

The Furious 1940s

Events and Policies

- FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT (1882-1945, in office 1933-1945, 32nd President)
- HARRY S. TRUMAN (1884-1972, in office 1945-1953, 33rd President)
- duration of the Great Depression in the US, its equivalent termed the Economic Crisis in Europe

Outbreak of WWII (1st Sept 1939)

- the Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union invade Poland, the conquered territory it split between the two countries
- the US prepare for a war of defence, do not intend to enter the war because of the ongoing Depression, the WWI experience, and unwillingness to interfere in foreign affairs
- Japan experiences depression, attempts to rebuild the nation to become the richest country, attacks neighbouring countries (British, French, and Dutch colonies in the Pacific)

Attack on Pearl Harbor (7th Dec 1941)

- the US send a fleet to the Pacific to protect Hawaii, Japan attacks the fleet unexpectedly at Pearl Harbor (island Oahu), the Americans suffer huge losses
- described by President Roosevelt in his speech as 'a date which will live in infamy'
- 8th Dec 1941 the US declare war on Japan, then Germany and Italy declare war on the US and vice versa
- battles in Europe were led by General DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, Pacific battles by General DOUGLAS MACARTHUR
- the **Pacific Theatre** of Operations: naval battles, island hopping invasion, Battle of Midway, Battle of Iwo Jima

Invasion of Normandy (6th June 1944)

- the American troops started in Algeria and Morocco to cross to Italy, France, and Spain
- on D-Day in the Operation Overlord the allies liberated French towns and continued to reach Berlin
- German surrendered on 8th May 1945, the V-E Day (Victory in Europe Day)
- the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6th and 9th Aug 1945 respectively, Japan surrendered on 15th Aug 1945, the V-J Day (the Victory over Japan Day)

Yalta Conference (4th to 11th Feb 1945)

- the wartime meeting between the heads of the US, GB, and the USSR, i.e. FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT, WINSTON CHURCHILL, and JOSEPH STALIN
- negotiated the sphere of influence, founded the **United Nations** to replace the original League of Nations founded as a result of the Treaty of Versailles after the WWI
- the US declare the end of isolationism to become the example of democracy, the carrier of the torch of freedom
- the post-war Germany is provisionally divided into British, Russian, American, and French zones
- the US planned a unification of Germany, the Soviets did not want it to be self-sufficient and held the American attempts of unification for an act of aggression

Cold War (1947-1991)

- the US and the USSR were allies during the WWII, their relationship crumbled, became enemies at the end
- had different ideas about the post-war shape of Europe and about capitalism v. communism
- the iron curtain (Winston Churchill's term) divides the supporters of imperialism and supporters of totalitarianism
- the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA, 1947): a civilian intelligence agency gathering political, military, and economic information for security purposes
- **Marshall Plan** (1947): named for the US Secretary of State, GEORGE MARSHALL, the primary plan for the economic reconstruction of Europe, refused by Czechoslovakia, followed by the creation of the Eastern Bloc
- **Truman Doctrine** (1947): named for the US President HARRY S. TRUMAN, a set of principles of US foreign policy which promise support to any nation threatened by the USSR and the communist regime
- **Berlin Blockade** (1948-1949): Stalin refused the Marshall Plan and blocked the Russian section of Berlin, the allies resolved the situation by plane delivery
- **North Atlantic Treaty Organization** (1949): a military alliance, a collective defence system against the USSR
- Warsaw Pact (1955): the reaction of the USSR to the creation of NATO

Society

- home front propaganda: to support the morals, draw soldiers, raise money for warfare, or prevent wasting material
- new workforce: married women could not previously work, now while men are in the war, women must work
- **Rosie the Riveter**: women employed for hard labour, including black women, were called the rosies
- juvenile delinquency: teenagers rise as a new social group produced by the WWII, children grew up alone while fathers were at war and mothers at work, could be independent due to earnings from part-time jobs, rise of gang life
- Relocation Camps: Japanese-American became suspicious, their civil rights were suspended (signed by Roosevelt in 1942), their property was confiscated, were removed from the West Coast to guarded internment camps
- **G.I. Bill**, or, Servicemen's Readjustment Act (1944): provided college or vocational education for homecoming war veterans, important especially for ethnic minorities
- **Levittown**: named for its creator WILLIAM LEWITT, a community town planned in advance, first with only two types of houses available, anticipated today's modern American suburbs, connected to the post-war baby boom

Culture

Music

- propaganda songs, big bands
- emergence of **rhythm and blues** (predecessor of R'n'B): combines jazz, blues, and gospel, mixes white and black music, originally used to refer to any black music
- FRANK SINATRA: a pop and jazz singer
- BING CROSBY: a pop and jazz singer ('White Christmas')
- WYNONIE HARRIS: a blues, rhythm and blues, and rock and roll ('Rocking Tonight')

Film

- the golden era of Hollywood, film industry was used for moral and propagandistic purposes
- romantic comedies with narrow plots and expectable happy endings
- **film noir** with a combination of a detective story and a thriller
- *The Maltese Falcon* (1941): a film noir starring HUMPHREY BOGART, based on the novel by Dashiell Hammett
- *Casablanca* (1942): a romantic film starring Humphrey Bogart and INGRID BERGMAN
- *To Have and Have Not* (1944): a thriller romance starring Humphrey Bogart and LAUREN BACALL, based on the novel by Ernest Hemingway, the script was co-authored by William Faulkner, then also a Hollywood scriptwriter
- *The Big Sleep* (1946): a film noir with Humphrey Bogart as the detective and Lauren Bacall as the femme fatale
- *Gilda* (1946): a black-and-white film noir starring RITA HAYWORTH
- *The Third Man* (1949): a British film noir, based on the novel by Graham Greene
- actors: HUMPHREY BOGART, CARY GRANT, SPENCER TRACY, JAMES STEWART
- actresses: INGRID BERGMAN, RITA HAYWORTH, KATHARINE HEPBURN, BETTY GRABLE, JUDY GARLAND

Literature

- JOSEPH HELLER's *Catch-22* (1961): an anti-war satirical novel, set in the later stages of WWII
- JAMES JONES's *The Thin Red Line* (1962): WWII fiction, set in the Battle of Mount Austen in the Pacific Theatre
- KURT VONNEGUT's *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969): WWII fiction, set in the Battle of the Bulge (1944-1945)