

Name _____ Date _____

World War II

“Would You Drop It?”

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1. b”

Fascism is generally a military dictatorship based on strong nationalist sentiment, racism and the suppression of opposition by using force. Fascists come to power by exploiting patriotism, racism and fear. Benito Mussolini invented the term in 1925 and used it proudly.

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Mussolini installed himself as Italy’s dictator in 1925. He blamed foreigners for Italy’s problems and failed to carry out many of his promises. He also built up Italy’s military, and in 1935, invaded Ethiopia.

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Another famous fascist, Francisco Franco, overthrew the Spanish government in 1936 in the Spanish Civil War. Franco and his fascist rebels won the war largely because of military aid from Germany and Italy.

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Adolf Hitler, also a fascist, took power in 1933 mainly by blaming outsiders for the humiliating position in which Germany found itself after World War I. War reparations, the hyperinflation of 1923 and then the international economic depression all fed the fascist rhetoric of blaming foreigners and Jews.

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2. b''

Notes

Franklin Delano Roosevelt helped get America out of the depression by giving people hope that the country could turn itself around. During this time, America practiced a policy of isolationism, totally uninterested in another European war that seemed looming. In Europe, the leaders of some countries were instilling hope in their populaces by blaming foreigners for their countries' woes. The National Socialist (Nazi) Party of Adolf Hitler was starting its intended take over, but it would take a direct attack on American soil before the United States joined World War II.

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America continued to stay out of the war as Hitler invaded Poland, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands and France. In 1941, with the Axis now in control of most of Europe, German submarines (U-boats) torpedoed two American destroyers, killing more than a hundred Americans. America was then on the brink of joining the war.

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3. b'

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The United States had a naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. It was early in the morning on December 7 when two US Army privates saw something strange on their radar screen: dozens of planes appearing out of the Northeast. The men were alarmed and reported the sighting, but they were told that it was probably just a delivery of new B-17 planes; nothing to worry about.

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What they actually saw was the first wave of 183 Japanese fighter planes. It was a surprise attack on America, and it was amazingly effective: 19 ships were sunk, 292 aircraft destroyed, and 2,403 Americans killed. This was the event needed to catalyze America into joining the war. On December 8, the day after the strike, Congress declared war on Japan. On December 11, Germany and Italy joined Japan and declared war on the United States. The United States was now fighting a war in Europe and a war in the Pacific.

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4. b'

The original concentration camps were built in Germany in 1933 as a place to keep "undesirables." Jews, Catholics, Gypsies, communists, gay people, the mentally and physically disabled, Polish intellectuals and others were shipped to these prison camps to work in slave labor.

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Actual extermination camps were built in 1941. These death camps would contribute to the murder of at least six million Jews and four million gentiles (mostly Polish gentiles and gypsies) during the Holocaust.

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5. b'

The Allies chose to concentrate on Europe before attacking Japan. In 1943 Allied troops invaded Italy and began pushing the Nazi lines back toward Germany.

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On June 6, 1944, D-Day, the Allies launched the largest sea-to-land invasion force in history. In the middle of the night, thousands of boats landed on French beaches and pushed the Germans back into France after days of bloody battles. It would be more than a year before Germany surrendered, though German ranks were then growing thin thanks to Russian forces attacking from the east.

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On April 30, 1945, while Russian bombs fell on Berlin, Hitler descended into a bunker with his mistress, Eva Braun, to get married. He then poisoned her and killed himself. Germany surrendered a week later.

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Harry S. Truman became president on April 12, 1945, after FDR died during his fourth term. The war in Europe was nearly finished, but the war with Japan wasn't over yet. US generals told Truman that an assault on Japan could cost the United States between half a million and a million casualties. However, the Japanese refused to surrender--reports indicated that they were arming civilians with sharpened bamboo spears.

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In 1939 Albert Einstein had told Roosevelt that a new type of bomb could be built-- one that had the destructive power of 20,000 tons of TNT. Roosevelt created the Manhattan Project to build this atomic bomb, and two days after Truman became president, he was told this top-secret information.

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Truman ordered these bombs to be dropped. On August 6, 1945, an American plane dropped the first bomb over Hiroshima, killing more than 70,000 people and injuring just as many. Three days later, America dropped another atomic bomb on Nagasaki, killing 40,000 and injuring 60,000 people. The same day, Russia\xe2\x80\x99s Stalin declared war on Japan and invaded Manchuria. The Japanese surrendered on August 11.

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