

How Japanese Helped Win World War II

Posted on October 10, 2019

Introduction

The Second World War is one of history's most significant events, referring to the global war between 1939 and 1945. [World War II](#) involved the majority of the world's countries, including the superpowers, which were formed into different opposing parties, including the Allies and the Axis. It was the most deadly and global war that involved over 100 million people from more than 30 countries around the globe, which killed 50 to 85 million people (Gilbert).

The tensions that caused the Second World War had begun years earlier, which included the wave of fascism in Italy and the invasion of Japan in China, as well as Japan's conversion towards increasing military. The war brought the world extremely close to "total warfare," which resulted in an average of 27,000 people dying every day in the chaos and violence between September 1939 and the until Japan surrendered in September 1945. Due to the introduction of Western technological development, the war was subject to the use of destructive weapons that were the most deadly in human history.

The war's primary combatants were the two groups of Axis, which included Nazi Germany and its reliable ally, i.e., Imperial Japan, Fascist Italy, and the Allied group of nations, which included Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union. The war included several events that were marked in history as the deadliest incidents, such as the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Holocaust.

Body

Causes of the Second World War

The First World War marked an end in 1918. It was predicted that many events could lead up to a second world war after the first had taken place. These events included the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, which was a brief colonial war that ended in May 1936. The Italian Kingdom aimed to capture the Ethiopian Empire, also known as Abyssinia (Taylor, 102-153). The war was marked to be a display of the weakness of the League of Nations, which was meant to keep peace among the countries. While the League was against Italy's actions to invade Ethiopia, violating Article X, Germany proved to be the only supporter, which convinced Italy to favour them in their invasion of Austria. During this time, fascism had increased in Italy and Germany, which reacted to international communism and the intentions of superpowers to capture the surrounding countries (Gilbert).

Furthermore, the civil war in Spain broke out due to nationalism in the country. This Nationalist

rebellion was backed up by Germany and opposed by the Soviet Union. The proxy war involved 30,000 foreign volunteers, which provided a platform for Germany to test their new advanced weapons and war tactics (Taylor, 102-153). When the Nationalists won the war in April 1939, the Spanish dictatorship favoured Germany and the Axis in the global war.

Japan's invasion of China and militarism ignited the matters and set the foundation for the Second World War (Paul, 13-45). Between 1931 and 1932, the Japanese captured Manchuria from China, and since the Chinese failed to resist the increased military power of Japan, the Japanese controlled Manchukuo as a puppet state. Meanwhile, the Chinese had begun an internal war against the communists in Shensi, and Japan built an active military base in northern China (Eastman). In July 1937, Japan invaded China's former capital, Peking, after initiating the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, which cultivated Japan's agenda to rule the rest of China. Here, the Soviets saw the purpose of interfering and providing material support to China to settle down the threats from Japan (Paul, 13-45). China had to put an end to their cooperation with Germany. The war continued to rage, and the Japanese forces succeeded in capturing major Chinese cities, including Shanghai, Nanking, and Taiyuan. However, by 1938, the Nationalist Chinese won their first war at Taierzhuang (Hoyt, 38-50).

The Second World War was ignited by the intentions of expansionism and militarism. Nations, including Japan, Germany, and Italy, used fascism and focused on strengthening their army forces in order to invade surrounding countries. This gained the attention of the Allies, the Soviet Union and the United States to be involved in the war to defend invasions (Taylor, 102-153).

Developments

On the 1st of September 1939, Germany initiated the war with the invasion of Poland, to which the British reacted with an ultimatum to cease military operations. However, the British Ultimatum was ignored by Germany, which encouraged Britain and France and British Commonwealth countries, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa to declare war on Germany. This created an Alliance between the Western countries. The German forces, on the other hand, responded with the Battle of the Atlantic. Nazi dictatorship in Germany was a major contributor towards the war, as their aim of expansion worsened the matters.

When the war commenced in Europe, The Japanese were still caught up in their war with China despite gaining victory in several battles. Japan's military forces continued their expansion into China and conquered many Chinese territories. This meant that half of the Japanese military was tied down in China, while the Western Allies initiated a war against Germany, which opened the possibilities for Japan's conquest of Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Moreover, Germany's invasion of the Netherlands and France during the summer of 1940 encouraged the Japanese to look at the defeated powers and also at the positions of the British and the United States of America.

Japan's Interests

Japan had the intention of expanding into China since the beginning of the first victory and its increased military strength. However, the island of the archipelago, now Indonesia, and the French and British held nearby regions that contained raw materials such as tin, rubber, and petroleum, which proved to be important to Japan's economy. Hence, Japan saw an incentive to capture the lands as it would provide the opportunity to be self-sufficient, which would make them one of the most powerful nations in the Pacific Ocean (Obstfeld).

Great Britain was occupied with the fight in Europe against the Axis nations; therefore, the Japanese were opposed by the United States for their mission to occupy surrounding nations and become a superpower. Japan first began its strike in northern Indochina in September 1940, to which the United States responded with a protest. They got the attention of Germany and Italy, who recognized Japan as an ally with growing power in the Far East. The three countries signed a pact to play the role of the Axis in the Second World War.

In the summer of 1941, the Imperial Conference declared to press the Japanese move southward even though there was a risk of war with the British and the Americans. The Japanese soon forwarded their forces to the south to capture Indochina for personal gains.

The United States didn't take Japan's actions lightly this time and reacted fiercely by freezing the country's assets and stopping the supplies of oil in order to weaken the country economically. This hit Japan strongly, which led to the country seeking other oil importers. When it failed to satisfy its oil requirements, the Imperial Conference decided to wage war against the United States and Great Britain if an agreement wasn't formed with the Americans (Frey, 468-496).

By November 1941, the U.S. Secretary of State warned the Japanese forces to stop their activities in China and put an end to the war. It was a clear threat to the country, to which they responded with strong opposition. The Japanese couldn't find a way to sign an agreement with the States and create peace; hence, they initiated a war against the United States of America, including Great Britain (Tsurumi, 99-213).

Pearl Harbor

On the 7th of December, 1941, the Japanese attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. This marked the beginning of the conflict between the United States and Japan that changed the course of the Second World War. Since the United States had severely damaged the Japanese economy and development in China, the country responded with sudden strikes on their base, with the first bomb appearing at 7 in the morning over the Harbor. This was the first wave of the 200 aircraft that followed, which involved destructing torpedo planes, fighters, and bombers that completely destroyed the region (Martin, 285-292).

The U.S. base was entirely assaulted in the first 30 minutes of the strike, which damaged the United States battleships. These battleships involved the Arizona and Oklahoma, while the California, Nevada and West Virginia ships sank in the water. This had weakened the forces of the States. It proved to be a crippling moment for the Americans, as their ground was completely shaken by sudden attacks from the unexpected enemy. The damage caused to the States was big enough for them to reciprocate with similar attacks on Japan.

Japanese Surrender and U.S Victory

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States of America had to respond with an even more deadly war waged against the Japanese to put an end to the conflict. America tested their atomic bombs during this time and attacked the Japanese, destroying the cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. This resulted in the country being completely shaken from its foundation and thousands of casualties. Even though Germany had surrendered by May 7, 1945, after the suicide of their leader and dictator, Adolf Hitler, the Japanese continued their war against the Allies nearly four months after its Axis nations had backed off (Tsurumi, 99-213).

Realizing a major defeat from the U.S., the Japanese chose to surrender to the new superpower of global recognition. The war proved to be a rival for the economy of the United States of America, as the country's Gross Domestic Product rose to the highest ever. Moreover, the Soviet Union and the United States became global superpowers after the destruction of Japan with atomic bomb attacks from the U.S. (Martin, 285-292).

After the successful atomic bomb testing in Japan by the United States, the country was forced to come to the terms of surrender by the States and the Soviet Union. Japan fell to the ground, as its military had weakened, and the economy was already suffering due to the damage caused by the embargo on oil. The Japanese were asked to give their plans for expansionism and war crimes, which had led to a disastrous global war. The U.S. promised not to enslave the Japanese economy for their actions.

Conclusion

The Second World War is the most prominent events in history that commenced the creation of the United Nations to avoid further conflicts among countries, the United States of America emerged as a global superpower when its economy flourished and Japanese atomic bombing testing alarmed the nations of the strengths of the States. The surrender of the Japanese after the bombings and the complete destruction of its cities, economy, and military helped the United States gain strong ground and become a superpower country.

Works Cited

Gilbert, Martin, and Bernard Mayes. *The Second World War: A Complete History*. H. Holt, 1989.

Taylor, Alan John Percivale. *Origin Of The Second World War*. Simon and Schuster, 1996. (102-153)

Fussell, Paul. *Wartime: understanding and behavior in the Second World War*. Oxford University Press, USA, 1990. (13-45)

Hoyt, Edwin Palmer. *Pearl Harbor Attack*. Sterling Publishing Company, Inc., 2008. (38-50)

Calvocoressi, Peter, and Guy Wint. "Total war: causes and courses of the Second World War." London: The (1995).

Tsurumi, Kazuko. *Social change and the individual: Japan before and after defeat in World War II*. Princeton University Press, 2015. (99-213)

Obstfeld, Maurice, Kenneth S. Rogoff, and Simon Wren-lewis. *Foundations of international macroeconomics*. Vol. 30. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996.

Gilbert, Martin (2001). "Final Solution". In Dear, Ian; Foot, Richard D. *The Oxford Companion to World War II*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. pp. 285-292

Eastman, Lloyd E. (1986). "Nationalist China during the Sino-Japanese War 1937-1945". In John K. Fairbank and Denis Twitchett, eds., *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 13: Republican China 1912-1949, Part 2*.

Frey, Bruno S., and Marcel Kucher. "History as reflected in capital markets: the case of World War II." *The Journal of Economic History* 60.2 (2000): 468-496.