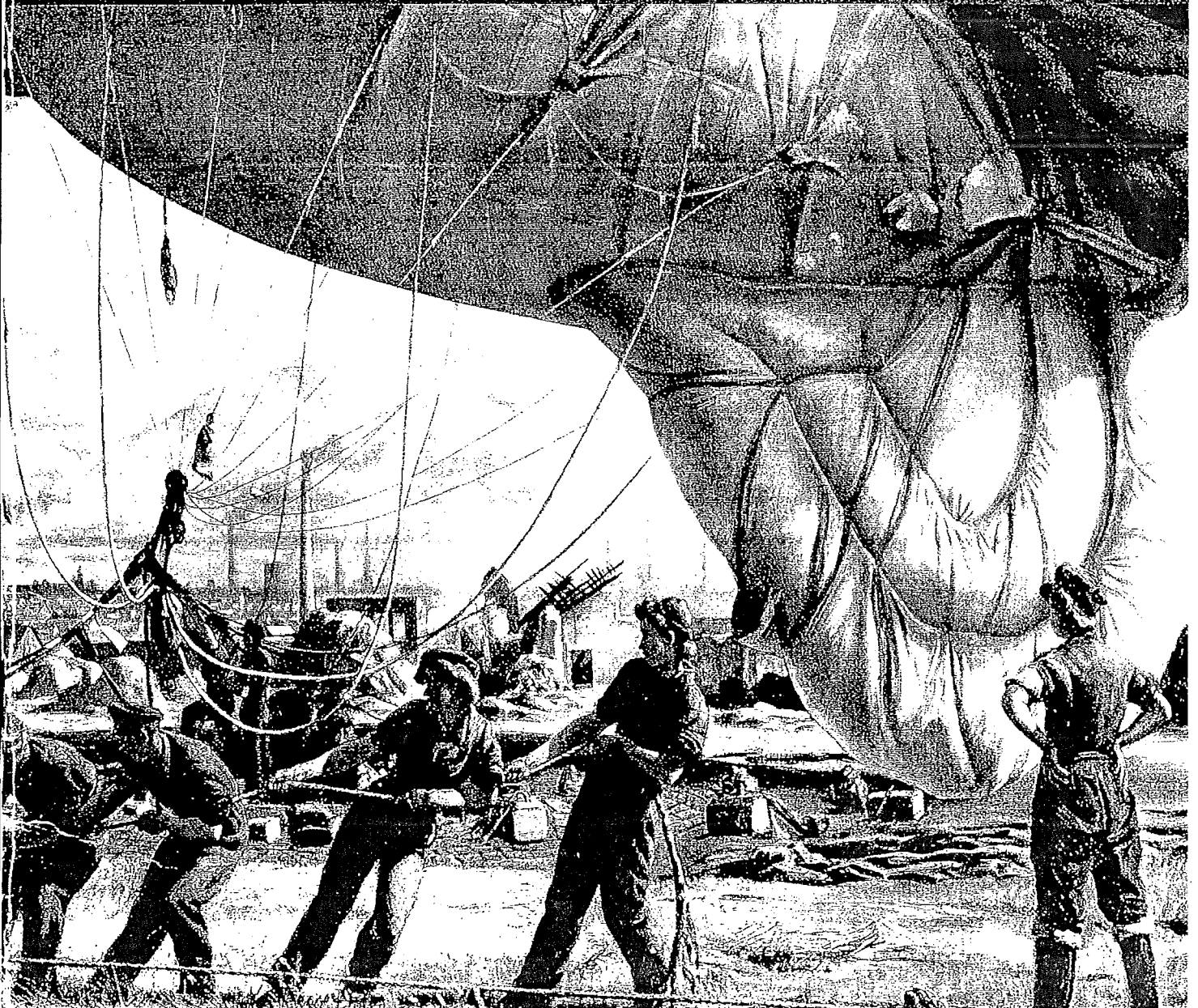
20th

CENTURY

HISTORY SERIES

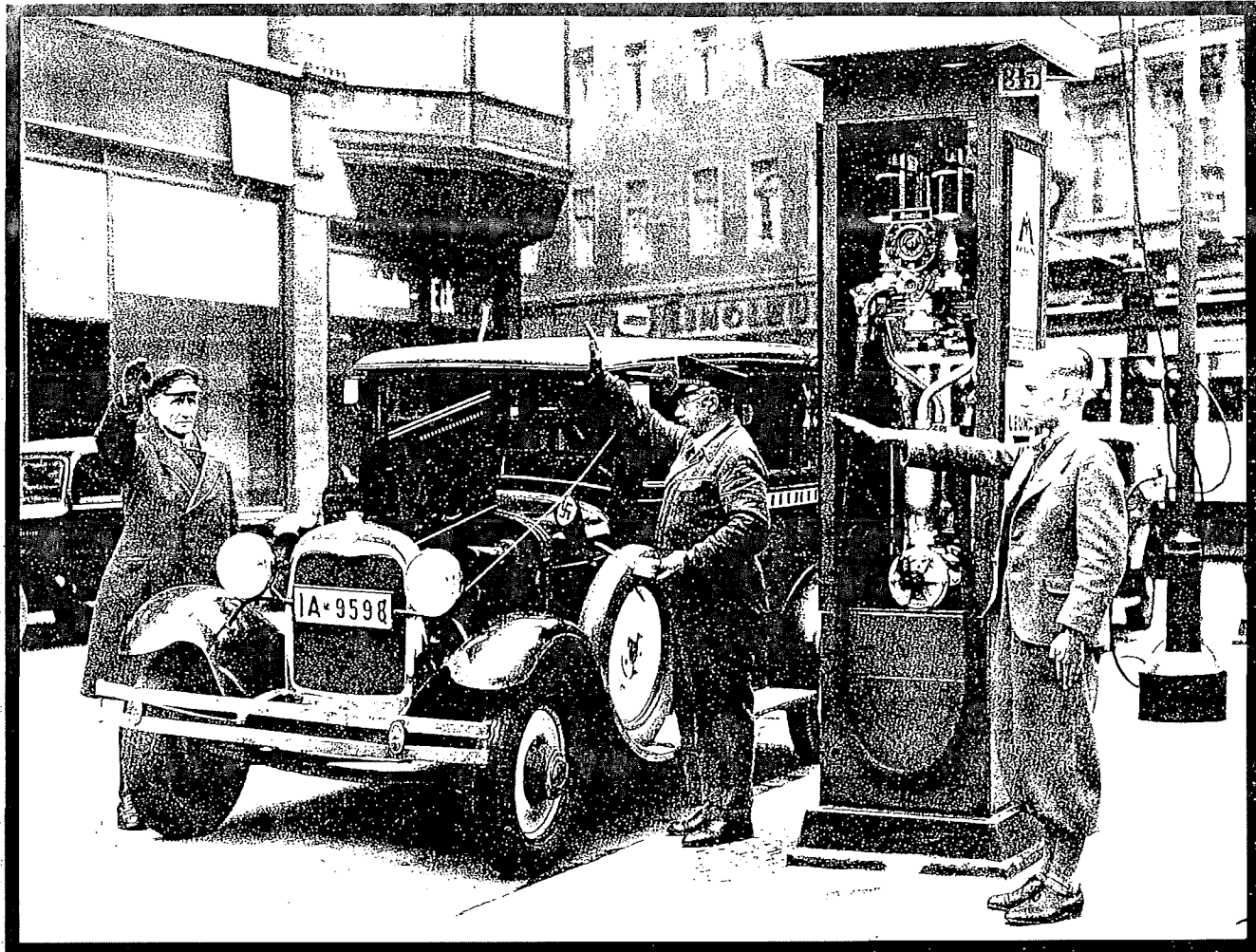
GLOBAL WAR

The Second World War, 1939-45



ONE

WAR IN THE WEST, 1939-41



A street in Berlin, capital of Germany, on 1 September 1939

Look carefully at the photograph above. A Berlin taxi driver, a garage attendant and a fashionable young man have stopped what they were doing to give the 'German salute'. They are saluting Adolf Hitler, leader of Germany, who has just made a radio speech, broadcast over loudspeakers in the streets. In his speech, Hitler has said:

'This night for the first time Polish regular soldiers fired on our territory. Since 5.45 a.m. we have been returning the fire, and from now on bombs will be met with bombs. Whoever fights with poison gas will be fought with poison gas. Whoever departs from the rules of humane warfare can only expect that we shall do the same. I will continue this struggle, no matter against whom, until the safety of the

Reich [*the German Empire*] and its rights are secured.'

In other words, Germany is at war with Poland.

As Hitler hinted, the 'struggle' which began on that day proved to be a long and desperate one. Over the next six years, war spread to every part of the world. Wherever fighting took place, the 'rules of humane warfare' were ignored. Fifty million people were killed. Hundreds of cities were destroyed. And by the war's end in 1945, life for the survivors was different in every way from their lives in 1939.

This book tells how the Second World War of 1939-45 was fought, and how it affected the lives of the people involved. We will begin on 1 September 1939, the day when the German army invaded Poland.

FROM LIGHTNING TO PHONEY WAR

German forces invaded Poland (see map, page 4) on 1 September 1939. By the end of the month they had defeated the Polish army and occupied half the country. The key to victory was a swift, mechanised form of warfare called *blitzkrieg*, or 'lightning war'.

Blitzkrieg

The aim of *blitzkrieg* was to smash an enemy's defences with a sudden, combined attack by aircraft, tanks and infantry.

In Poland, the attack was started by bomber aircraft which destroyed most of the Polish Air Force while it was still on the ground. They blew up roads and railways, bombed factories and power stations, and set fire to towns and cities.

At the same time, German forces crossed the Polish border to fight the Polish army. They began by bombing the Poles with *Stuka* dive-bombers. After the *Stukas* came tanks, travelling at up to 40 km-per-hour, smashing the Polish defences with their guns. Then came soldiers in trucks and on motorcycles to fight any Polish units that still survived.

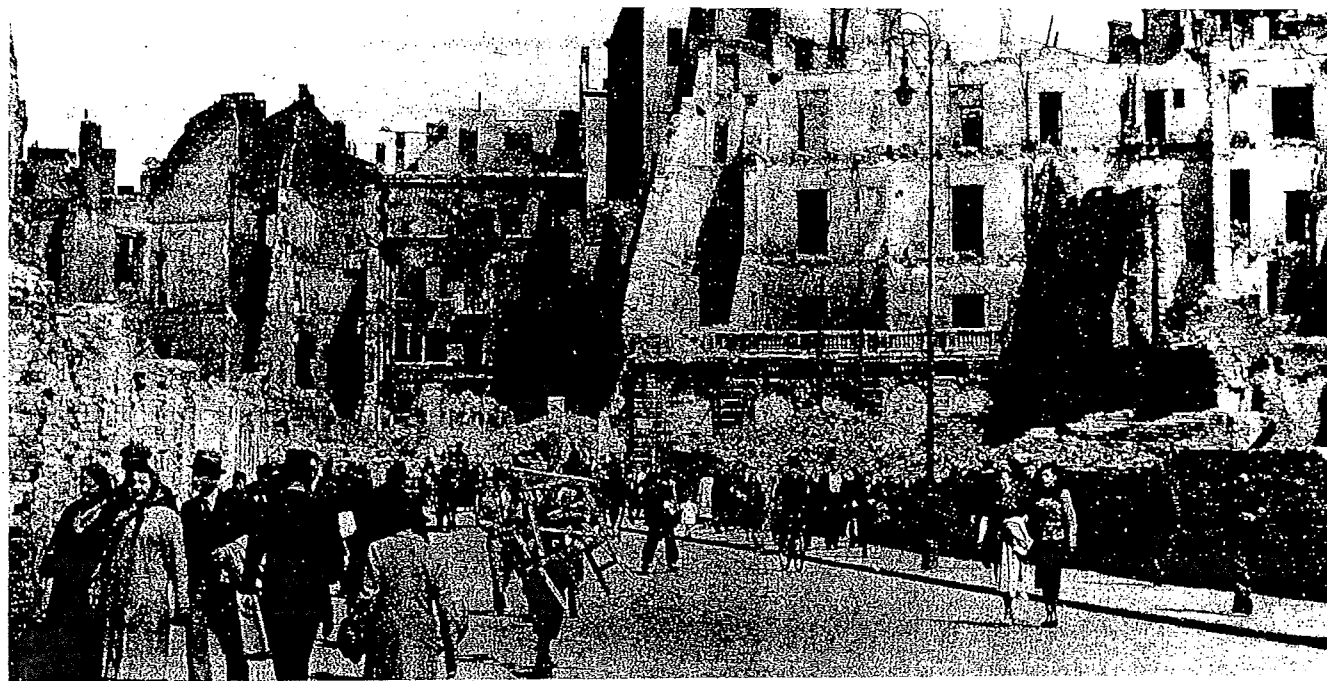
By 17 September, German forces had captured most of western Poland. On that day, in accordance with a secret agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union, the Soviet Red Army invaded eastern Poland. This ended any chance that Poland could win the war, for she was now under attack from two sides. On 28 September, after desperate street fighting against the Germans, the people of Warsaw, Poland's capital, surrendered. Poland had been defeated.

The suffering of the Poles

Unlike previous wars, *blitzkrieg* meant that civilians as well as soldiers were involved in the fighting. Some of the effects of *blitzkrieg* are described in the following eye-witness accounts collected in 1939 by the Polish government and published in Britain in 1940 in *The Polish Black Book*. All the witnesses were anonymous.

- A. 'On 1st September, 1939, the first day of the war, we listened to the broadcast from Berlin announcing that the methods of warfare would be humane. One hour later, the Germans were bombing the suburb of Grochow . . . There were 112 people killed, of which approximately 80 were women and children.'
- B. 'The little town of ---, whose name I cannot reveal, as I have left my family there, was burnt down by the Germans on 4th and 5th September . . . In the neighbourhood, the Germans destroyed and burnt down a considerable number of market towns and villages . . . At Lelow, the Germans systematically burnt down all the houses, one by one . . .
- C. 'Corpses of men and animals are heaped in the streets. Notwithstanding the showers of projectiles [*bombs*], men of goodwill are burying the dead where they find them; in a garden or a square or the courtyards of houses. Famished people cut off pieces of flesh as soon as a horse falls, leaving only the skeletons . . .'

D. A street in Warsaw in October 1939, shortly after the German siege of the city



F. London, September 1939: two businessmen with gas-masks chat by a canvas tank full of water for fire-fighting



By the end of September 66,000 Poles had been killed, and at least 200,000 wounded.

The 'Phoney War'

A week before the Germans invaded Poland, Britain and France promised to defend Poland against attack. On 3 September, two days after the German invasion, they duly declared war on Germany.

In fact, it was very difficult for Britain and France to defend Poland. Britain's army and air force were both small. France had a large army but it was not yet ready to fight. And Poland was 1000 km away from them. So, while the German and Soviet armies over-ran Poland during September, the British and French did nothing to stop them.

Instead, both countries prepared to fight Germany in western Europe. A British Expeditionary Force was sent to France. The French army was placed along the frontier with Germany and Belgium. And civilians in both countries prepared to defend themselves against German bombing. In Britain, one and a half million women and children were evacuated from cities to the countryside. Air-raid shelters were built. Sandbags were put around doorways. A night-time **blackout** forbade people to use lights in

the open at night. And as a defence against poison gas, people had to carry gas-masks everywhere.

But for the next nine months, no fighting took place between Britain, France and Germany. French people described the situation as the 'Odd War' (*Drole de Guerre*) and the British called it the 'Phoney War'. For some people, life went on as normal, as this extract from *Housewife* magazine in 1939 suggests:

- E. The following were the . . . air-raid arrangements in a big house that I know well The spacious cellars were arranged so:

First cellar: for the elderly owner and her guests; Wilton carpet, upholstered arm-chairs, occasional tables, a ration of the best bitter chocolate, a bottle of expensive brandy, petit-beurre biscuits, thermos jugs, packs of cards, a Chinese lacquer screen concealing an eighteenth-century commode.

Second cellar: for female servants; wicker-work armchairs, an oak table, . . . a half bottle of cheap brandy, plain biscuits, tea-making apparatus, a Japanese paper screen concealing sanitary accommodation of a bedroom type.

Third cellar: for chauffeur, boot boy, gardeners and stray neighbours; a wooden bench; wooden table, . . . water biscuits. No brandy, no screen.'

Work section

- A 1. Using sources A to D, describe how Polish civilians were affected by the invasion of their country.
2. (a) Why do you think sources A to C are anonymous? Does this affect their value as evidence?
(b) How does source D help you to use sources A to C?
(c) Suggest why the *Polish Black Book*, sources A to C, was published in Britain in 1940.
(d) How valuable do you consider the *Polish Black Book* as evidence of the effects of Germany's invasion of Poland? Explain your answer.
- B 1. In sources A to D, what methods of warfare might be called 'humane' (not necessarily cruel)?
2. How do sources A to D suggest that the Germans did not use humane methods of warfare?
3. Do sources A to D prove that the Germans acted inhumanely? Explain your answer.
- C 1. In source E, how did the lives of people in the 'big house' seem to have been affected by the start of war with Germany? How did their lives seem unchanged?
2. Judging by source E, how did the start of the war affect daily life in London?
3. Using E and F, suggest why British people in 1939 called the war the 'Phoney War'.
4. For what other purposes could a historian use sources E and F as evidence?

THE FALL OF WESTERN EUROPE

Germany attacks Norway

The 'Phoney War' ended when the Germans invaded Norway in April 1940. Hitler, the German leader, ordered the invasion when the British Royal Navy laid mines along the Norwegian coast in April 1940. The aim of the British was to stop iron ore being taken by rail and ship from northern Sweden to Germany (see map). As the Germans got half the iron needed for making weapons from Sweden, they could not afford to have their supplies blocked by British mines.

German forces quickly captured Narvik, Trondheim and Bergen on the Atlantic coast. Air-borne units took the capital, Oslo. At the same time, German forces occupied Denmark to give themselves supply bases for the invasion of Norway.

The British tried to stop the German invasion of Norway. The Royal Navy attacked and sank many German ships, and 30,000 British troops were sent to northern Norway. But the British forces were poorly trained, poorly equipped, and did not have enough fighter planes to protect them from German air attacks. Within weeks, they were forced to retreat.

In the House of Commons in Britain a majority of Members of Parliament blamed the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, for the British defeat in Norway. They refused to support his government and thus forced him to resign. He was replaced by **Winston Churchill** who quickly formed a National Government – that is, a coalition which included members of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal parties.

When asked what this government's policy would be, Churchill said in the Commons:

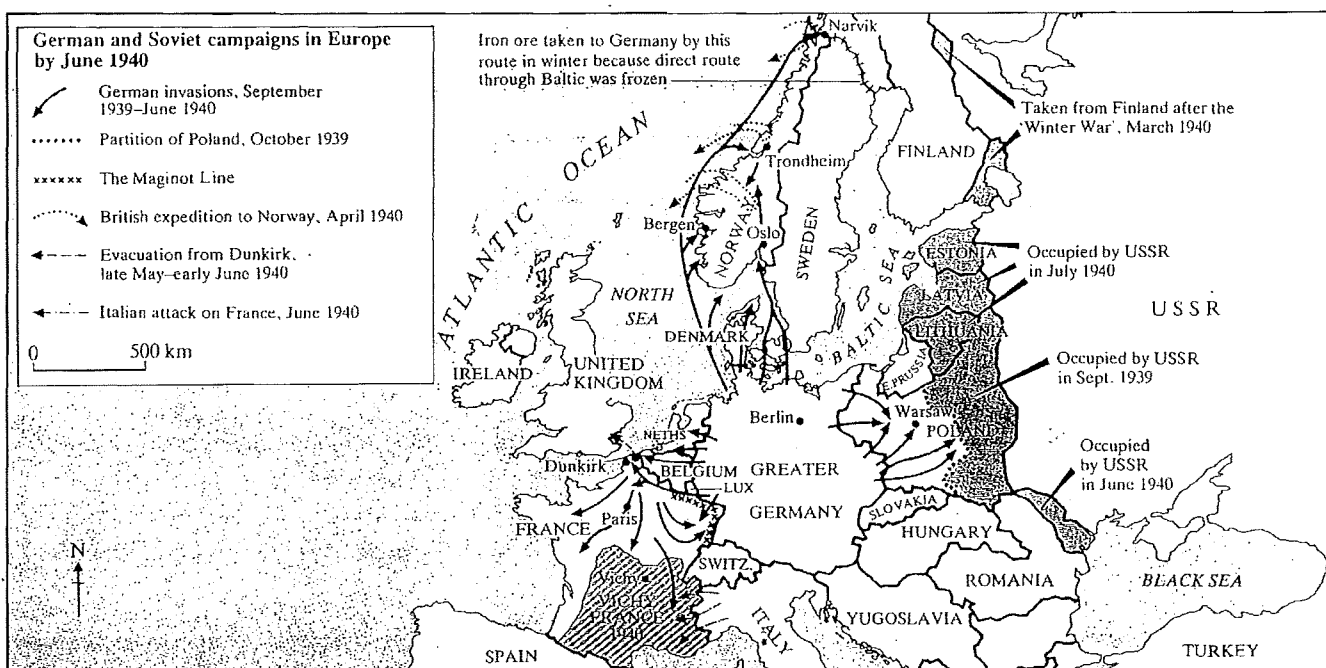
A. 'I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat . . . You ask, what is our policy? I will say: It is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us . . . You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory . . . however long and hard the road may be.'

Germany attacks the West

Soon after invading Poland, Hitler ordered an attack on western Europe. His aim was to smash France and to force Britain to surrender.

The attack, code-named **Operation Yellow**, began on 10 May 1940. Using *blitzkrieg* tactics, German forces smashed into Holland and Belgium, defeating them in just three weeks. Then they invaded France through the thickly-wooded Ardennes mountains, where the French were least expecting an attack. Breaking through the French defences, the Germans swept through north-east France at high speed, forcing the British and French armies facing them to retreat to **Dunkirk** on the Channel coast.

At Dunkirk the French and British organised a seaborne rescue operation for the half-a-million soldiers trapped there by the German advance. About half were able to board ships in Dunkirk harbour. The rest had to wait on the beaches near Dunkirk while volunteers in a fleet of pleasure boats, fishing



the Channel from Dunkirk—in history's strangest armada

TENS OF THOUSANDS SAFELY HOME ALREADY

*Many more coming
by day and night*

SHIPS OF ALL SIZES DARE
THE GERMAN GUNS

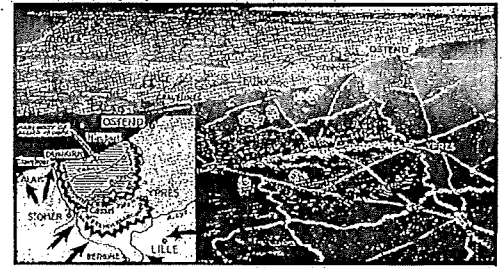
UNDER THE GUNS OF THE BRITISH FLEET, UNDER THE WINGS OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE, A LARGE PROPORTION OF THE B.E.F. WHO FOR THREE DAYS HAD BEEN FIGHTING THEIR WAY BACK TO THE FLANDERS COAST, HAVE NOW BEEN BROUGHT SAFELY TO ENGLAND FROM DUNKIRK.

First to return were the wounded. An armada of ships—all sizes, all shapes—were used for crossing the Channel. The weather which helped Hitler's tanks to advance has since helped the British evacuation.

Cost to the Navy of carrying out, in an inferno of bombs and shells, one of the most magnificent operations in history has been three destroyers, some auxiliary craft, and a small steamer.

Cost to the enemy of the Fleet's intervention outside Dunkirk can be counted in the shattering of German advanced forces by naval guns and the survival of tens of thousands of British soldiers whom the Germans had hoped to capture or destroy.

THE NAVY CARRIES ON



How the Allies fought back to Dunkirk, aided by warships and planes. British troops held the left bank, French troops the right bank. Last year.

Guard action (see last page) fought by French under General Fritsch on the hills between Cambray and Tournai.

*Tired, dirty, hungry
they came back
—unbeatable*

THREE
DESTROYERS
LOST

As Navy helps B.E.F.

THE Admiralty issued this communique last night:—
The Royal Navy has been and is doing all possible

Re: MILOR MARSHANT
SOUTH COAST TOWN, Thursday Night.
THE Army is coming back from Belgium. It is a dirty, tired, hungry army. An army that has been shelled and bombed from three sides, and had

Signposts
to be
removed

SIR JOHN KEITH, Minister of Transport, announced last night that 'highway authorities are being instructed to remove signposts and direction indications which would be of value to the enemy in case of invasion. The work was put in hand on Wednesday.'

B. *The evacuation from Dunkirk as told by the Daily Express in Britain, 31 May 1940*

craft and other small vessels ferried them out to larger craft off-shore. Between 26 May and 4 June some 850 boats of every kind, large and small, snatched 338,226 men from Dunkirk.

The evacuation of the British army from Dunkirk was a great defeat. Nearly 70,000 men were killed, wounded or taken prisoner. The survivors left 2500 big guns, 90,000 rifles and 64,000 vehicles behind them. They also abandoned 150,000 of their French allies to become prisoners of the Germans. On the other hand, a third-of-a-million soldiers had been saved from capture and would soon be able to fight again.

The fall of France

After driving the British out of France, the Germans launched a new attack on the French, driving them back on all fronts. On 10 June Hitler's ally, Mussolini of Italy, declared war on France and an Italian army invaded southern France.

As the Germans advanced, the French government fled from Paris in confusion. The Prime Minister resigned and was replaced by a retired army general, Marshal Pétain, who signed an armistice, or cease-fire, with the Germans. By the terms

of the armistice, the Germans occupied all northern and eastern France. The south was to be governed by Marshal Pétain, based in the town of Vichy.

Britain alone

In less than a year, the Germans had conquered six European nations. Only Britain was still at war with Germany.

Hitler believed that Britain was in no mood to fight, and offered to make peace on moderate terms. Churchill, however, rejected them and chose to fight on. Hitler therefore ordered an invasion of Britain by the combined air, sea and land forces of Germany.

The British hastily prepared to resist invasion. Over a million men joined a volunteer defence force called the **Home Guard**. Road signs were painted out and the names of railway stations removed. In a campaign to get scrap metal for making tanks and planes, iron railings disappeared from gardens and aluminium pans vanished from kitchens. King George VI practised revolver shooting in the grounds of Buckingham Palace, saying that he intended to die there fighting. Britain thus entered the summer of 1940 determined to stand alone against Germany.

Work section

- A. 1. What was Churchill offering the British in source A? 2. What would have been the alternative?
2. This speech was very popular among the British. Suggest why this was so.

B. Study source B. Then, using this chapter for information, answer these questions.

1. What is an armada (lines 2 and 15)? Suggest why the *Daily Express* used this word to describe the boats which rescued soldiers from Dunkirk.
2. Which parts of this newspaper story might (a) a French reporter, and (b) a German reporter have written differently? Explain your answer.

BATTLE OVER BRITAIN

When Churchill refused to make peace with Germany in June 1940, Hitler ordered his generals to prepare a cross-Channel invasion of England. The invasion plan which they hastily drew up was code-named **Operation Sealion**.

Operation Sealion

Two German armies totalling over 100,000 men were gathered at French and Belgian ports on the Channel. To transport them to England, a fleet of river barges and coastal steamers was collected from Germany's rivers and ports. The most vital part of the operation was given to the German air force, the **Luftwaffe**. Its task was to win control of the airspace over the Channel to prevent the British Royal Air Force (**RAF**) from sinking the invasion craft.

The Luftwaffe began its work on 10 July 1940. Bomber planes attacked convoys of British ships in the Channel and bombed several Channel ports. On paper, it looked as if the Luftwaffe would soon win command of the skies, for it had some 3000 aircraft against Britain's 600-700 aircraft. In fact, the Luftwaffe was not as strong as it seemed. While it had many more bombers than the RAF, it only had the same number of fighters, and these only had enough fuel to operate over southern England for half-an-hour at a time. This meant that German fighter attacks were limited to targets within about a 150-km radius, while the RAF fighters were operating over their home ground for longer periods.

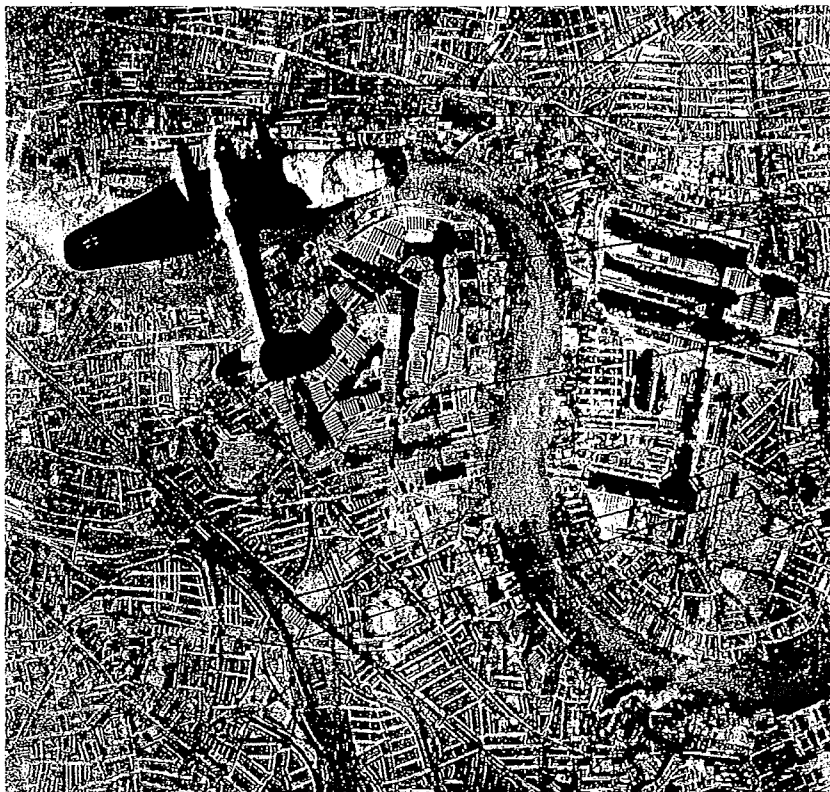
Moreover, the British had a chain of radar stations around the coast, allowing them to predict the movements of the German aircraft.

On 15 August the Luftwaffe began an all-out attack on Britain, trying to smash the RAF. For the next month, the RAF fought back in a desperate aeroplane war that came to be known as the Battle of Britain.

The Battle of Britain

From 15 August to 7 September, the blue summer skies over southern England were filled with the vapour trails of battling aircraft. The Luftwaffe inflicted great damage on the RAF's airfields and shot down hundreds of fighters. By the start of September the RAF was close to defeat: its airfields were badly damaged and, although it was well supplied with new aircraft, it did not have enough pilots to fly them.

The Luftwaffe failed to follow up this advantage for, on 7 September, Hitler ordered it to switch its attacks to London, in revenge for British air-raids on Berlin. This gave the RAF a chance to rebuild and re-organise its forces. A week later, when two large groups of German bombers flew over London on a bombing raid, the RAF was able to break them up by flying in large, new formations. The Luftwaffe lost sixty aircraft in that attack, and many more were damaged. As a result, the Luftwaffe stopped making air-raids in daylight, and went over to night-time bombing.



Residential Areas:

Limehouse
Whitechapel
Wapping
Poplar
Rotherhithe

East India Docks

Surrey Docks

Millwall Docks

Railways

River Thames

A German bomber over the East End of London, late summer 1940



Balham High Street, South-West London, 17 October 1940. As well as wrecking buildings in the street, this bomb explosion destroyed the sub-surface gas, electricity and water mains. This flooded the underground railway station beneath the street, killing sixty-three people sheltering there

This was the decisive moment in the Battle of Britain, for it meant that the RAF had kept control of the air over Britain. Hitler realised that he could not now risk an invasion, and so cancelled Operation Sealion. Britain was safe from invasion.

The Blitz

From 7 September onwards, the Luftwaffe dropped bombs on London and many other British cities. Sometimes they tried to damage communications by bombing railway centres. Sometimes they bombed ports and factory areas to disrupt trade and production. Sometimes they bombed housing areas to destroy people's morale. These attacks, which went on until May 1941, were known as the 'Blitz'.

Since the start of the war in 1939 the British had made many preparations against bombing. A civilian defence organisation called **Air Raid Precautions** (ARP) was set up. All citizens, including children,

were issued with gas-masks for it was thought that the Germans would use gas bombs as well as explosives. Air-raid shelters were constructed – 'Anderson' shelters for the garden and 'Morrison' shelters for indoors. Air-raid sirens were installed in each area. Barrage balloons were floated above cities, forcing aircraft to fly high to avoid them, thus reducing their chances of hitting the target. And to make cities invisible to night-time bombers, 'blackout' regulations banned the use of street lights, car headlamps or any other light that could be seen from above.

As a result of these preparations, the Blitz did less damage than many people on both sides expected. It did not destroy the morale of the population. It did not greatly reduce the production of factories, and damage to transport was quickly repaired. Nevertheless, over the next five years, 3.5 million homes were damaged or destroyed by bombs. A quarter-of-a-million people were made homeless and 60,595 were killed.

Work section

A. Study the photograph opposite, then answer these questions:

1. Suggest what the Luftwaffe was hoping to destroy in this air-raid.
2. Why was this air-raid likely to result in many civilian casualties?
3. What kind of people do you think were most likely to be casualties in this air-raid? Explain your answer.

B. Study the photograph above, then answer these questions:

1. Explain in as much detail as you can what caused the situation in the photograph.
2. Suggest what the consequences of this raid were for the people living in the surrounding area.

THE MEDITERRANEAN WAR

By summer 1940, much of Europe was under German control: only Britain was unbeaten. But, after the retreat of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) from Dunkirk, Britain had no way of fighting the Germans in Europe. So, for a while, there was a lull in the European war. Only in the lands around the Mediterranean were the British able to fight.

Importance of the Mediterranean

Mussolini, dictator of Italy and ally of Germany, had long dreamed of conquering land around the Mediterranean Sea. He wanted to rebuild the ancient Roman Empire and make the Mediterranean into what he called 'an Italian Lake'. Libya, in North Africa, was already an Italian colony and Mussolini had recently added to Italy's colonies the African kingdom of Abyssinia and the Balkan state of Albania.

For the British, the Mediterranean was a vital trade route between Britain and her colonies in the Middle and Far East. Naval bases at Gibraltar and Malta protected this trade route, and a British army in Egypt protected the Suez Canal.

For Hitler, the Mediterranean was less important: he agreed with Mussolini that it should belong to Italy. His generals, however, wanted to drive the British out of their Mediterranean bases, for conquest of Egypt and the Middle East would help

them get control of Britain's oil supplies in Iraq and Persia.

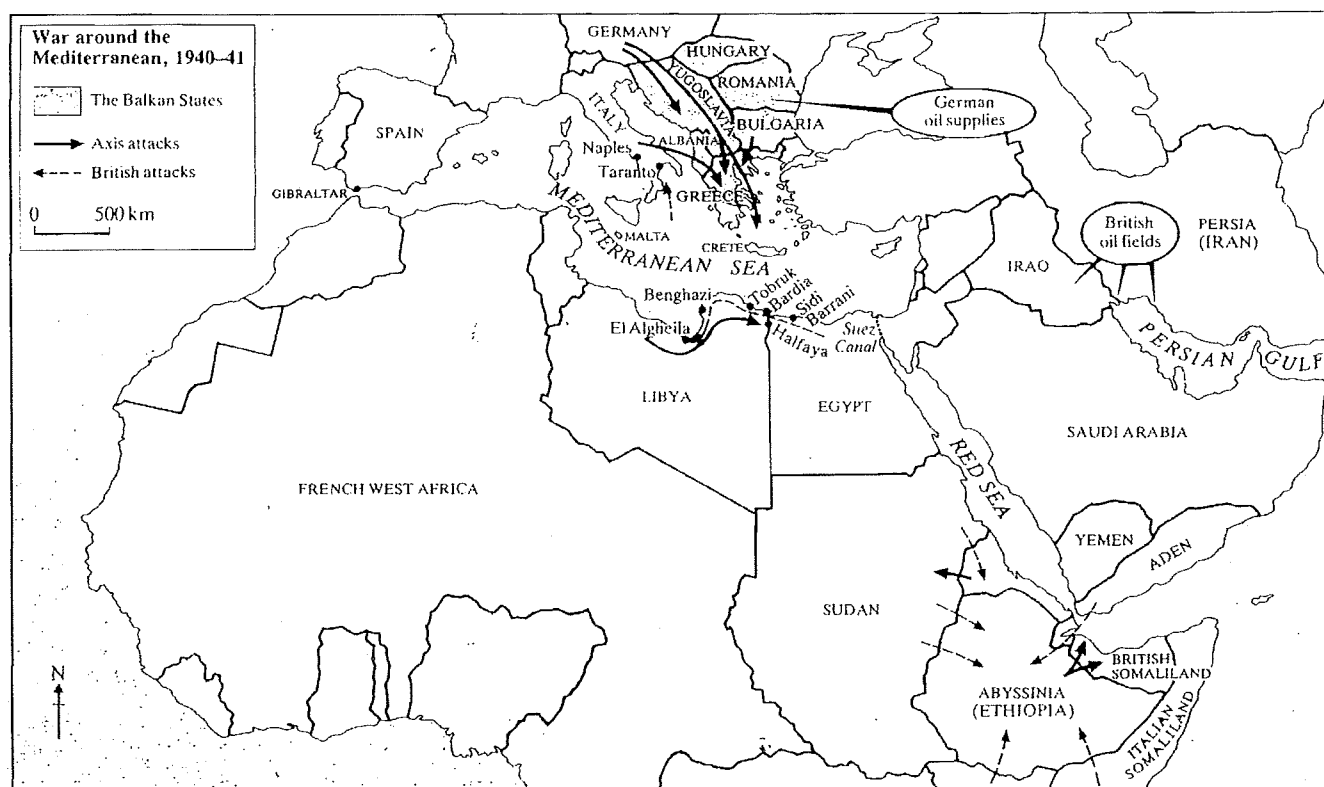
From 1940 onwards, therefore, the three countries became involved in a struggle for control of the Mediterranean. The struggle centred on two vital areas, the Balkan states of south-east Europe and the desert lands of north-east Africa.

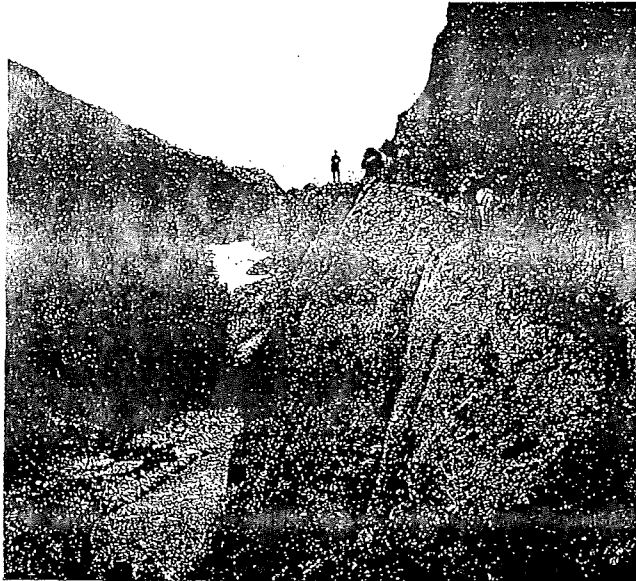
War in the Balkans

Mussolini and Hitler had become allies in 1936 by signing an agreement called the Rome-Berlin Axis. Germany and Italy were thus known as the Axis powers. Mussolini, however, was overshadowed by his Axis partner; Hitler did not consult him before invading Poland in 1939, and in 1940 he forbade Mussolini to attack Yugoslavia. Mussolini resented this and decided to act on his own. In October 1940, without consulting Hitler, Mussolini ordered the Italian army to invade Greece.

The Italians, who invaded across the high Pindus mountains, were poorly led and poorly equipped for mountain warfare. The Greeks, fighting on their own territory for the survival of their country, soon drove them back into Albania.

A worse setback to Mussolini's plans quickly followed. In November 1940 British aircraft attacked the Italian navy in its harbour at Taranto, severely





Greek soldiers on a mountain path between Greece and Albania during their war against Italy in 1940

damaging five warships. Mussolini promptly withdrew the rest of the fleet to Naples, leaving the British Royal Navy in command of the Mediterranean.

When it became clear that Mussolini was in trouble Hitler decided to help him. He feared that the British would set up RAF bases in Greece and bomb the oil-fields in Romania which provided Germany with most of its oil. So, in December 1940, German troops moved into Romania to protect the oil-fields, while Hitler put pressure on the Balkan states to join the Axis. Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria agreed to join, but when the Yugoslavs refused, German forces invaded their country. In just ten days in April 1941, 20,000 Yugoslavs were killed and the country was forced to surrender.

At the same time as invading Yugoslavia, German forces also invaded Greece. Churchill sent 58,000 soldiers to help defend Greece, but they were quickly forced to retreat, leaving behind most of their equipment. By the end of April the Germans had

occupied all of Greece and forced it to surrender. All the Balkan states were now under Axis control. And to strengthen that control, the Germans went on to capture the island of Crete in May 1940.

War in North Africa

In September 1940 300,000 Italian troops invaded Egypt where 36,000 British, Australian, Indian and New Zealand troops were based. Although outnumbered ten-to-one, the British General O'Connor attacked the Italian base at Sidi Barrani. The attack took the Italians by surprise and they were defeated. General O'Connor went on to capture Italian bases at Bardia, Tobruk, Benghazi and El Algeila.

By February 1941 the British had destroyed ten Italian army divisions, advanced 800 km, and taken 130,000 prisoners. It was an overwhelming victory, and there was nothing left to stop O'Connor from conquering the rest of Italian North Africa. In February 1941, however, Churchill sent O'Connor's soldiers to help defend Greece against the Germans (see above). At the same time, Hitler sent General Rommel and the German Afrika Korps to North Africa to help the retreating Italians. With many British troops now in Greece, Rommel was able to counter-attack. Within weeks he had driven the British all the way back to the Egyptian border. Only Australian troops at Tobruk were able to keep their positions.

The Commander of the British forces in Africa, General Wavell, tried to halt Rommel's advance at Halfaya ('Hellfire') Pass, but had to withdraw after ninety-one of his tanks were destroyed by German guns. For the rest of the year the British would remain on the defensive in North Africa.

By the middle of 1941, then, Britain's prospects in the Mediterranean war seemed poor. On 22 June, however, the Mediterranean ceased to be the main theatre of war. On that day the Germans invaded the Soviet Union. The war was about to widen into a struggle for world power.

Work section

- A. Study the photograph above, then answer these questions.
1. List the difficulties the Italians were likely to face in their invasion of Greece.
 2. What advantages do you think the Greeks had over the Italians in country like this?
- B. Using the map opposite, as well as the information in this chapter, make a table like this to show the positions of Germany, Italy and Britain in the Mediterranean war by mid-1941.

Germany		Italy		Britain	
Successes	Defeats	Successes	Defeats	Successes	Defeats

Judging by your completed table, which side seemed most likely to win the war in mid-1941?

- C. Check your understanding of the terms used so far in this book by explaining what each of the following mean: war, blitzkrieg, Phoney War, Luftwaffe, Battle of Britain, Blitz, ARP.

Before going any further, you may find it helpful to make notes on what you have read so far. If you are unsure how to organise your notes, these headings show the main points to be noted.

A. The German invasion of Poland, Sept 1939

1. The German *blitzkrieg*
2. The Soviet invasion
3. How the Poles suffered

B. The 'Phoney War'

1. Britain and France declare war
2. Britain and France prepare for war
3. The 'phoney war', Sept 1939–April 1940

C. The fall of western Europe

1. Germany invades Norway and Denmark
2. Germany invades Holland and Belgium
3. Germany invades France
4. The retreat of the BEF from Dunkirk
5. The fall of France
6. Britain prepares to fight alone

D. Battle over Britain, summer 1940

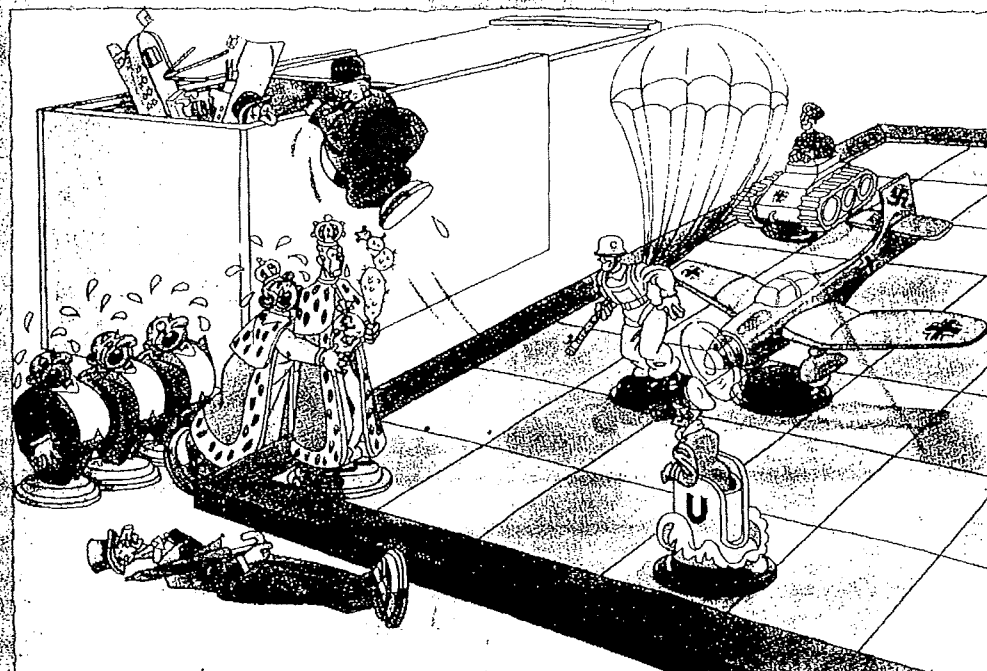
1. Operation Sealion
2. The strength of the RAF and the Luftwaffe compared
3. The Battle of Britain
4. The Blitz on Britain's cities

E. The Mediterranean war, 1940–41

1. Why the Mediterranean was important to Britain, Germany and Italy
2. War in the Balkans
 - (a) The part played by Italy
 - (b) The part played by Germany
3. War in North Africa
 - (a) Italian attacks
 - (b) British attacks
 - (c) German attacks

Revision exercise

Study this cartoon. Then, using information from Part One of this book, answer the questions beneath.

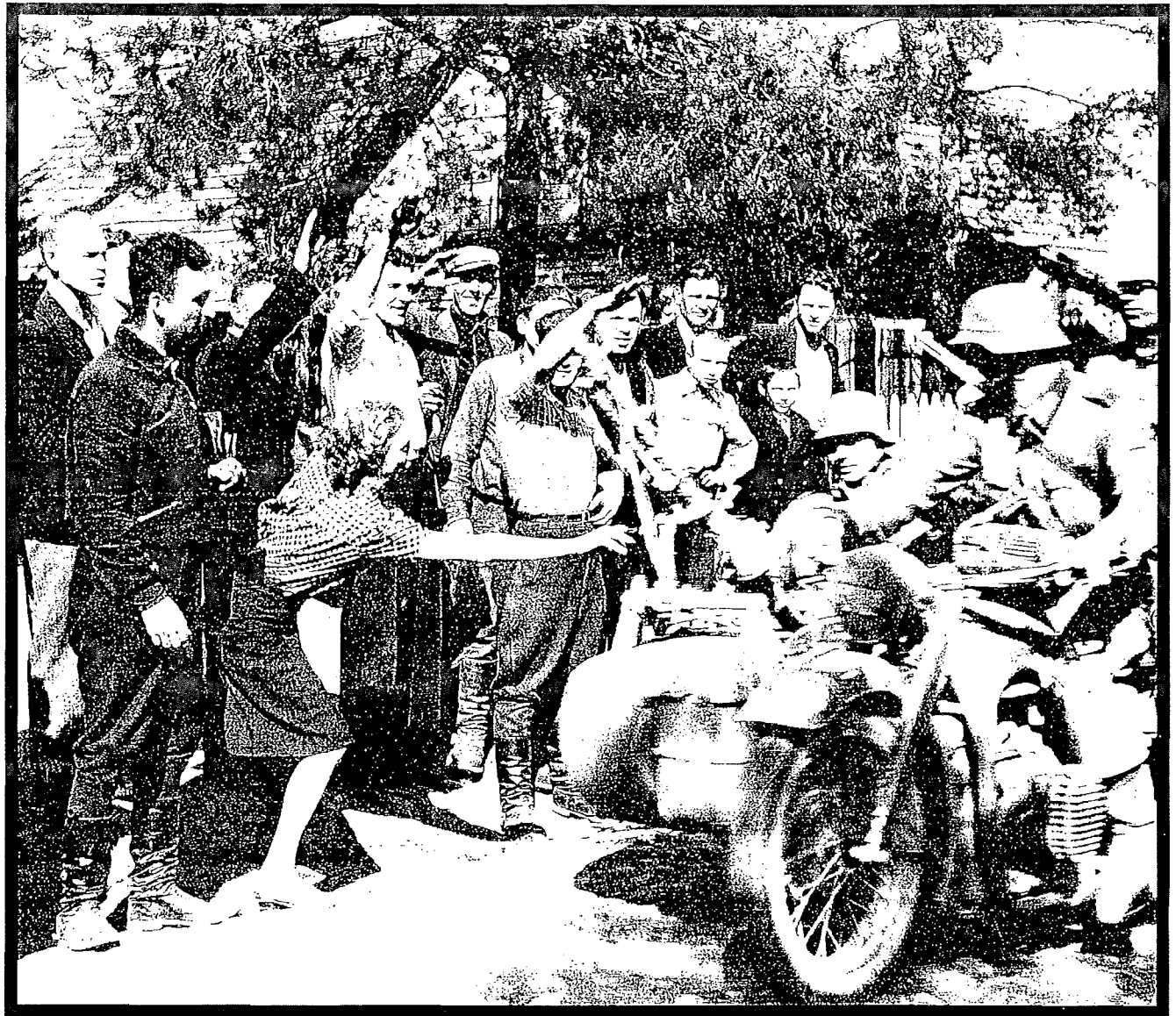


'Check-mate'. A German cartoon of 1940 shows Britain (represented by the king) check-mated by Germany on the chess board of Europe

1. In the game of chess, check-mate is a position in which one player cannot move her/his king, the most important piece on the chessboard, and therefore loses the game. What reasons might the cartoonist have had in 1940 for thinking that Germany had check-mated Britain?
2. Which other countries were on the European chess board at the start of the war?
3. How did Germany remove these countries from the board in 1939 and 1940?
4. Why might British people have disagreed with the cartoon in July 1940?
5. In your opinion, had the position of Britain changed by July 1941? Explain your answer.

TWO

THE WAR BECOMES GLOBAL, 1941-42



German invaders pass through a village in western USSR during 'Operation Barbarossa' in July 1941

Until the summer of 1941 the Second World War was fought mostly in Europe and North Africa. As you have read, Germany's armed forces had conquered and occupied ten European nations, leaving only Britain unbeaten and still fighting. To many observers, it seemed only a matter of time before Britain too would surrender.

By the end of 1941 this situation had been transformed. In the space of just six months, the war spread to lands far beyond Europe – first to the

Soviet Union, then to Japan and the Far East, then to the United States. For the first time in the war, the Germans experienced a major defeat in battle, while Britain gained two allies, the USA and USSR, and no longer had to fight alone.

Part Two of this book describes how the war which began in Europe became a global war during the course of 1941. We will begin with the invasion shown in the picture above – Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941.

THE GREAT FATHERLAND WAR

Why did Germany attack the USSR?

You found out in Chapter 1 that Germany and the USSR signed a pact in 1939, agreeing not to make war on each other. Stalin, the Soviet leader, therefore did not try to stop Hitler invading Poland. Instead, Soviet forces occupied the eastern half of Poland. And, while the Germans invaded western Europe in 1940, Soviet forces went on to take more land from their east European neighbours – from Finland after a costly ‘Winter War’, from Romania, and from the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. You can see these gains on the map on page 4.

The Nazi–Soviet Pact, however, was not a pact of friendship. Hitler hated Communism and had long planned to destroy the Soviet Union. He signed the Pact simply to keep the Soviet Union neutral while he occupied Poland and western Europe. Stalin, who knew that Hitler hated the Soviet Union, signed the Pact because the Soviet armed forces were not yet ready to fight; the Pact gave him time to prepare the country for war.

By the start of 1941 the Pact was no longer useful to Hitler; now that he controlled most of western Europe, he could safely turn his attention to the east. He therefore ordered his generals to prepare an invasion of the USSR as soon as possible.

Operation Barbarossa

The invasion, code-named Barbarossa (which means Red Beard), began on 22 June 1941. Using *blitzkrieg* tactics, three German armies of 3.2 million men poured over the Soviet frontier. They destroyed much of the Soviet air force while it was still on the ground, they took over half-a-million prisoners, and they captured huge quantities of supplies.

Faced with total defeat, Stalin made a radio speech on 3 July, telling the Soviet people to use ‘scorched earth’ methods against the Germans:

- A. ‘The enemy must not find a single railway-engine, not a wagon, not a pound of bread or a glassful of petrol. All the farms must bring in their herds and hand their stocks of wheat over to official bodies to be sent to the rear. Everything that is usable but cannot be sent back (such as wheat, petrol or non-ferrous metals) must be destroyed.

In areas occupied by the enemy . . . sabotage groups must be organised to combat

enemy units . . . blow up bridges and roads, damage telephone and telegraph lines, set fire to forests, stores and transports. In occupied regions conditions must be made unbearable for the enemy.’

In the months after Stalin’s radio speech the Soviet people followed this scorched earth policy, but they could not halt the German invasion. By the end of September the Germans had occupied the Ukraine, the Donets basin and the Crimea, all rich farming and industrial regions. A German advance on the capital, Moscow, led to panic there, with thousands of frightened people leaving their homes to flee eastwards. The defeat of the USSR seemed certain.

How the USSR was saved

Four things stopped the Germans from defeating the USSR in the autumn of 1941. First, the Soviet authorities moved many important weapons factories to eastern regions beyond reach of the Germans. Between July and November 1941, 1523 factories were dismantled and taken in 1.5 million railway truck-loads to areas such as the Ural Mountains. Around 10 million workers went with the factories to make weapons, ammunition, transport, clothing, and all the other equipment needed for war.

A second reason why the USSR survived the German invasion was bad weather. Just as the Germans prepared for a final attack on Moscow, autumn rains turned the countryside into lakes of mud which slowed them down. In December the mud froze as winter set in. General Guderian, one of the German commanders, later described the effects of the cold in his memoirs:

- B. ‘On the actual day of the offensive, the thermometer fell from –20 to –40 degrees. The sufferings of the troops were ghastly. All the automatic arms ceased to work because the oil in them froze. On the afternoon of the 5th all the armies called a spontaneous halt . . .

The men had greatcoats and jackboots. The only additional clothing they had received consisted of a scarf and a pair of gloves. In the rear, the locomotives had seized up with the cold. In the line, weapons were unserviceable and, according to General Schaal, the tank motors had to be warmed up for 12 hours before the machines could get going . . . Many men, while satisfying the calls of nature, died when their anuses froze.’

A third reason for the survival of the Soviet Union in 1941 was help from the USA and from Britain. The day after the Germans attacked, President Roosevelt of the USA announced that his government would give aid to the USSR. Over the next year, convoys of American ships took more than a billion dollars worth of food, weapons, medical supplies, tanks and aircraft to the Soviet Union. The British shipped 500 Hurricane fighter aircraft to Murmansk to help protect the convoys. Later, in 1942, Britain and the USA signed treaties of collaboration with the Soviet Union.

Finally, the behaviour of the German armed forces strengthened the will of the Soviet people to survive. In many of the areas which they occupied, the Germans behaved with appalling cruelty. Millions of Soviet people were rounded up and taken to Germany as slave labour. Millions more, especially Jews and

members of the Communist party, were massacred by Nazi **Special Action Groups**. The photograph below shows the aftermath of one of those massacres, at Kerch in the Crimea. Many Soviet men and women joined resistance groups to fight the Germans. Known as Partisans, these resistance fighters had to swear the following oath when they joined:

C. 'I, a citizen of the Soviet Union, a true son of the heroic Russian people, swear that I will not lay down my weapons until the Fascist serpent in our land has been destroyed . . . I swear to work a terrible, merciless and unrelenting revenge upon the enemy for the burning of our cities and villages, for the murder of our children and for the torture and atrocities committed against our people. Blood for blood! Death for death!'



D. 'Searching for loved ones at Kerch', a photograph taken by the Soviet photographer Dmitri Baldermants after a German massacre of 8000 Soviet Jews in the Crimea in 1942

Work section

- A. 1. How far does the photograph on page 11 prove that some Soviet citizens welcomed the German invasion of their country?
 2. For what reasons might some Soviet citizens have welcomed the invaders?
 3. Using sources A, C and D as evidence, say why such people were unlikely to still welcome the Germans a year later.
- B. Study source A, then answer these questions:
 1. Summarise in your own words what Stalin was telling people to do.
 2. What do you think he hoped would be achieved by this?
 3. Describe how the lives of (a) Soviet citizens and (b) German soldiers would be affected in areas where people followed Stalin's instructions.
- C. Under the following headings, describe how the German campaign in the USSR was (a) similar to and (b) different from the German campaigns in Europe in 1939-40 (see pages 2, 4-5):
 1. Method of attack. 2. Length of campaign. 3. Effects on civilians. 4. Result of campaign.



WAR SPREADS TO THE FAR EAST

The United States and Japan

When war began in Europe in 1939 the United States wanted to keep out of it. During the 1930s the US Congress had passed a series of **Neutrality Laws**, isolating the USA from other countries' disputes, and it had given little money to the armed forces. In 1939 the US Army therefore ranked only 39th in the world. The US Navy, with bases in two oceans, was smaller than its main rival, the Japanese Imperial Navy, which had only the Pacific to patrol.

The Japanese spent the 1930s doing the exact opposite to the Americans. In an attempt to gain extra land and resources for their fast-growing population, the Japanese invaded and occupied first China and then French Indo-China between 1931 and 1941. They also spent massively on their armed forces, making them the third largest in the world, efficient, experienced and well-equipped.

The end of US isolation

United States policy changed after war started in Europe in 1939. The Neutrality Laws were amended to allow Britain to buy war supplies from the USA on a '**cash and carry**' basis – meaning that the British had to pay in dollars or gold, and collect the goods in their own ships. In 1940 the US Navy gave Britain fifty destroyers and helped the Royal Navy to protect British ships against German attack. In March 1941 Congress passed a **Lend-Lease Act**, allowing the USA to provide Britain with guns, tanks, warships, planes and other war supplies. Later in 1941, Lend-Lease aid was also given to the USSR.

The USA also gave help to China in its war

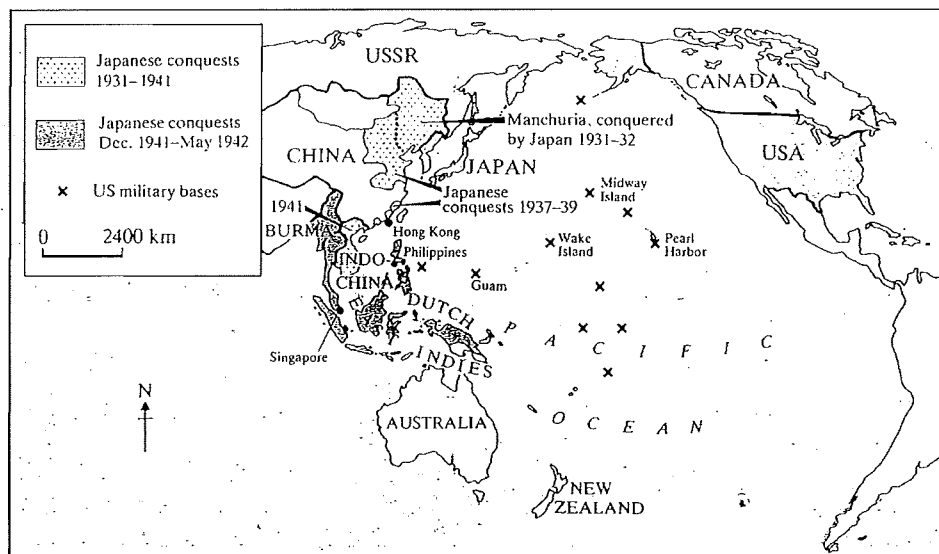
against Japan. It cancelled trading agreements with Japanese companies and stopped the sale of planes, chemicals and iron to Japan. When the Japanese occupied Indo-China in July 1941, the US government also stopped the sale of oil to them. As Japan imported 90 per cent of its oil from the USA, the ban was a crippling blow. The Japanese complained that their economy would collapse without oil, but the Americans said they would only lift the ban if Japan held peace talks with China. When the Japanese refused, the two countries were in a state of deadlock. Both began to talk of war as the only way out.

Japan attacks Pearl Harbor

Desperate to find a new source of oil, the Japanese planned to attack the oil-rich British and Dutch colonies in South-East Asia. They knew, however, that they were not strong enough to fight the Americans, who had military bases in the Pacific, at the same time as fighting the British. Their plans therefore began with a surprise attack on the US Pacific Fleet in its base at **Pearl Harbor**, in Hawaii.

The attack on Pearl Harbor took place on Sunday, 7 December 1941. Three hundred and sixty torpedo planes and bombers, launched from Japanese carriers 400 km away, caught the Americans by surprise. They sank or damaged eight battleships and put ten other warships out of action; 340 US aircraft were destroyed on the ground; and 3581 US servicemen were killed. In the space of two hours, the US Pacific Fleet had been crippled.

In fact the attack on Pearl Harbor was not as damaging as it might have been. By chance, the Fleet's four aircraft carriers were not in port



Japanese conquests, 1931-41.

that day, and were thus unharmed. As carriers were to prove more deadly than battleships later in the war, this was a valuable saving for the Americans. Also of great value to the Americans was the fact that the Japanese made no attempt to destroy the huge oil storage tanks which supplied the US navy with its fuel.

Declarations of war

The immediate result of the attack on Pearl Harbor was to bring the United States into the war for, on 8 December, Britain and the USA declared war on Japan. Within the next twenty-four hours, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and eight other countries also declared war on Japan.

Since September 1940 Japan had been an ally of Germany and Italy, for the three countries had signed a **Tripartite Axis Pact**, promising to help each other if attacked by a country not already in the war. Accordingly, Germany and Italy declared war on the USA, which immediately declared war on them both.

Over the next three weeks, twenty-six nations from all five continents declared war on Germany, Italy and Japan. On 1 January 1942 they signed a pact in Washington known as the **United Nations Declaration**, agreeing to put all their resources into fighting the Axis and to carry on fighting until all three had been defeated. The war was now truly global.

Japan conquers Asia

For the time being, however, declarations of war did nothing to stop Japan's plans to conquer Asia. On 8 December they destroyed US aircraft on the ground in the Philippines, and attacked Guam, Midway and Wake Islands. On 10 December Japanese torpedo aircraft sank the British warships *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* which had been sent to defend Singapore, Britain's largest naval base in the Far East.

From then on, the British and Americans suffered one disaster after another. On Christmas Day, Hong Kong surrendered to the Japanese. On 15 February 1942, Japanese forces captured Singapore, taking



A Japanese poster of 1943 shows Japan breaking the power of the Americans, British and Dutch (represented by the letters A, B and D) in Asia.

prisoner 140,000 British and Empire troops. The Dutch East Indies fell on 9 March. In April, American troops in the Philippines surrendered after a Japanese siege. And the British colony of Burma fell to Japanese invaders at the end of May.

Within six months of their attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese had brought all of South-East Asia and the western Pacific under their control. They had badly damaged British and American forces in the region. They now had all the oil, rubber, tin, bauxite and other raw materials they needed. Their position seemed unshakeable.

Work section

A. Study the poster above, then answer these questions:

1. What connections did the three countries represented by the letters A, B and D, which the soldier is breaking from the chain, have with Asia?
2. Why do you think the artist portrayed these countries' connections with Asia as a heavy chain?
3. Suggest what the breaking of the chain by the soldier is meant to represent.
4. Why do you think the Japanese published the poster with English rather than Japanese lettering?

B. Study this list of causes and consequences of the spread of war to the Far East:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Japan's lack of raw materials and oil | The Tripartite Axis Pact |
| Japan became the dominant power in the Far East | Formation of the 'United Nations' |
| Collapse of British colonial power | United States ban on oil supplies to Japan |
| Creation of Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere | Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor |

1. Select three long-term causes from the list and explain which you think was the most important.
2. Select three long-term consequences and explain which you think was the most important.
3. Arrange the eight items in the list into the order which best explains how war spread to the Far East between 1940 and 1942.

WAR AT SEA

As the European war grew into a global war in 1941 more and more fighting took place at sea, especially the Atlantic Ocean, between the British and German navies. The aim of the Germans was to sink ships taking food and raw materials to Britain, and so starve the British into surrender. The aim of the British was to keep their shipping routes open at all costs.

Sea battles

Up to 1941 there were no great sea battles between the German and British fleets. German warships concentrated their attacks on British merchant shipping and did not try to confront the Royal Navy. The only major sea battle in the early stage of the war took place in December 1939, when three British warships trapped the German pocket battleship *Graf Spee* in the **River Plate** in South America, forcing the ship's captain to scuttle her.

In May 1941 the Germans decided to create a squadron of powerful warships based in the occupied French port of Brest. Their aim was to attack British convoys deep in the Atlantic. This meant bringing their only battleship, the *Bismarck*, and the battle-cruiser *Prinz Eugen* from the Baltic Sea to the Atlantic to join the cruisers *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst* that were already active there.

The two ships sailed out of the Baltic on 18 May but a British aircraft spotted them as they sheltered in a fjord in Norway. A Royal Navy fleet of seventeen

ships was sent to chase them. When they engaged the German ships in battle on 24 May, a single shot from the *Bismarck* penetrated the weak deck armour of HMS *Hood* and blew it up, killing all but three of its 1400 crew.

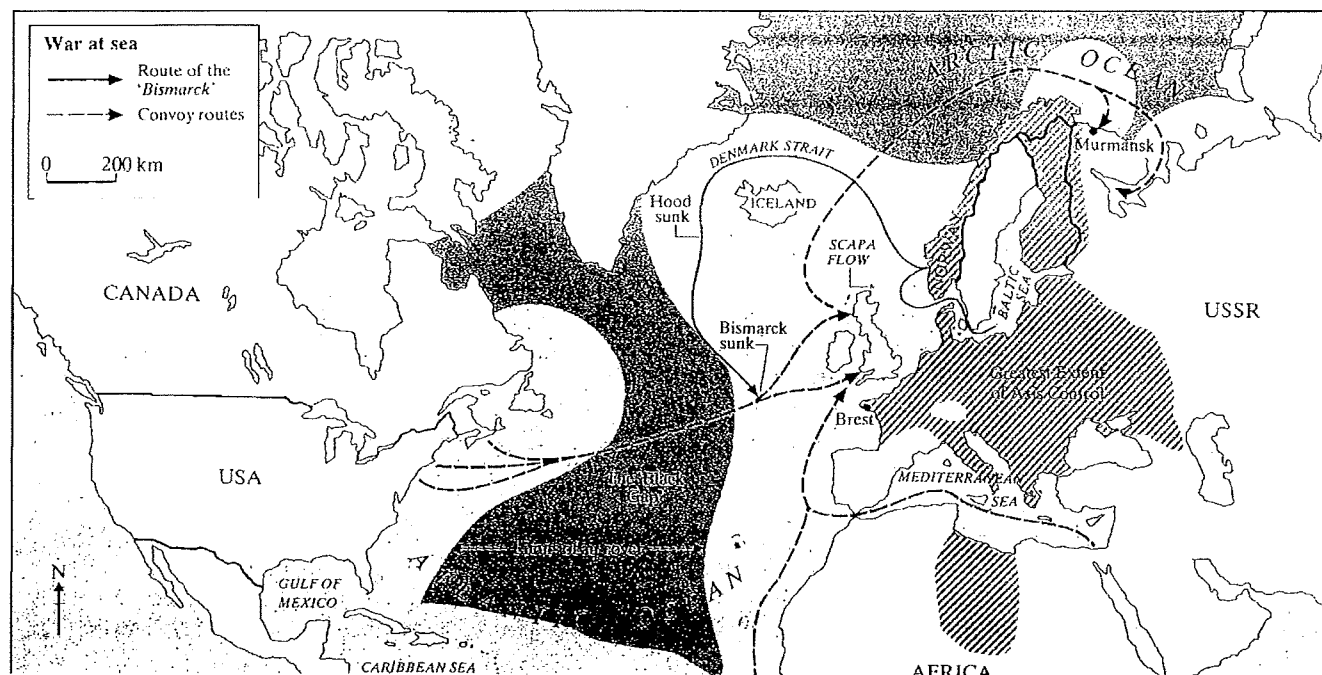
The British sent all their available warships to hunt the *Bismarck* as it escaped into the Atlantic. On 26 May a torpedo from one of the carrier *Ark Royal*'s aircraft damaged the *Bismarck*'s steering gear, forcing it to drop speed. On 27 May British ships caught up with the *Bismarck* and destroyed her with gunfire and torpedoes. The blazing wreck went to the bottom with all but 110 of its 2300 crew.

The *Prinz Eugen*, meanwhile, had escaped the British ships and was able to join the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* in Brest. The three ships made many attacks on British shipping from there before returning to the safety of the Baltic in March 1942.

The menace of the U-boats

Even more dangerous to British ships were German submarines, the U-boats (*Unterseebooten*) which could hunt ships unseen beneath the waves and destroy them with torpedoes.

German U-boats had shown how dangerous they were from the very start of the war. A single submarine penetrated the Royal Navy's harbour at Scapa Flow and sank the battleship *Royal Oak* while it was at anchor in October 1939. The menace of the U-boats increased after the fall of France in July



1940, for they could now use French ports as bases for attacks on ships far out in the Atlantic.

As protection against U-boat attacks, ships travelled in **convoys**, guarded by Royal Navy destroyers and corvettes. The Germans, however, took to hunting in 'wolf packs' of fifteen to twenty U-boats which waited in a line across likely convoy routes, ready to attack. By early 1941 so many British ships were being sunk by the wolf-packs that Churchill said a 'Battle of the Atlantic' was taking place.

The Battle of the Atlantic

The Battle of the Atlantic widened after the United States joined the war in December 1941. Until then, U-boats had attacked only British ships. Now they also attacked American shipping on the US east coast, in the Caribbean and then in the Gulf of Mexico, sinking more than 200 ships before the US Navy began its own convoy system. Checked by the convoys, the U-boats moved for a while into the South Atlantic, attacking ships off the African coast taking goods to Britain from the Far East.

As the Battle of the Atlantic went on into 1943, the American and British Allies benefited from new inventions which helped them to find and destroy U-boats. For example, High Frequency Direction Finding (known as Huff Duff) could detect even very short radio signals from a surfaced U-boat, allowing convoys to be directed away from the area. Of special help to the Allies was the discovery of an 'Enigma' coding machine on board a captured U-boat. This allowed British intelligence workers to decipher the secret *Ultra* codes which the Germans used for sending orders to the U-boats.

Despite new weapons and inventions, the Allies were losing the Battle of the Atlantic by early 1943. Their worst losses came in March 1943 when forty U-boats attacked two Allied convoys in the 'Black Gap', an area in the central Atlantic beyond the range of aircraft cover. Out of ninety-two ships in the convoys, twenty-one were sunk for the loss of only one U-boat.

Encouraged by their success the Germans massed sixty U-boats for an attack on a slow convoy in May 1943. This time, however, the Allies were better



A German cartoon of 1941 commenting on the likely outcome of the Battle of the Atlantic

prepared. Using a combination of new, fast escort boats, radar, Huff Duff, and long-range aircraft, they sank seven U-boats for the loss of twelve ships in the convoy. In all of that month, the Allies destroyed forty-one U-boats.

Although the U-boats continued to hunt Allied convoys for the rest of the war, the May 1943 sinkings were a turning point in the Battle of the Atlantic. The Germans had failed to cut Britain's supply lifelines across the ocean. With American aid, Britain would be able to continue fighting for as long as it took to defeat Germany.

Work section

A. Study the cartoon above, then answer the following questions:

1. What do each of the following represent:
(a) the white cliffs in the background, (b) the sinking boat, (c) the lion holding the boat, (d) the captain of the boat, (e) the sharks?
2. What are the sharks doing to the lion? What does this represent?
3. Explain the point you think the German cartoonist was trying to make.
4. Judging by what you have read in this chapter, do you think the cartoonist was accurate in his assessment of the situation? Explain your answer.

B. Check your understanding on the words and terms used in Part Two of this book by explaining what each of the following mean: Nazi-Soviet Pact, Operation Barbarossa, scorched-earth policy, neutrality, Lend-Lease act, Tripartite Axis Pact, United Nations, global war, U-boats, convoys, Battle of the Atlantic.

Revision guide

Before going any further, you may find it helpful to make notes on what you have read in Part Two of this book. If so, these headings and sub-headings show the main points that should be noted.

A. Germany invades the USSR, 1941

1. Why Germany invaded the USSR
2. Operation Barbarossa
3. The 'scorched earth' policy
4. How the USSR avoided defeat
 - (a) The evacuation of industry
 - (b) Winter weather
 - (c) Aid from the United States
 - (d) The fighting spirit of the Soviet people.

B. War spreads to the Far East, 1941–42

1. The background:
 - (a) US neutrality in the 1930s
 - (b) Japanese expansion in the 1930s

2. The end of US neutrality

- (a) Cash and Carry aid
 - (b) Lend-Lease aid
 - (c) The US bans oil supplies to Japan
3. The attack on Pearl Harbor
 4. Declarations of war in December 1941
 5. Japan's conquest of Asia, 1941–42

C. The war at sea

1. Surface battles
2. The menace of the U-boats
3. The Battle of the Atlantic
4. How the British survived the Battle

Revision exercise

Study this cartoon carefully. Then, using Chapters 4 to 7 of this book for information, answer the questions beneath.

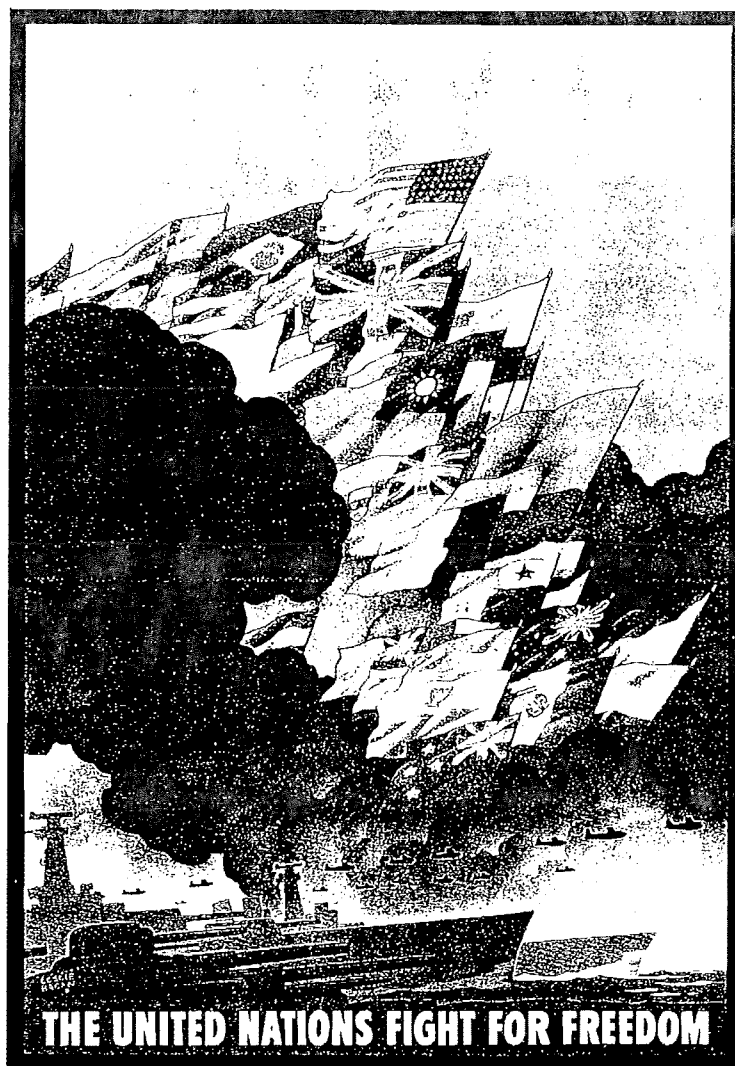


*December 1941. All's well.
A British cartoon from the Daily
Express at the end of 1941.*

1. Describe briefly the events of 1941 portrayed in the parts of the globe marked (a) Libya, (b) Russia, (c) Atlantic, (d) Pacific.
2. What does the man holding a machine gun represent?
3. What message do you think the cartoonist was trying to put across?
4. Why might people in (a) the Soviet Union, and (b) the United States have disagreed with the message of the cartoon?

THREE

THE GLOBAL WAR, 1942–45



An Allied poster of 1942 shows who was who in the newly-created United Nations

At the start of 1942 twenty-six countries formed an alliance called The United Nations to fight against the Axis – Germany, Italy and Japan. As you can see from the flags in the poster above, the alliance included countries from every part of the world, large and small, rich and poor. Many more were to join later. With such a combination of forces, they seemed certain to win.

The United Nations were not, in fact, as united as their name suggested. They agreed on only one major issue – the need to defeat the Axis as quickly as possible. On the question of how exactly to do so, there was disagreement. Stalin, leader of the Soviet Union, wanted his new Allies to open a ‘second front’ in Europe – in other words, to attack Germany in

western Europe so as to take the pressure off the Soviet army fighting in the east. The Americans and British, however, were not ready in 1942 to invade Europe. They put their efforts instead into fighting the Axis in North Africa and the Far East, and into bombing Germany and Italy from the air. This angered Stalin, who suspected that his Allies wanted the Soviets to do all the fighting.

Despite their disagreements, the Allies of the United Nations won several important victories in 1942. Nevertheless, the year ended as it began, with the Axis in control of much of Europe, South-East Asia and the Pacific. As Part Three of this book shows, it would take until the middle of 1945 to defeat them all.



1942: YEAR OF UNCERTAINTY

The War in Europe

After being forced out of Europe in 1940 (see Chapter 2) the British could only make war on German forces in Europe by bombing them from the air. Similarly, after the failure of their invasion plans, the Germans' only way of attacking the British Isles was to bomb them.

From 1940–42 the British and Germans bombed each other's factories, ports and railways, trying to cripple their war industries and transport. These 'precision' bombing raids did not achieve their aim. Most bombs missed. Factories that were hit were soon rebuilt. Railways and ports were quickly repaired.

In February 1942, therefore, the British Royal Air Force changed from precision bombing to **area bombing**. Devised by Air Chief Marshal Arthur Harris, 'area bombing' was intended to flatten everything in a target area – not just industry but peoples' homes, their power and water supplies, their transport systems, their postal, telephone and civic services. The aim was to destroy their will to fight.

From 1942 onwards British aircraft dropped bombs on built-up and densely populated areas without trying to pinpoint targets. The effects of the method were shown in May 1942 when 1000 aircraft attacked the German city of Cologne. In this 'thousand bomber raid', the first of its kind, 2.5 km² of Cologne were set on fire, 250 factories were damaged or destroyed, and 45,000 people were made homeless.

For the time being, area bombing was the only kind of attack the British could make on German-occupied Europe. The cost of doing anything else was shown in August 1942 when a Canadian–British force tried to seize the French port of Dieppe. Six thousand men took part in the **Dieppe Raid** but they captured none of the German strongpoints there. In all, 4384 of them were killed, wounded or taken prisoner, while 34 ships, 24 tanks and 106 aircraft were destroyed. The Germans lost 600 men.

The War in Africa

1942 began badly for the British in Africa. Axis forces led by General Rommel drove the British Eighth Army out of Libya, right back to El Alamein in July. Malta, Britain's key Mediterranean base, was meanwhile being pulverised by German bombers and starved by U-boat attacks on supply ships.

Rommel's army, however, used up all its supplies on the way to El Alamein. Without fuel, food and ammunition they could go no further. This allowed the British to re-organise their forces. A new

commander, General Montgomery, took charge of the Eighth Army, and an Allied invasion of French North Africa, known as Operation Torch, was organised to attack Rommel's army from behind.

Montgomery spent the summer of 1942 strengthening the Eighth Army for an attack on Rommel's forces. By October he had 230,000 men against Rommel's 80,000, and 1440 tanks against the Germans' 540. In the two week **Battle of El Alamein**, lasting until 4 November, Montgomery's forces overwhelmed Rommel's, taking 30,000 prisoners and chasing the rest back into the middle of Libya by the end of the year.

Four days after Montgomery's victory at El Alamein, **Operation Torch** began. Three British–American armies invaded the French colonies of Morocco and Algeria. French forces loyal to the Vichy government (see page 5) fought the invaders for a day until their commander, Admiral Darlan, ordered a cease-fire and began to negotiate with the Allies.

The Germans reacted with lightning speed. German troops arrived in Tunisia within a day and stopped the Allies from attacking Rommel's army. German forces also entered the unoccupied part of France, bringing an end to the Vichy government. There was actually no need for the Germans to hurry, for Operation Torch quickly fizzled out. The Allied soldiers lacked experience, they were short of supplies, and torrential rain bogged their vehicles down. 1942 ended with the Germans strengthening their defences in North Africa, and the Allies at a standstill.

The War in the Soviet Union

At the start of 1942 both the German and Soviet armies planned major attacks on each other. The Soviet Red Army struck first, aiming to relieve the besieged cities of Leningrad and Sevastopol, and to recapture Kharkov. All three attacks failed and 250,000 Soviet troops were taken prisoner.

Following this victory, the Germans advanced towards the Caucasus region to capture the oil-fields there. A possible threat to their advance was **Stalingrad**, a major city and communications centre on the River Volga, so Hitler sent half the German forces to capture it. This was a fatal decision. Stalingrad was a huge city, spread out some 30 km along the Volga, so the Germans could not surround or besiege it. The only way of capturing the city was a direct assault.

For the next three months, Germans and Soviets fought a desperate battle for Stalingrad. In the centre of the city the Red Army contested each street, each building and sometimes each room. By November



Australian soldiers cross a bamboo bridge during the invasion of New Guinea, 1942–43

the city was a wilderness of blasted stone and twisted metal, but still the Germans could not take it. Meanwhile, Soviet forces broke through the German lines north and south of Stalingrad, trapping 278,000 Germans inside the city. For the first time since their country had been over-run in 1941, the Soviet Red Army was on the brink of winning a major victory.

The War in the Far East

You found out in Chapter 6 that the Japanese conquered much of South-East Asia and the Pacific during the six months which followed their attack on Pearl Harbor. By May 1942 their grip on the region seemed unbreakable.

In fact, the Japanese stranglehold was soon broken. In May 1942 they sent an invasion fleet to seize Port Moresby, New Guinea, to use as a base for bombing Australia. American ships caught up with it and, in the **Battle of the Coral Sea**, sank or damaged all three Japanese aircraft carriers. Only weeks later, in June 1942, when the Japanese attempted to destroy the US Pacific Fleet at Midway Island, the Americans again inflicted a defeat on Japan. In the **Battle of Midway**, four Japanese carriers were sunk, 296 aircraft shot down and 3500 men killed. The Americans, with the loss of only one carrier, had thus severely damaged Japanese naval power.

Now that they had checked Japan's expansion, the

Americans divided the Pacific into three areas of command (see map on page 28). Admiral Nimitz, commanding the central area, aimed to take back the Pacific Islands and then strike at Japan itself. He began, in August 1942, with an attack on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. The Americans quickly captured the airstrip but had to fight hard to keep it when the Japanese sent reinforcements to the island. The **Battle of Guadalcanal** raged for the next six months, with both sides pouring men and equipment into the struggle. By the end of 1942 it was clear that the Americans would face great difficulty in driving the Japanese off the Pacific Islands.

General MacArthur, commanding the South-West Pacific forces, faced similar problems when he tried to drive the Japanese out of New Guinea. A joint US–Australian force managed to push the Japanese back through the New Guinea mountains and fought a major battle with them at Buna. They only succeeded in taking Buna after vicious fighting which killed 8500 Allied troops and 7000 Japanese.

1942 thus ended in the Far East with Japan's expansion halted, but with the future holding the prospect of vicious and costly fighting if Japan was to be defeated.



The sole survivor of an immobilised German tank surrenders to British guardsmen during the Battle of El Alamein in October 1942

Work section

- A. Check that you have understood the following terms used in this chapter by explaining in your own words what they mean: second front, area bombing, the Allies, Operation Torch.
- B. Study the photographs above. Indicate by what you have read in this chapter, describe how the conditions in which these soldiers fought were (a) similar to, and (b) different from each other.

THE TURNING POINTS OF 1943



A. An American cartoon drawn at the start of 1943 predicts Allied attacks on Hitler in the coming year

In January 1943 President Roosevelt of the USA and Prime Minister Churchill of Britain met at Casablanca in Morocco to discuss what the Allies should do next in the war. Stalin, though invited, did not attend due to the heavy fighting in the Soviet Union.

At the **Casablanca Conference**, Roosevelt and Churchill announced that their aim was to force Germany, Italy and Japan into unconditional surrender. They hoped, by saying this, to reassure Stalin that they would not make a separate peace with Germany, leaving the Soviet Union to fight Germany alone. They did not, however, agree to do what Stalin really wanted – to open a second front in Europe. Instead they decided to continue with Operation Torch until they had driven all Axis forces out of North Africa. Then they would invade Europe via Sicily and Italy.

Stalingrad

While Roosevelt and Churchill talked in the sun at Casablanca, the German Sixth Army was fighting for survival in the frozen ruins of Stalingrad. Surrounded in the city, short of ammunition and with food fast running out, the Germans had strict orders from Hitler to fight to the last man.

Early in January 1943 the German commander in

Stalingrad, von Paulus, told Hitler that cold, hunger and disease made it impossible for his men to continue fighting. To Hitler's fury, Paulus surrendered on 31 January along with 24 generals and 91,000 soldiers. As they marched off into captivity they left behind 150,000 of their comrades dead in the ruins.

Stalingrad was a turning point in the war. For the first time since 1939 a German army in Europe had been beaten. Hitler had to give up his plans to occupy the Caucasus. The whole German position in the Soviet Union had been badly weakened.

Allied victory in North Africa

As you have read, Operation Torch came to a halt at the end of 1942. This gave Rommel a chance to re-group the Axis forces. So, when Torch started again in February, the Allies had to fight hard to drive them back into Tunisia. It was not until May that the Allies forced them to surrender, taking 130,000 German and Italian soldiers prisoner.

After three years of fighting in the desert, the Allies now controlled North Africa and the Mediterranean. However, it was too late in the year to transfer the victorious armies to Europe to open a second front there. Instead, in July 1943, they invaded Sicily. Half-a-million men landed on the island, ready for an assault on the Italian mainland.

The invasion of Sicily led to the downfall of Mussolini, dictator of Italy and co-founder of the Axis. The Italian economy was already close to collapse, with key war factories crippled by strikes. Most Italians were sick of the war in which their armed forces had won hardly a single victory. On 25 July Mussolini was forced to resign and was replaced by General Badoglio.

The Allies hoped to occupy Italy without a fight, for Badoglio signed a cease-fire with them and declared war on Germany. But by the time the Allies invaded Italy on 3 September, Hitler had sent German troops into Italy to resist them. Faced with skilful German defenders in mountainous country, the Allies advanced slowly. By the end of 1943 they had been halted at the Germans' **Gustav Line** of defence, more than 100 km from the capital, Rome.

Bomber offensive

In northern Europe, British bombers continued to pound German cities in 'area bombing' raids. For the first half of 1943 they concentrated their raids on the industrial cities of the Ruhr Valley. At the end of July they turned their attention to the city of Hamburg, dropping 165,000 bombs on it between

24 July and 3 August. The bombs created a 'fire-storm' in which super-heated winds of hurricane force tore up trees, bowled cars over, set streets on fire and incinerated people hiding in air-raid shelters. A survivor, Anne-Lies Schmidt, described the horror of the fire-storm to a British historian in 1979:

3. 'Four-storey-high blocks of flats were like glowing mounds of stone right down to the basement. Everything seemed to have melted Women and children were so charred as to be unrecognisable. The smallest children lay like fried eels on the pavement. Even in death, they showed signs of how they must have suffered – their hands and arms stretched out as if to protect themselves from the pitiless heat.'

In addition to killing 50,000 people the bombs sent a million people fleeing from Hamburg as refugees.

The Germans bombed Britain's ports and cities in 1943, but they did not have enough bombers to do this sort of damage. During 1943 they dropped 2320 tonnes of bombs on Britain, while the RAF and the United States Air Force dropped a hundred times more than that – a total of 207,000 tonnes.

Turning point at Kursk

In spite of the Sixth Army's defeat at Stalingrad the rest of the German forces in Russia stood their ground. In summer 1943 they prepared another great assault on the Red Army. The Soviets, however, knew from their spies that the attack would be on the area around Kursk. They were thus able to prepare strong defences, with guns, tanks and minefields.

The **Battle of Kursk** began on 5 July. Two million men, 30,000 guns and 6000 tanks faced each other on the dusty steppe. In a mighty, week-long struggle, the Red Army prevented the Germans from advancing more than 30 km. On 12 July, 850 Soviet tanks counter-attacked in the greatest and most savage tank battle of the war. More than 300 German tanks were destroyed before Hitler called off the assault.

The Battle of Kursk was another turning point in the war, for the Germans lost so many men and tanks that they could never again mount an offensive on the eastern front. From then on, the Soviets were able to make continuous attacks against the Germans, slowly but steadily driving them back to the frontier. The tide had started to turn against Germany.



Work section

Study the cartoon opposite. Then use the information in this chapter to answer these questions.

1. Explain the point you think the cartoonist was trying to make.
2. Why might people at the start of 1943 have thought the prediction was unlikely to come true? In what ways had the cartoonist's prediction come true by the end of 1943?

10

TOTAL WAR

The Second World War became a total war. This means that it involved not only the armed forces of the countries at war but also their civilians.

Displaced people

The war forced countless millions of people to leave their homes. Often they left in terror, fleeing to save their lives. In China, according to a British journalist, after the Japanese invasion in 1937,

A. 'Acres of houses have been laid waste as a result of aerial bombing . . . Smouldering ruins and deserted streets presented an eerie spectacle, the only living creatures being dogs unnaturally fattened by feasting on corpses. In the whole of Sunkiang, which should contain a densely packed population of approximately 100,000, I saw only five Chinese.

Millions left their homes under compulsion. In German-occupied Europe, over 5 million people were taken to do forced labour in Germany. Working for long hours in bad conditions, many died in slavery. In the Volga region of the USSR, 400,000 people of German descent were sent in 1941 to live in distant Siberia, in case they tried to help the invading Germans. And, as you have read, around 10 million Soviet workers were taken with their factories to areas of the country beyond reach of the Germans.

B. *French refugees fleeing from the advancing Germans in June 1940*



Concentration camps

Millions of the people forced from their homes were imprisoned in concentration camps run by Germans. The conditions in which they lived and died can be glimpsed in this report by an American army lawyer in 1945:

C. 'Flossenburg concentration camp can be described as a factory dealing in death. Although this camp had the primary object of . . . slave labour, another of its primary objects was the elimination of human lives . . . Hunger and starvation rations, sadism, inadequate clothing, medical neglect, disease, beatings, hangings, freezing, forced suicides, shooting, etc. all played a major role in obtaining their object. Prisoners were murdered at random; spite killings against Jews were common, injections of poison and shooting in the neck were everyday occurrences; epidemics of spotted fever and typhus were permitted to run rampant as a means of eliminating prisoners; life in this camp meant nothing.'

The 'Final Solution'

Most prisoners in concentration camps were Jews. Hitler and the German Nazis had started to persecute Jews as soon as they took power in 1933. Jews were

bullied, stripped of their rights, forced out of work, and many thousands were imprisoned.

After the German occupation of Poland in 1939, 3 million Polish Jews came under Nazi rule. The Germans forced many of them to live in **ghettoes** – that is, walled off areas of towns which they were not allowed to leave. The worst of the ghettoes was in Warsaw where half-a-million Jews were walled into a small area of the city and kept on starvation rations.

In 1942 the Nazis began what they called ‘the final solution of the Jewish question in Europe’. This meant the extermination of all Jews in Europe by murdering them. To carry out the mass murder of the Jews, five concentration camps in Poland were equipped with gas chambers in which thousands at a time were killed with poison gas.

Between 1942 and 1945 more than 5 million people from all parts of Europe were murdered in the extermination camps in Poland. In addition, Special Action Squads of soldiers toured the areas of the USSR occupied by Germany and killed a million Soviet Jews in mass shootings and gassings.

Partisans and Resistance

In all occupied countries, civilians formed armed bands to resist the invaders. In Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union they were known as **Partisans**, in France and the Low Countries as the **Resistance**.

Both Partisans and the Resistance fought a guerilla war against the Axis. They blew up railways, roads and the telephone lines that ran along them. They ambushed convoys, set supply dumps on fire and killed soldiers. In Yugoslavia the activities of the Partisans forced Germany to keep an occupation army of 140,000 troops in the country.

The Germans fought the Partisans with great cruelty. Hermann Goering, one of the Nazi leaders, described in 1942 how they dealt with Partisans:

- D. To begin with, the entire livestock and all foodstuffs are taken away from the areas concerned, so as to deny the Partisans all sources of food. Men and women are taken away to labour camps, children to children’s camps, and the villages burnt down.

In addition, the Germans often carried out reprisals against villages which they suspected of Partisan

activity. This usually involved the taking and killing of hostages. For example, when Czechs killed a leading Nazi, Heydrich, in 1942, the Germans shot all the men in the Czech village of Lidice, put the women in concentration camps, sent the children to Germany, and razed the village to the ground.

Total war in unoccupied lands

Civilians in unoccupied countries escaped many of the horrors of total war, though not all. As you have read, millions of British and German civilians risked death or mutilation from the bombs which their air forces dropped on each other’s cities.

Even in lands beyond the reach of the bombers – the United States, for example – people’s lives were changed by the economic demands of war. With millions of men leaving their jobs to fight in the armed forces, most unemployed people found work. The Great Depression of the 1930s vanished as American, Canadian, British, and other Allied industries expanded to provide the goods and weapons of war. By 1943 these countries had achieved full employment of their labour forces.



E. In most countries the war gave women new kinds of work. Here, Soviet women assemble bombs in a factory in the Urals in 1942

Work section

- A. Check your understanding of the words and terms in this chapter by explaining what each of the following mean: total war, forced labour, concentration camp, the final solution, ghettoes, extermination camps, partisans, guerilla warfare.
- B. Use sources A to E in this chapter to explain how each of the following might have been affected by the war:
1. A Chinese family in Sinking in 1938
 2. A French family in North-Eastern France in 1940
 3. A Soviet aircraft factory worker in 1941
 4. A Jewish person in Warsaw in Germany in 1942
 5. The son of a captured Yugoslav partisan in 1943

GERMANY IN RETREAT, 1944

Retreat in Italy

In January 1944 the Allies attacked the Gustav Line, the German defence zone that halted their advance into Italy in 1943. The only way through it was blocked by **Monte Cassino**, a mountain with a monastery on its summit. The Allies bombed the monastery into rubble but could not drive out its German defenders. Another Allied force landed at **Anzio** to attack the Gustav Line from behind but German reinforcements soon arrived and stopped them from advancing.

It was not until May 1944 that the Allies captured Monte Cassino and broke through the Gustav Line. Even this did not lead to victory, for the Germans retreated to a second defence zone, the Gothic Line. The Allies tried to smash their way through this in the autumn of 1944 but bad weather and fierce German resistance kept them back until April 1945.

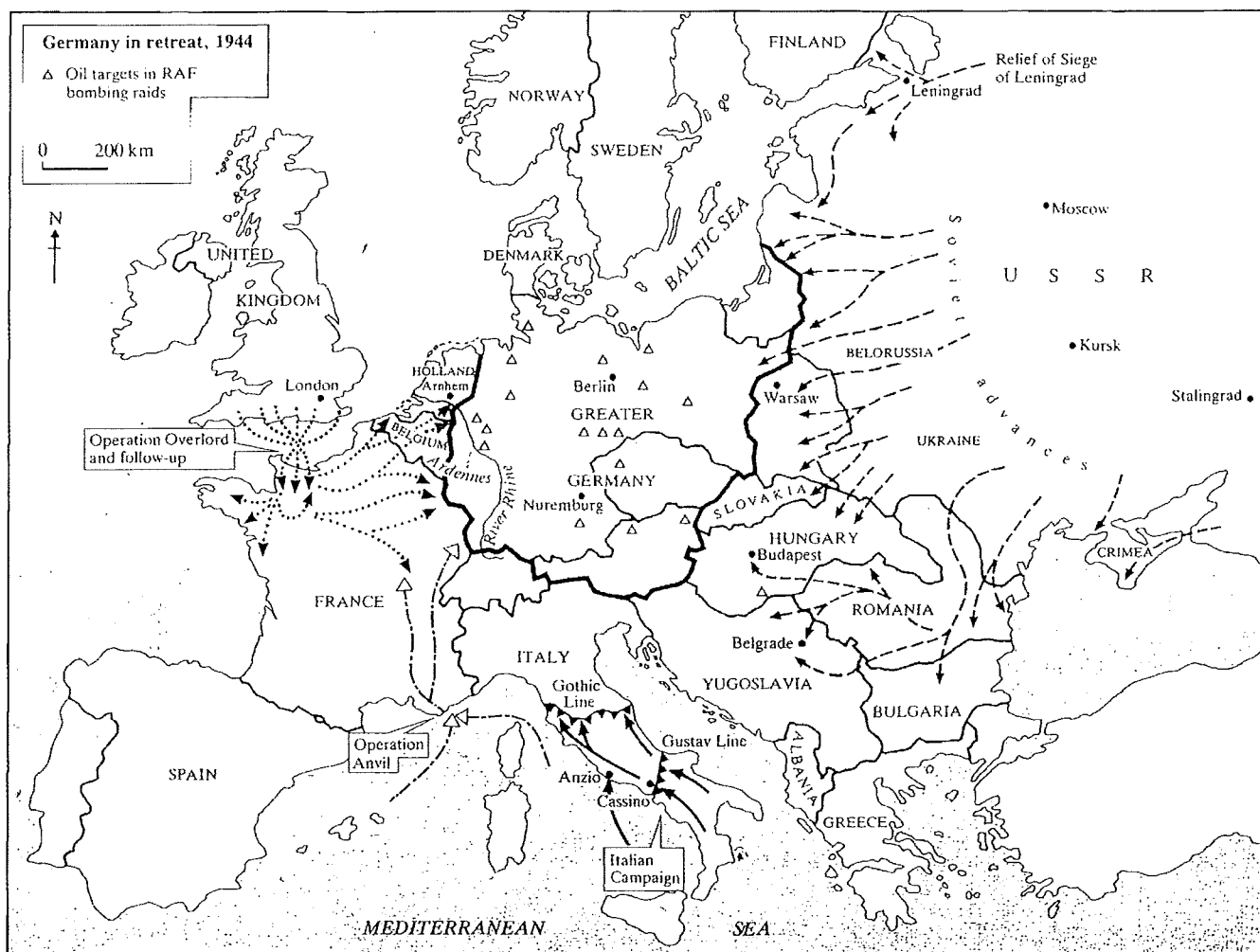
The Italian campaign thus seemed a costly mis-

take. One thing could be said in its favour, however; it tied down German troops needed to defend Germany against an even greater Allied invasion – **Operation Overlord**, in June 1944.

Second front in France

Operation Overlord aimed to transport an Allied army from England to France and thus open a 'second front' in Europe. It was a difficult and ambitious operation, involving a cross-Channel invasion of the heavily-defended French coastline.

Operation Overlord took place on 6 June 1944, code-named **D-Day**. An assault force of 4000 ships and landing craft carried 176,000 soldiers and their equipment across the Channel. They were escorted by 600 warships and protected in the air by 2500 bombers and 7000 fighter planes. Supported by a bombardment of the German defences, they landed on five beaches in Normandy. After fierce battles they broke through the coast defences and advanced inland.



Between June and December 2.1 million Allied soldiers poured into northern France. An invasion of southern France in August, **Operation Anvil**, opened yet another front. By September the Allies had driven the Germans out of France.

The air war continues

Despite this Hitler refused to admit defeat. The German army was ordered not to retreat or surrender and a new bombing offensive was launched against Britain, using V-1 aircraft. The V-1 was a small, pilotless plane carrying a tonne of high explosive, fired from launching ramps in France and the Low Countries. In September Londoners were also hit by V-2 rockets, each carrying four tonnes of high explosive. From August 1944 to May 1945, 5823 V-1s and 1054 V-2s fell on South-East England, killing nearly 900 civilians and injuring 35,000.

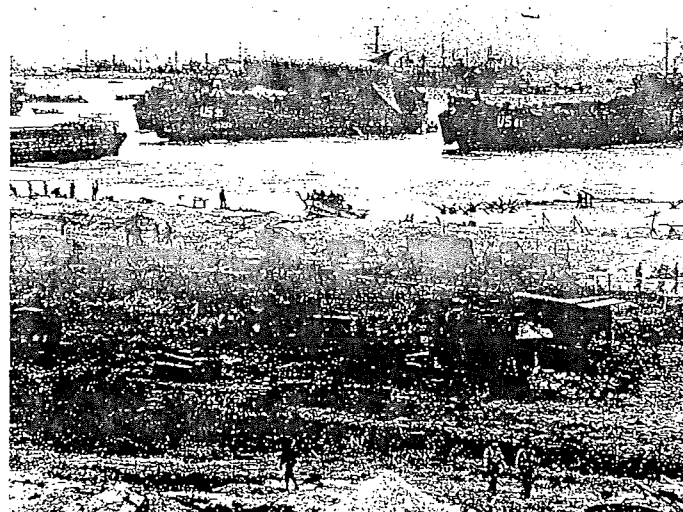
The Allies also increased their bombing attacks on Germany in 1944. Protected by new, long-range fighters, they were able to hit targets in Germany which had so far been out of their reach. Both the RAF and USAF lost many planes in these raids. In a series of attacks on Berlin at the start of 1944, 1077 RAF bombers were shot down by German night fighters.

Gradually, the Allies won control of the skies over Germany during 1944. By bombing the German oil industry from May onwards, they crippled the fuel supplies of the German armed forces. In June they destroyed many railways in France and Belgium, making it difficult for the Germans to fight the Allied invasion of Normandy. From September onwards they were regularly making 'thousand bomber raids' on German cities and oil installations.

Battle of the Bulge

Meanwhile, the Allied armies in France prepared to invade Germany itself. General Montgomery tried to cross the River Rhine by using parachute troops to attack Arnhem in Holland but the Germans beat them back with heavy losses. As a result, General Eisenhower ordered a slower advance towards the Rhine.

This gave the Germans a chance to strike back. In December 1944 they launched a major offensive through the weakly defended Ardennes mountains, driving the Allies back into a bulge shaped area of Belgium. In the six-week **Battle of the Bulge** which



American troops landing in Normandy on D-Day, 6 June 1944

followed, the Allies halted the Germans and drove them back to their starting point. Germany lost 120,000 men, 600 tanks and 1600 aircraft. Losses of this size meant that Germany no longer had the strength to attack in the west, only to defend.

The War in the Soviet Union

1944 also saw Germany retreat from the Soviet Union. In January Soviet forces drove them from the Baltic area, ending the 890-day siege of Leningrad which had killed nearly a million people through starvation, bombardment and artillery fire. In the south, the Red Army drove the Germans out of the Ukraine and the Crimea, back into Romania.

The main Soviet attack took place in June, to coincide with the Allied attack on France. Three Soviet armies overwhelmed the Germans in Belorussia, taking 200,000 prisoners. Within six weeks they had pushed the Germans back to Warsaw, capital of Poland.

From August to the end of the year, Soviet forces advanced into the Balkans. Faced with defeat, Romania and Bulgaria deserted Germany and joined the Allies. Advancing into Yugoslavia, the Soviets liberated Belgrade in October. In November they entered Greece and by Christmas had encircled Budapest, capital of Hungary. 1944 thus ended with the Soviets poised to strike at Germany itself.

Work section

A. Look back to Chapters 3 and 4, then answer these questions:

1. What events in 1940 and 1942 showed that a cross-Channel invasion was difficult?
2. What difficulties did those events reveal?
3. What other problems involved in a cross-Channel invasion can be seen in the photograph above?
4. Judging by the scene in the photograph, how did the Allies overcome those difficulties?

B. Compare the map opposite with the map on page 22.

1. Describe in detail how the war in Europe changed between 1943 and 1944.
2. Which of these changes do you think were most likely to worry the German armed forces?

Examine your answer

JAPAN IN RETREAT, 1943-44

'Victory disease'

As you read in Chapter 7, the Japanese conquered a huge area of South-East Asia and the Pacific in 1941-42. It took them just five months to bring one-sixth of the world's land surface under their control. In speed and scale it was an amazing victory.

Victory brought problems, however. Before long the Japanese themselves were saying that they had 'victory disease' - meaning that they had taken too much for their own good. Now they had to control 350 million Asian people living on thousands of islands separated by 100 million km² of ocean. Already, in 1942, they had suffered two major defeats at sea, in the Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle of Midway, threatening their control of the Pacific.

'Island hopping'

You can see from the map below how the Allies took advantage of Japan's 'victory disease'. In the Pacific, the Americans divided their forces into three areas of command, under Admiral Nimitz, Admiral Halsey and General MacArthur. The three commanders carried out an 'island hopping' campaign, driving the

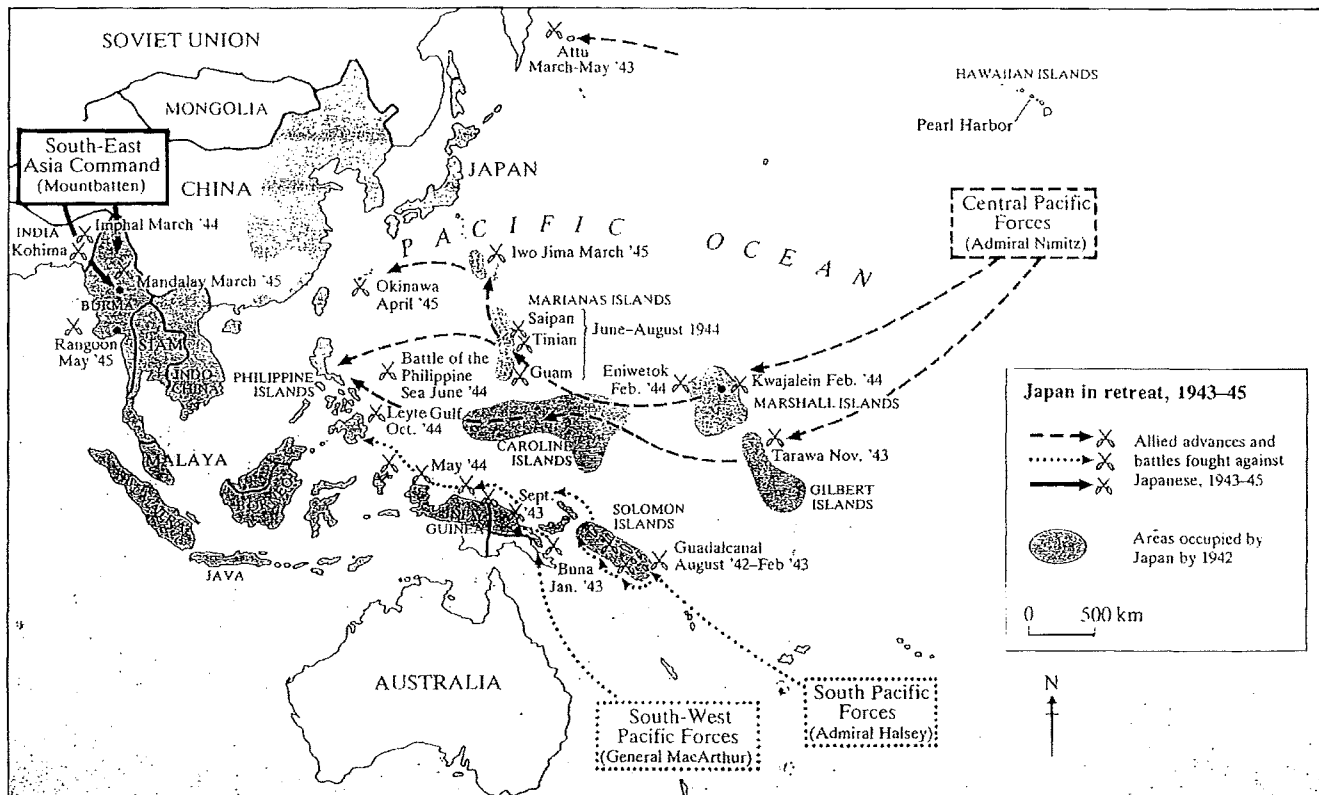
Japanese from each group of islands back towards the Philippines and the Japanese home islands.

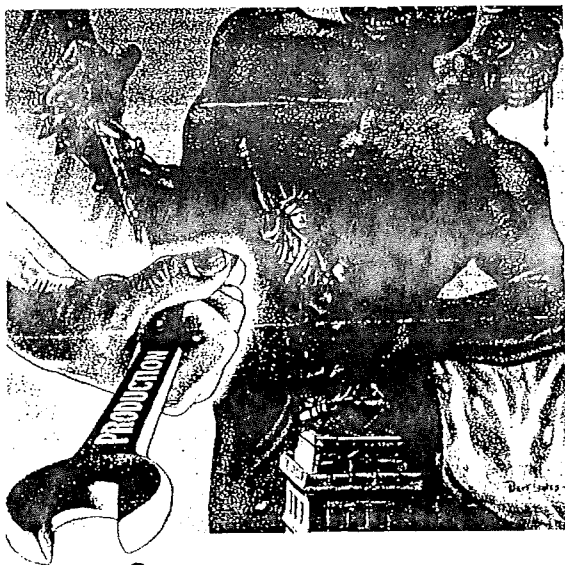
In India, the Allies created the **South-East Asia Command** under Lord Mountbatten. His aim was to drive the Japanese from India, the most valuable part of Britain's empire, back into Burma.

Economies at war

The Allied war against Japan was a desperate and cruel struggle in which millions lost their lives. The two sides, however, were unevenly matched. As you read in Chapter 7, Japan in the 1930s lacked food and raw materials for its fast-growing population; and although their conquests in 1941-42 gave them vast stocks of oil, rubber, metal and other materials, they were never able to produce as many weapons as the Americans. For example, in the whole of the war, Japan made 62,795 aircraft, whereas the USA was making over 100,000 each year by 1943. Japan was able to build twenty new aircraft carriers during the war, whereas the USA had built a hundred by 1944. In guns, bombs, shells, tanks, and every other weapon of war, the United States far out-produced Japan.

The economic gap between the USA and Japan widened as a result of American submarine raids on





Stop this monster that stops at nothing... **PRODUCE** to the limit!

This is YOUR war!

A 1943 American propaganda poster urges workers to fight the Axis monster by producing more war materials.

Japanese shipping. Japan had few anti-submarine vessels and did not use the convoy system to protect its ships until 1944. As a result, US submarines sank huge numbers of merchant ships. Attacking in 'wolf-pack' formations (see Chapter 6), they had sunk 6 million of Japan's 7 million tonnes of shipping by the end of the war. And the rate of the sinkings was so fast that ten times more ships were sunk than newly-built ships could be launched.

The capture of the Marianas Islands in 1944 brought the US Air Force within bombing range of the Japanese home islands for the first time in the war. Flying from the air base on Saipan, US Super-Fortress bombers attacked Tokyo and other Japanese cities from November 1944 onwards. As bombing destroyed factories and homes in the Tokyo-Nagoya-Osaka industrial area, the production of war materials dropped still further.

No surrender

The Japanese made up for their economic disadvantage by fighting the Allies with great bravery. At sea they threw huge numbers of ships and aircraft into battles with the US Navy. In the Battle of the Philippine Sea, for example, 435 Japanese aircraft were sent to attack the American 5th Fleet in June 1944: they only called off the attack after three of their aircraft carriers and 400 planes had been destroyed.

On land, the Japanese army fought with fanatical bravery to defend the islands which they occupied. On Tarawa Atoll, only 17 of the 4700 Japanese defenders were left alive at the end of the US attack on the island. On Eniwetok, not one of the 2000 defenders were left alive at the end of the battle. At Saipan, nearly all the 2700 Japanese were killed, with men, women and children committing suicide by leaping from sea cliffs to avoid capture.

Few Japanese were taken prisoner, for most soldiers, especially officers, thought surrender dishonourable. Many of those who were taken prisoner were only captured because they were too badly wounded to commit *hara-kiri*, suicide by disembowelment. Others fled to remote areas rather than surrender, and stayed there for the rest of the war. On Tinian island, the last soldier to come out of hiding did so in 1960, fifteen years after the war ended.

In the closing stages of the **Battle of Leyte Gulf**, the largest naval battle in history, the Japanese started to use *kamikaze* aircraft against American ships. These were fighter planes filled with high explosive and just enough fuel for a one-way trip to the target. The pilots, who believed that death in battle won them a place in heaven, made suicide dives onto American ships, sacrificing their lives for the certainty of a direct hit.

At the end of 1944, then, the Japanese were in retreat from their newly-won empire, but the Allies were far from winning the war. The more the Japanese were forced to retreat, the more fiercely they fought. It was clear that any attack on Japan itself would lead to even bloodier fighting. That thought was to play a big part in deciding how the Allies continued the war against Japan in 1945.

Work section

A. Study the map opposite, then answer these questions:

1. List (a) the groups of Pacific islands, and (b) the territories in South-East Asia which Japan controlled by 1942.
2. Under the following headings, suggest what difficulties the Japanese faced in keeping control of these territories: (a) language and communication, (b) military defence, (c) trade.
3. In view of these difficulties, do you think it was inevitable that the Japanese had to retreat in 1943-44? Explain your answer.

B. Study the poster above, then answer these questions:

1. Which countries are represented by the two-headed monster?
2. What impression does the artist try to create of these two countries?
3. Explain the meaning of the message 'Produce to the limit! This is your war!'
4. Suggest why propaganda like this was produced for American workers.

DEFEAT OF THE AXIS, 1945

At the start of 1945 both Germany and Japan were fast on the retreat. It was only a matter of time before the advancing Allies defeated them. Time ran out for the Germans in May, and the Allies were able to celebrate 'Victory in Europe'. But in the Far East the war dragged on for nine more months, killing huge numbers of soldiers and civilians, before the Japanese finally surrendered in September.

Victory in Europe

Germany had to fight a war on three fronts in 1945. In the east, the Soviet army attacked in January, advancing 500 km to the River Oder by the end of the month. In the west, Allied forces continued to advance towards the Rhine, crossing the river in March. In Italy, the Allies broke through the Gothic Line in April and advanced into France and Austria.

While the Allied armies squeezed Germany on three sides, their air forces continued to bomb German cities. **Operation Thunderclap** in February 1945 aimed to destroy the Germans' will to fight with a final, gigantic bomber offensive. One of the targets was Dresden, a medieval town that had not been attacked before. On 13–14 February, 805 British and American bombers dropped over half-a-million bombs on the mostly wood-built city. The attack created a fire-storm which destroyed the centre of the city and killed at least 35,000 people.

'Thunderclap' hit Dresden so hard that not enough able-bodied survivors were left to bury the dead.

By April the Allies had destroyed nearly every city in Germany, and they called off the bomber offensive. Since the start of the war the offensive had cost the lives of nearly 160,000 Allied airmen and some 305,000 German civilians. However, it had not cracked the German will to fight, it had not destroyed the German economy and it had not won the war. That was left to the armies on the ground, which now made a final attack on the shattered country.

On 11 April the western Allies reached the River Elbe. On 16 April the Soviets crossed the Oder and advanced to the capital, Berlin, encircling it on the 25th. By now the German armed forces were close to collapse. Old men and boys had to help fight the Soviets as they entered Berlin. Hitler, ill and isolated in a concrete bunker beneath the city, committed suicide on 30 April. The next day, Germany's military leaders began to negotiate peace with the Allies. They surrendered without conditions on 7 May.

The defeat of Japan

In the Far East, the Americans continued to 'island-hop', while the British continued to advance in Burma (see map on page 28). But the closer the Allies got to Japan, the harder the Japanese fought. In their defence of **Luzon**, largest of the Philippine Is-

United States troops pass through a shattered German town in 1945



Revision guide

If you want to continue making notes on what you have read, but are unsure how to organise them, these headings and sub-headings show the main points to be included.

A. 1942: Year of uncertainty

1. The war in Europe
 - (a) 'Area bombing' of Germany
 - (b) The raid on Dieppe
2. The war in Africa
 - (a) Rommel's advance to El Alamein
 - (b) The Battle of El Alamein
 - (c) Operation Torch
3. The war in the Soviet Union
 - (a) The German advance to the Caucasus
 - (b) The Battle of Stalingrad
4. War in the Far East
 - (a) The Battle of the Coral Sea
 - (b) The Battle of Midway
 - (c) The Battle of Guadalcanal
 - (d) MacArthur's advance in New Guinea

B. The turning points of 1943

1. The Casablanca Conference
2. The German defeat at Stalingrad
3. The Allied victory in North Africa
4. The Allied invasion of Italy
5. The Allied bomber offensive
6. The Battle of Kursk

C. Total war

1. The displacement of people
2. Concentration camps
3. The 'Final solution'
4. Partisans and Resistance
5. The war and employment

D. Germany in retreat, 1944

1. The Italian campaign
2. Operation Overlord
3. The V-weapon bombing of London
4. Allied bombing raids on Germany
5. The Battle of the Bulge
6. War in the Soviet Union

E. Japan in retreat, 1943-44

1. 'Victory disease'
2. The 'island hopping' campaign
3. Economies at war
 - (a) US and Japanese output compared
 - (b) Effects of US submarine attacks
 - (c) Effects of US air-raids
4. Japan's determination not to surrender

F. The defeat of the Axis, 1945

1. Victory in Europe
 - (a) Allied advances into Germany
 - (b) Operation Thunderclap
 - (c) The surrender of Germany
2. The defeat of Japan
 - (a) Island hopping continues
 - (b) US air-raids
 - (c) The economic collapse of Japan
 - (d) The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
 - (e) The surrender of Japan

Revision exercise

Compare this photograph with that on page 1, then answer the questions beneath.



A street in Berlin, capital of Germany, in June 1945.

1. List the ways in which Berlin appears to have changed between 1939 and 1945.
2. What other changes, not shown in the photograph, might you have seen in Berlin in 1945?
3. Explain in as much detail as you can how these changes occurred.