

20th Century Europe:

DEMOCRACIES, DICTATORSHIPS & DIVISIONS

1914

START OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Following a long period of increasing tension, the Triple Entente (Britain, France and Russia) are at war with Germany and Austria-Hungary. For the first time in more than a century Europe is engulfed in a conflict which later includes much wider parts of the world.



1918

END OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The armistice came into effect at 11am on 11 November. Although there was widespread relief at the end of the fighting, within Germany the Nazis later accused the German politicians that signed the armistice of 'stabbing the German Army in the back.'



1923

THE MUNICH PUTSCH

In November Hitler's failed attempt to seize power leads to him being put on trial for treason and serving almost nine months in prison.



1938

THE ANSCHLUSS

Many Austrians supported union with Germany and Hitler sent troops into Austria to unite the two countries although this clearly broke a condition of the Treaty of Versailles.



1942

THE FINAL SOLUTION

The Nazis' treatment of the Jews becomes one of systematic extermination in death camps such as Treblinka and Auschwitz, led Himmler - the head of the SS and the Gestapo.



1948

THE BERLIN BLOCKADE AND AIRLIFT

The first major crisis of the Cold War when Stalin ordered the blockade of road and rail routes into West Berlin. Britain and the USA airlifted food, fuel and clothing to West Berliners until the USSR called off the blockade in May 1949.



1961

CONSTRUCTION OF THE BERLIN WALL

The East Germans began to divide East and West Berlin with what was at first a barbed wire border but became a heavily guarded and defended 27 mile long concrete wall separating the city.



1968

THE PRAGUE SPRING

The Prague Spring was a brief period of political liberalization in Czechoslovakia when Dubcek was elected First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and continued until August 1968 when the Soviet Union and other members of the Warsaw Pact invaded to halt his reforms.



1987

GORBACHEV'S 'NEW THINKING'

Gorbachev's radical programme included reforming the Communist Party and ending the arms race.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

THE RISE OF HITLER & THE THIRD REICH

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

THE COLD WAR

1916

THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME

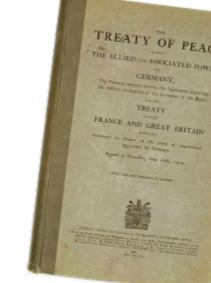
The Battle of the Somme stands out as one of the most controversial battles of the First World War with huge casualties and whether the British government and generals showed extreme incompetence or was the battle vital to the Allies eventual victory?



1919

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

Germany had no say in the peace agreement largely decided by the USA, Britain and France. The Treaty was seen as a 'Diktat' and led to severe economic and political problems in Germany.



1933

HITLER BECOMES CHANCELLOR OF GERMANY

As the largest party in the Reichstag President Hindenburg offered Hitler the position as Chancellor of Germany. By August 1934, Hitler would be Führer of the Third Reich.



1939

START OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Britain and France declare war on Germany following the German invasion of Poland. Historians debate the extent to which Hitler, Stalin and Chamberlain bear responsibility for the outbreak of the conflict.



1945

END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

In May 1945 following Germany's surrender, the war ended in Europe. It was not until August that the war ends in the Far East following the USA's dropping of two atomic bombs on Japan.



1956

THE HUNGARIAN UPRISING

Demonstrations in Budapest demanding free elections, freedom of the press and the withdrawal of Soviet troops led to Khrushchev sending troops and tanks into Hungary. About 7,000 Hungarians were killed.



1963

KENNEDY'S VISIT TO BERLIN

Kennedy toured West Berlin and spoke to a crowd of 200,000 near the Berlin Wall which had become the symbol of the Cold War division of East and West.



1980

SOLIDARITY FORMED

The Polish labour union that was founded on 17 September 1980 at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk under the leadership of Lech Wałęsa.

1989

OPENING OF THE BERLIN WALL

In November 1989 the East German government opened border crossings into West Berlin. Millions of Germans visited friends and relatives in the 'other' Germany for the first time in nearly 30 years.

