

UK: THE 20TH CENTURY UNTIL 1945

1. World War One (1914-18)

At the beginning of the 20th century, Europe was divided into two rival camps: the **Triple Alliance** of Germany, Austria and Italy, and the **Triple Entente** between Britain, France and Russia. When the Austrian Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo in 1914, the conflict exploded with the Austrian declaration of war to Serbia, Russia entering the conflict to support Serbia, and Germany to support Austria. When Germany invaded the neutral territory of Belgium, in order to attack France, Britain declared war to Germany in the same year. After the first year, the war stopped to be a war of movement and became a war of trenches and huge numbers of people were killed by machine guns, barbed wire, gas and shells. In 1918, Germany asked for an armistice, and the Peace Treaty was signed in Paris in 1919. The monarchies of Germany, Austria, Russia and the Ottoman Empire fell.

2. World War Two (1939-1945)

With the help of Italy, Germany wanted to gain control of Europe. Thus, in 1939 it invaded Poland, and Britain and France declared war to Germany. In 1940 the Germans attacked and invaded many European countries, included France, and bombed London and other British cities, but unsuccessfully. The situation changed with the landing of the Allies in Normandy. The war ended in 1945, when Germany surrendered, but the loss of lives had been enormous.

USA: THE 20TH CENTURY UNTIL 1945

1. World War One (1914-1918)

The USA entered the conflict in 1917 to support the Allies. President Wilson's Fourteen Points Speech to the Congress in 1918 was taken as a basis for peace negotiations at the end of the war.

2. The Roaring Twenties (1920-29)

Between 1920 and 1929, the USA enjoyed a period of prosperity thanks to improvements in technology, in the arts and entertainment. However, it was also the period of Prohibition because USA Constitution declared alcohol illegal. This led to the proliferation of crime related to illegal methods to transport and sell alcohol. The most important gangster of the period was Al Capone.

3. The Great Depression and the New Deal (1929-1938)

Black Tuesday, 29th October 1929, the day of the Wall Street Crash, changed everything. The crash was due to excessive speculation. In 1932 Franklin D. Roosevelt became president and in 1933 he launched the New Deal with an intensive social-economic reform program. The plan worked in part and, in 1938, 6 million people had a job again.

4. World War Two (1939-1945)

The USA entered the conflict in 1941 after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor's naval base. At the Conference of Casablanca in 1943, Roosevelt, Churchill and De Gaulle decided to force Germany to surrender. The Normandy Invasion began on D-Day, June 6th 1944. In 1945 the concentrations camps were liberated with the help of the Russian Army Japan surrendered after the launch of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Germany soon after.