World War II Complete: Versailles to 1945

1922
- Mussolini begins fascist movement in Italy
  - Recreate Roman Empire
  - Invade Ethiopia

1931
- Sept: Japan invades Manchuria and creates a puppet government
  - Loss of $100 million in cotton sales to China
- League of Nations falters

1933
- March: becomes chancellor of Germany
- May: Japan quits the League of Nations

1934-36
- Nye Committee investigations
  - to investigate role of weapons manufacturers in decision to enter WW I (70% of Americans believe US involvement in WW I was a mistake)
- America First Committee
  - Charles Lindbergh

1935-38
- Oct: The first Anti-Semitic laws established in Germany
  - Laws
- Hitler announces intention to build a half a million man army (violates Versailles)
- Neutrality Acts authorize the president to block the sale of munitions to belligerent nations
  - Criticism: didn’t differentiate between aggressor nations and victims of aggressors
- Peace movement spreads across US college campuses
  - 500,000

1936-39
- Spanish Civil War: fascist
  - 2,800 American Wobblies and Young Communists join brigades to fight fascist in Spain
    - Were the first fully integrated US troops in war
  - 1937: Spanish village of Guernica used as blitz practice by Nazis with OK from Franco
    - wins four gold medals at Munich Olympics

1937
- Aug: Japan invades
- Oct: FDR calls for international cooperation against aggression

1938
- March: Nazis occupy Austria and Hitler announces Violation of Versailles
- Sept: lets Germany annex Sudetenland Munich Conference: “Peace in our Time” appeases Hitler by handing him Sudetenland
- Nov:
  - Ludlow Amendment: require a national referendum (vote) on declaration of war
  - Narrowly defeated in Congress

1939
- March:
  - Aug: Germany and USSR sign nonaggression pact
  - Sept: ; World War II begins
  - Nov: USSR invades Finland
  - St. Louis turned away from US ports/sent back to Europe

1940
- April-June: Germany’s Blitzkrieg sweeps over Europe
  - Hitler begins
  - US embargoes Japanese scrap metal and aviation fuel
  - Sept:
    - First peacetime military draft in American history
    - Nov: FDR is elected to an unprecedented third term
    - Women make up less than ¼ of the US workforce
    - 9 Million in labor unions across the USA
    - Defense spending= 9% of GDP (9 Billion)

1941
- March:
  - May: German troops secure the Balkans
June: Germany invades USSR
Fair Employment Practices Committee formed
Aug: US and GB agree to the Atlantic Charter

Dec: Japanese attack Pearl Harbor; US enters the war

Gen. Wainwright surrenders US/Filipino forces at Bataan

War Productions Board: directed wartime manufacturing, limited consumer goods
National War Labor Board: set wages and hours/mediated labor disputes to keep production going

Executive Order 8802:

**Major Civil Rights Legislature**

Jan: War mobilization begins
Feb:
Revenue Act expands graduated income tax system
  - raised taxes on upper income levels and levied it for the first time on middle and lower income levels
  - This quadrupled the # of people paying taxes and raised crucial $$ for war effort
May-June:
Battle of Guadalcanal begins US counter offensive in Pacific (6 month battle)
Aug:
  - Gen. Rommell (Desert Fox) takes North Africa for Germany moving toward Suez
  - U-Boats sink over 1,000 allied ships this year in the Atlantic

CORE founded

1943

Jan: Casablanca conference announces unconditional surrender policy

Nimitz and MacArthur “island hop” and “leapfrog” across Pacific Islands putting Japan within reach of bombers
Feb: USSR victory over Germans at Stalingrad - (turning point of European theater) More Soviets killed at Stalingrad than US suffered in entire war
April-May:
Smith-Connally War Labor Disputes Act- authorized Pres. To seize plants or mines if strikes interrupt war production
May:
Summer: Allies open second front by invading Italy Eight months of fighting on Italian peninsula secures Italian surrender (Sept 8)

July: Allied invasion of Italy
FDR, Churchill, and Stalin meet in Tehran
Summer: Race Riots break out in nearly fifty cities

1944

June-Aug:

US forces invade the Philippines
Nov: FDR elected to fourth term
  - Hitler halts Allied drive with a counter-offensive through American lines (70,000 US dead)
Winter: B-29’s able to incinerate Japanese cities

CORE founded

- 4,000 writers, artists and advertisers design war propaganda

- Pentagon opens as headquarters of war planning

- US close enough to mainland to carpet bomb cities

- Firebombing...war crime?
When reflecting on the campaign after the war, some expressed doubts about the morality of the firebombing.

Curtis LeMay later said, “I suppose if I had lost the war, I would have been tried as a war criminal.”

High school enrollment down as 3 million teens employed.

GI Bill of Rights: education for returning veterans.

1945

Women over 1/3 of US workforce (19 million)

14.8 million in labor unions

Defense spending=45% GDP $ 96 billion

Feb: renews American-Soviet alliance

- US needs Soviets for potential Japanese invasion/Stalin uses leverage to make demands

- Agree to formation of a United Nations

March 9-10: US B-29’s drop napalm and magnesium bombs on Tokyo killing 84,000

Feb-June: US captures Iwo Jima & Okinawa

April: FDR dies in office

- become President

April 30: As Soviets approach Berlin from the East, Hitler commits suicide

May: Germany surrenders

July-Aug:

- Diplomatic impasse: no agreement on Germany and war crimes trials

- Truman delivers Potsdam Declaration to Japan: surrender or we will use a new weapon

August 6: 70,000 died

August 14: Japanese surrender VJ Day