Chronology of Selected World Events Outside the United States, 1940–1949

1940

- Max Beckmann paints *Circus Caravan*.
- T.S. Eliot’s long poem *East Coker*, the second part of his *Four Quartets*, is published.
- Graham Greene’s novel *The Power and the Glory* is published.
- Carl Jung’s *Psychology and Religion* is published.
- Arthur Koestler’s novel *Darkness at Noon* is published.
- Igor Stravinsky composes his *Symphony in C Major*.
- Dylan Thomas’s *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog*, a collection of largely autobiographical short stories, is published.
- On January 27, in Rangoon, Burma, a riot breaks out between Hindus and Muslims.
- On February 9, the Irish Supreme Court upholds a law authorizing the internment without trial of suspected members of the Irish Republican Army.
- On February 12, the Dominican Republic announces a contract to resettle one hundred thousand European refugees.
- On February 16, the British destroyer *Cossack* attacks the German ship *Altmark*, liberating some three hundred English prisoners. Norway protests the attack, which violated Norwegian territorial waters.
- On February 18, President José Félix Estigarribia of Paraguay announces he is assuming dictatorial powers.
- On February 21, in the small Polish village of Auschwitz, construction begins on a German concentration camp.
- On February 22, in Tibet, a six-year-old boy is crowned the fourteenth Dalai Lama.
- On February 28, in Egypt, the twenty-eight-hundred-year-old sarcophagus of Pharaoh Psusennes is opened, revealing treasures that rival those found in the tomb of Tutankhamen.
- On March 1, Italian laws restricting the professional practices of Jews go into effect.
- On March 12, defeated in the Soviet-Finnish war, the Finns sign a treaty ceding the Karelian Isthmus and the Rybach Peninsula to the Soviet Union and granting it lease rights to the Hango Peninsula in return for their continued independence.
- On March 18, at a meeting on the Italian side of the Brenner Pass, Benito Mussolini informs Adolf Hitler that Italy will enter the war against Britain and France.
- On March 19, U.S. ambassador to Canada James Cromwell declares in an official address that Hitler is bent on the destruction of American social and economic order.
- On March 20, French premier Edouard Daladier resigns; the next day Paul Reynaud forms a new cabinet and creates a war council in expectation of a German invasion.
- On March 26, the Mexican government announces the expropriation of 1.5 million acres of land held by three American corporations.
- On April 9, Germany invades Denmark and Norway. Belgium refuses to allow the British to move their troops through the Low Countries.
- On April 10, King Haakon VII of Norway repudiates the puppet government of Norwegian Nazi Vidkun Quisling.
Chronology of Selected World Events Outside the United States, 1940–1949

On April 18, in India, the All-India National Congress calls for civil disobedience against British rule.

On May 10, Germany invades Belgium and Holland, beginning its “blitzkrieg” (lightning war) through the Low Countries into France. Neville Chamberlain resigns as British prime minister and is succeeded by Winston Churchill.

On May 13, Churchill announces to the House of Commons, “I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat.”

On May 14, the Dutch army surrenders to Germany. Authorities report that one hundred thousand Dutch troops, more than one-fourth of their army, have been killed in the fighting. The official capitulation papers are signed the next morning.

From May 17 to May 18, German troops take Brussels and Antwerp in Belgium.

On May 20, the German army takes Amiens, France.

On May 26, German troops take Calais.

On May 27, the British begin to evacuate Dunkirk, France. England is left practically disarmed by the defeat, but in the House of Commons on June 4 Churchill declares, “We shall defend our island whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets... we shall never surrender.”

On May 28, King Leopold III of Belgium surrenders his country to the Germans.

On May 30, Reich commissioner Arthur Seyss-Inquart assumes office as civil administrator of the occupied Netherlands.

On June 3, German planes bomb Paris.

On June 7, King Haakon VII and his Norwegian government go into exile in London.

On June 9, an armistice is signed in Norway.

On June 10, Italy declares war on Britain and France. The next day its planes bomb British bases on Malta and in Aden, while the British hit Italian air bases in Libya and Italian East Africa.

On June 11, President Getúlio Vargas of Brazil reasserts his country’s neutrality.

On June 12, the heaviest single Japanese bombing attack on Chungking, China, kills 1,500 people and leaves 150,000 homeless. Between May 18 and August 14, Japanese planes drop 2,500 tons of bombs on the city, killing more than 2,000 civilians and injuring nearly 3,500.

On June 14, the German army enters Paris; Hitler orders a three-day celebration of the victory. The French government relocates to Bordeaux.

On June 15, The Soviet Union occupies the small Baltic nation of Lithuania; two days later it takes over neighboring Estonia and Latvia, demanding that all three countries put themselves under Soviet protection.

On June 16, Italian planes bomb British bases in Egypt.

On June 17, French premier Reynaud resigns and is replaced by World War I hero Marshal Philippe Pétain, who calls for surrender to the Germans.

On June 18, German planes raid the east coast of England. In a radio broadcast from London, Gen. Charles de Gaulle of France calls on his countrymen to rally behind him as he continues to oppose Germany from exile.

On June 22, the French government signs an armistice with the Nazis in the Compiègne Forest, where Germany surrendered to the Allies in World War I. Germany occupies three-fifths of France, leaving the southern portion as a so-called Free Zone. De Gaulle announces the formation of the French National Committee in London to continue fighting alongside the British Empire.

On June 24, France and Italy sign an armistice.

On June 26, Turkey declares itself a nonbelligerent.

On June 28, the Soviet Union occupies Bessarabia and northern Bucovina, in Romania.

On June 30, the Germans occupy the Channel Islands.

On July 2, the French government establishes itself at Vichy. On July 10, it replaces the Third Republic with a new constitution creating an authoritarian government and investing full power on the chief of the French state, Pétain.

On July 6, Hitler makes peace overtures to Britain.

On July 10, German aircraft bomb South Wales.

On July 14, Fulgencio Batista defeats Ramon Grau San Martin for the presidency of Cuba.

On July 16, Hitler issues Directive 16, ordering the invasion of Great Britain. During the Battle of Britain, which lasts from early August to November, the British lose 827 aircraft, but they shoot down 2,409 German planes.

On July 21, the Soviet Union annexes Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.

On July 22, Prince Konoye Fumimaro of Japan forms a new government. At the second Pan-American conference, U.S. secretary of state Cordell Hull proposes a collective trusteeship of state Cordell Hull proposes a collective trusteeship of state Cordell Hull proposes a collective trusteeship of state Cordell Hull proposes a collective trusteeship of state Cordell Hull proposes a collective trusteeship of state Cordell Hull proposes a collective trusteeship of state Cordell Hull proposes a collective trusteeship of state Cordell Hull proposes a collective trusteeship of state Cordell Hull proposes a collective trusteeship of state Cordell Hull proposes a collective trusteeship of state Cordell Hull proposes a collective trusteeship of state

On August 2, Italian troops invade British Somaliland, occupying the capital, Berbera; on August 19 British forces are evacuated.

On August 6, Germany orders the expulsion of all Jews from Kraków, Poland.

On August 15, the Minseito Party, the last remaining political party in Japan, dissolves itself, making the nation an authoritarian state.

On August 17, Germany announces a “total” naval blockade of the British Isles.

On August 20, reflecting on the conduct of the Royal Air Force (RAF) in the Battle of Britain, Churchill declares, “Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.”

On August 24, the first German bombing of London occurs.
On August 25, the RAF bombs Berlin, an event Luftwaffe head Hermann Göring had assured Hitler could never happen.

From September 7 to September 15, the London Blitz, massive German bombardment of London, occurs.

On September 13, Italian troops invade Egypt from Libya.

On September 22, Vichy France accedes to a Japanese ultimatum demanding bases in northern Indochina near the Chinese border.

On September 25, the Germans suspend bombing of London.

On September 8, Italian troops begin retreating from Libya.

On September 7 to September 15, the London Blitz, massive German bombardment of London, occurs.

On November 30, Japan formally recognizes the puppet government of Wang Ching-wei in China.

From November 26 to November 27, the RAF conducts heavy night raids on Cologne.

On November 28, the Free French announce the capture of Murzuk, in southern Libya.

On November 29, the British recapture Murzuk, in southern Libya.

On November 29, the British recapture Somaliland.

On November 14, the English automotive center of Coventry is carpet-bombed by 449 German aircraft. The attack creates a firestorm that kills more than 550 people and destroys the city’s fourteenth-century cathedral.

On November 11, British fighter planes cripple much of the Italian fleet in an engagement at Taranto.

On November 10, Hungary joins the Axis.

From November 23 to November 24, Romania and Slovakia sign the Tripartite Pact with the Axis.

On November 28, German troops move into Romania.

On September 25, after meeting heavy resistance from Vichy French forces, British and Free French forces led by General de Gaulle abandon an invasion of Dakar, in French West Africa.

On September 27, Germany, Italy, and Japan sign the Tripartite Pact in Berlin, committing themselves to providing each other with military assistance in case of attack by any nation not already at war against them.

On October 1, military delegations from several Latin American nations visit Washington, D.C., for consultations.

On October 2, all Jews in occupied France are required to register with police.

On October 7, German troops move into Romania.

On October 9, the British suppress publication of the communist newspaper Daily Worker.

On October 12, Hitler postpones “Operation Sealion,” a German invasion of Britain, until spring 1941.

On October 18, Vichy France bars Jews from positions in government, the teaching profession, the armed forces, the press, film, and radio. On October 30 Pétain announces a policy of collaboration with Germany.

On October 28, Italian troops invade Greece.

On November 8, Italian troops begin retreating from Greece.

On November 11, British fighter planes cripple much of the Italian fleet in an engagement at Taranto.

On November 14, the English automotive center of Coventry is carpet-bombed by 449 German aircraft. The attack creates a firestorm that kills more than 550 people and destroys the city’s fourteenth-century cathedral.

On November 20, Hungary joins the Axis.

From November 23 to November 24, Romania and Slovakia sign the Tripartite Pact with the Axis.

On November 28, German troops move into Romania.

On November 28, Italian troops invade Greece.

On December 25, the Germans suspend bombing of London.

On December 7, Japanese troops land in Hong Kong.

On December 9, Italian troops invade Egypt from Libya.

On December 17, in North Africa the British take Sidi Omar and Sollum from the Italians.

On December 29, the Germans drop incendiary bombs on the center of London, causing the worst damage to the city since the fire of 1666.

1941

- Bertolt Brecht’s play Mother Courage and Her Children premiers in Zurich.
- Benjamin Britten composes his opera Paul Bunyan.
- Noel Coward’s play Blithe Spirit premiers in London.
- T.S. Eliot’s long poem The Dry Salvages, the third part of his Four Quartets, is published.
- Erich Fromm’s Escape From Freedom, an analysis of fascism, is published.
- Franz Werfel’s novel The Song of Bernadette is published.
- On January 21, the British suppress publication of the communist newspaper Daily Worker.
- On January 22, Tobruk, Libya, falls to British and Free French forces.
- On January 26, British forces invade Somaliland.
- On January 28, the Free French announce the capture of Murzuk, in southern Libya.
- On February 2, three days of riots between soldiers and anti-British demonstrators come to an end in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- On February 6, British forces capture Bengasi, in eastern Libya.
- On February 9, British warships shell Genoa, Italy.
- On February 10, Great Britain breaks off diplomatic relations with Romania because German troops have been deployed there.
- On February 12, Gen. Erwin Rommel arrives in Tripoli to take command of German and Italian forces in Libya.
- On February 24, in a speech to the Japanese Diet, Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yosuke demands the cession of Oceania to Japan.
- On March 1, Bulgaria joins the Axis.
- On March 3, the Soviet Union denounces Bulgaria for allying itself with the Axis powers.
- On March 5, Nazis in Amsterdam sentence eighteen Dutch resistance fighters to death.
- On March 7, the British recapture Somaliland.
- On March 25, Yugoslavia joins the Axis; anti-Nazi riots erupt in Belgrade, and on March 27 the pro-Axis government is overthrown in a military coup.
- From March 28 to March 29, the British navy destroys much of the remaining Italian fleet off Cape Matapan, Greece.
- On April 3, Italian and German troops force the British to evacuate Bengasi, Libya.
- On April 4, the German army invades the Balkan Peninsula; it then crosses into Yugoslavia and Greece on April 6.
- On April 10, the Danish envoy to Washington, D.C., announces an agreement to provide American protection for Greenland; the government of Nazi-occupied Denmark declares the agreement void on April 12.
Chronology of Selected World Events Outside the United States, 1940–1949

- On April 13, the Soviet Union and Japan sign a neutrality pact.
- On April 17, the Yugoslavian army surrenders to the Axis.
- On April 19, the British land troops in Iraq to protect the oil fields after the Baghdad government has displayed an increasingly pro-Axis bias. Military exchanges between the British and Iraqis follow.
- On April 27, German forces occupy Athens.
- On May 5, following the British conquest of Ethiopia, Emperor Haile Selassie returns to assume the throne lost in the Italian conquest of 1936.
- On May 9, the RAF conducts devastating air raids on Hamburg and Bremen.
- On May 10, Rudolf Hess, Hitler’s personal deputy, parachutes into Scotland.
- From May 10 to May 11, Nazi bombers blitz London, damaging the House of Commons, Westminster Abbey, and Big Ben.
- On May 16, the RAF bombs German airfields in Syria.
- On May 20, the Germans launch an invasion of Crete, completing their conquest of the island on June 1.
- On May 21, the U.S. ship Robin Moor is torpedoed and sunk by a German U-boat off the coast of Brazil.
- On May 24, the British battle cruiser Hood is sunk by the German battleship Bismarck between Greenland and Iceland.
- On May 27, the British navy sinks the Bismarck off the French coast.
- On May 31, British forces enter Baghdad, and the Iraqi government agrees to an armistice.
- On June 8, British and Free French troops invade Syria, taking Damascus on June 21.
- On June 18, Germany and Turkey sign a ten-year friendship treaty.
- On June 22, Germany and Italy declare war on the Soviet Union, as Germany launches a massive attack on three fronts. Turkey declares its neutrality. Britain assures the Soviets of aid, as does the United States, as President Franklin D. Roosevelt declares on June 25 that the neutrality act does not apply to Russia.
- On June 26, Finland joins the Axis attack on the Soviet Union; German troops are already within fifty miles of Minsk, which falls to them on June 30.
- On June 27, Hungary declares war on the Soviet Union.
- On July 1, the Germans capture Riga, the capital of Lithuania; the next day the Nazis capture 160,000 Russian troops near Bialystok.
- On July 3, Soviet premier Joseph Stalin announces a "scorched earth" defense; two days later German mechanized troops reach the Dnieper River, three hundred miles from Moscow.
- On July 7, the United States occupies Iceland with naval and marine forces; the Icelandic parliament approves the occupation on July 10.
- On July 8, the Nazi advance into Russia stalls. An estimated nine million men are engaged in the war between Germany and Russia.
- On July 18, Japanese premier Konoye forms a new cabinet, which includes four generals and three admirals.
- On July 19, Bolivia announces the uncovering of an Axis plot and ousts the German diplomatic minister.
- On July 23, Vichy France accedes to Tokyo’s demand for military bases in Indochina.
- On July 24, German troops advance to the outskirts of Leningrad and Smolensk. Japanese troops arrive in southern Indochina.
- On July 25, the United States and Great Britain freeze all Japanese assets; Japan retaliates the next day by freezing American and British assets.
- On July 31, Japan formally apologizes for sinking the American gunboat Tutuila in Chungking, China, on July 30.
- On August 1, President Roosevelt places an embargo on the export of all motor fuel oils outside the Western Hemisphere except to the British Empire.
- On August 8, Vichy military observers estimate the casualties from the first forty-eight days of the German invasion of the Soviet Union to be 1.5 million Axis troops and 2 million Russians.
- On August 19, German troops lay siege to Odessa.
- On August 21, in Paris two communists are executed, and thousands more so-called communists and anarchists are arrested as the Germans crack down on the Resistance. By month’s end eleven more suspected Resistance members are executed, and in Paris alone thousands of Jews are deported to Nazi concentration camps.
- On August 25, responding to increasing Axis infiltration, Soviet and British troops invade Iran.
- On August 28, the Vichy regime executes three more suspected Resistance fighters; on August 29 they will execute eight more men.
- On August 29, German troops occupy Tallinn, Estonia.
- On September 4, German U-boats attack the U.S. destroyer Greer, en route to Iceland; the Greer counterattacks with depth charges.
- On September 5, German artillery begins shelling Leningrad.
- On September 10, German authorities in Oslo place the city under martial law after several strikes break out; on September 12, they begin mass arrests of trade unionists.
- On September 11, President Roosevelt authorizes American ships to protect themselves by shooting first if they feel threatened by Axis warships; the next day Berlin announces that it will take appropriate countermeasures.
- On September 14, the first Russian-based RAF wing arrives in the Soviet Union. In Zagreb, Yugoslavia, the central telephone exchange is bombed, and Axis authorities arrest and execute fifty Resistance fighters.
- On September 16, under pressure from the Allies, ailing Reza Shah Pahlevi of Iran abdicates in favor of his twenty-one-year-old son, Mohammed Reza Pahlevi.
On October 30, the U.S. destroyer Reuben James is sunk off the coast of Greenland.

On October 15, the Germans capture Kalinin, one hundred miles northwest of Moscow. Soviet troops begin their final evacuation of Odessa.


On October 17, the U.S. destroyer Kearny is torpedoed and damaged off the coast of Greenland.

On October 19, the Germans lay siege to Moscow.

On October 21, in reprisal for the slaying of a German officer, fifty French citizens are executed in Nantes, and the German army orders the execution of twenty Czechs. Because of an international outcry, execution of the Nantes hostages is first postponed and then suspended indefinitely on October 30.

On October 22, in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, newspapers report the execution of two hundred citizens in reprisal for an attack on two German officers.

On October 30, the U.S. destroyer Reuben James is sunk off the coast of Iceland.

On November 6, the United States announces $1 billion in lend-lease aid to the Soviet Union.

On November 9, in Vienna Nazi authorities announce the execution of twenty Czechs.


On November 18, Britain begins an invasion of Libya that drives Rommel’s forces back to the point at which he began his invasion of Egypt.

On November 19, the United States and Mexico sign trade and financial agreements designed to stabilize currency and resolve nationalization claims.

On November 24, the United States dispatches troops to Dutch Guiana to help Dutch troops protect its bauxite mines.

On November 28, reports from Shanghai indicate that transports carrying some thirty thousand Japanese troops are moving southward from China toward Haiphong in Indochina.

On November 30, in an inflammatory speech, Japanese premier Tojo declares that Anglo-American exploitation of Asia must be purged.

On December 2, in Trieste, sixty people go on trial on various charges, including espionage and involvement in a 1938 plot to assassinate Mussolini; on December 14, nine are sentenced to death, and others receive long prison terms.

On December 6, the Soviet army begins a counteroffensive along the Moscow front.

On December 7, in a surprise attack, Japanese planes bomb U.S. naval and air bases at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, destroying two battleships and four other capital vessels. Japanese air forces simultaneously attack U.S. bases in the Philippines, Guam, and Wake Island, and British bases in Hong Kong and Singapore, while also invading Malaya and Thailand by land and sea. A Japanese declaration of war on the United States is delivered after the attack.

On December 8, the United States, Great Britain, the Free French government, and the Dutch government in exile in London declare war on Japan, as do Canada, Costa Rica, Honduras, San Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. Thailand capitulates to the Japanese.

On December 11, Germany and Italy declare war on the United States; the U.S. Congress unanimously responds by declaring war on Germany and Italy—as do Cuba, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic; Mexico severs relations with both nations.

On December 13, Japanese forces take Guam.

On December 14, Turkey and Ireland declare neutrality in the U.S./Japanese war.

On December 16, a Japanese submarine shells the Hawaiian port of Kahului, one hundred miles southwest of Honolulu.

On December 22, Prime Minister Churchill and other British officials visit Washington, D.C., to establish a combined American-British military command for the war.

On December 23, Japanese forces complete their invasion of Wake Island.

On December 25, the British garrison at Hong Kong surrenders to the Japanese.

On December 30, Mohandas K. Gandhi resigns from the All-India National Congress Party because it has abandoned civil disobedience.

1942

- Albert Camus’s novel The Stranger is published.
- T.S. Eliot’s Little Gidding, the fourth part of his Four Quartets, is published.
- Dmitry Shostakovich composes his Seventh Symphony, his homage to Leningrad.
- On January 1, in Washington, D.C., twenty-six Allied nations, including the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China, sign a pact agreeing not to make separate peace with Germany.
Chronology of Selected World Events Outside the United States, 1940–1949

- On January 2, the Japanese take Manila.
- From January 14 to January 15, the RAF conducts heavy bombing raids on port facilities at Hamburg and Rotterdam, beginning a long series of air attacks on port and factory cities in Germany and occupied Europe.
- From January 15 to January 28, foreign ministers of the Western Hemisphere nations, including the United States, meet in Rio de Janeiro. With the exception of Argentina and Chile, they sever diplomatic relations with Axis nations and agree to collective-security arrangements.
- On January 17, the Japanese invade Burma.
- On January 20, leading Nazi officials meet in Wannsee, near Berlin, to plan a “final solution” to the “Jewish problem.”
- On January 21, in North Africa, Rommel begins a counteroffensive that drives the British back into Egypt within two weeks.
- On January 26, the first U.S. troops arrive on British soil.
- On January 29, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and Iran conclude a treaty providing for wartime occupation of Iran. The Soviets station troops in the northern section of the country, the British in the south, to guard Iranian oil reserves and vital supply lines from the Persian Gulf to the Soviet Union.
- On February 15, Japan occupies Singapore and Malaya.
- On March 23, British envoy Sir Stafford Cripps arrives in India to offer postwar dominion status; the terms of the offer are rejected by the Indian Congress on April 11. The British respond by imprisoning Indian Nationalists.
- On March 28, the RAF bombs Lübeck, Germany, inflicting heavy damage in the important Baltic port.
- On April 2, Dr. William Temple, archbishop of York, becomes archbishop of Canterbury.
- From April 23 to April 26, the RAF bombing of the Baltic port of Rostock is the heaviest on any city since the beginning of the war. The Germans begin reprisal raids on British cities.
- On May 1, the Japanese take Mandalay, forcing the British to begin withdrawal from Burma to India.
- From May 4 to May 9, American and Japanese naval forces trade blows in the Coral Sea.
- On May 6, U.S. forces surrender the Philippines to the Japanese.
- On May 7, the Allies take Bizerte and Tunis.
- On May 27, Reinhard Heydrich, second in command of the Gestapo, is shot in Czechoslovakia; he dies on June 3. In retaliation, the Nazis kill thousands of Czechs, including everyone in the town of Lidice.
- On May 30, more than one thousand Allied bombers level Cologne, the major railroad center of western Germany.
- On June 3, Japanese aircraft attack a U.S. naval base in the Aleutian Islands. A few days later, they land troops on Attu and Kiska, in the western Aleutians.
- From June 4 to June 6, the United States cripples the Japanese fleet at the battle of Midway.
- From June 9 to June 28, Rommel’s victories in North Africa force the British to retreat to El Alamein, east of Alexandria, Egypt.
- On June 18, the United States declares war on Bulgaria.
- From July 1 to July 9, Rommel’s troops attack El Alamein, attempting to reach and gain control of the Suez Canal, but they are turned back by British forces.
- From July 16 to July 17, during the Rafle du Vel’ d’Hiver (Roundup of the Winter Velodrome), more than twelve thousand Jews are arrested and held in a Paris sports arena for deportation to Germany and the occupied countries of Eastern Europe.
- From July 26 to July 29, the Allies conduct one of their most successful bombing raids on Hamburg.
- On August 7, the United States lands troops on Guadalcanal, where the Japanese have been building an airstrip since early July; from November 12 to November 15, American naval forces score a costly victory in a major sea battle for control of this strategically important island in the Solomon Islands, but the Japanese fight on until February 1943.
- From August 12 to August 15, Churchill, Stalin, and American representative Averell Harriman meet in Moscow to discuss the progress of the war against Germany.
- On August 25, German troops reach the outskirts of Stalingrad.
- On August 27, British scientists announce the discovery of penicillin.
- On September 14, the German siege of Stalingrad begins.
- On October 5, Prof. Gilbert Murray helps to found Oxfam to help relieve starvation in occupied Europe.
- From October 23 to October 26, the British Eighth Army, under the leadership of Lt. Gen. Bernard L. Montgomery, defeats Rommel’s forces at El Alamein.
- On November 8, Allied troops under Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower land in French North Africa to support the British offensive in Egypt. The United States and Vichy France break off diplomatic relations. In a speech in Munich, Hitler incorrectly announces that Stalingrad is “firmly in German hands.”
- From November 9 to November 11, German troops occupy the so-called Free Zone of France.
On November 11, the Allies take Algiers and Oran in Algeria, and also Casablanca and Rabat in Morocco.

On November 13, Tobruk, Libya, is retaken by the British.

From November 19 to November 22, a Soviet offensive lifts the siege of Stalingrad, but heavy fighting in the area continues until February 1943.

On November 20, the British retake Benghazi, Libya.

1943

- Aram Khachaturian composes his Ode to Stalin.
- Harold Laski’s political study Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time is published.
- Thomas Mann’s novel Joseph the Provider is published.
- Jacques Maritain’s Christianity and Democracy is published.
- Henri Michaux’s Exorcismes, a collection of war poems, is published.
- Henry Moore sculpts his Madonna and Child.
- Sean O’Casey’s play Red Roses for Me premieres in Dublin.
- Sergey Prokofiev composes his opera War and Peace.
- Jean-Paul Sartre’s philosophical work Being and Nothingness is published.
- Dmitry Shostakovich composes his Eighth Symphony.
- The Aqua-Lung is invented.
- Hitler suppresses publication of the Frankfurter Zeitung.
- From January 14 to January 27, Churchill and Roosevelt confer with the joint chiefs of staff at Casablanca, Morocco, and demand unconditional surrender by the Axis powers.
- On January 22, American and Australian forces overrun the last pockets of Japanese troops in New Guinea.
- On January 23, the British Eighth Army takes Tripoli, Libya.
- On January 31, on the outskirts of Stalingrad, the Germans under Gen. Friedrich Paulus capitulate. Stalin announces the capture of more than 45,000 prisoners, including thirteen generals, and the deaths of 146,700 Germans. The remaining German troops in the area, including eight more generals, surrender on February 2.
- On February 9, the last Japanese forces retreat from Guadalcanal.
- On February 20, at the Kasserine Pass in Tunisia, Allied troops are forced to retreat by Rommel’s Afrika Korps. On February 25, Allied troops retake the pass.
- From March 2 to March 4, the Japanese are defeated by the United States in the battle of the Bismarck Sea, losing a convoy of twenty-two ships and more than fifty aircraft.
- On April 20, the Nazis massacre Jews in the Warsaw ghetto.
- From May 7 to May 9, after the Allies take Tunis and Bizerte, the German forces in Tunisia surrender unconditionally.
- On May 11, American forces land on Attu in the Aleutian Islands. They complete their invasion of the island on June 2, and the Japanese abandon Kiska without a fight by July 27.
- On May 22, Moscow announces it has dissolved the Third Communist International (Comintern), formed in 1919.

On June 3, French generals de Gaulle and Henri Giraud form the French Committee of National Liberation (CFLN) to coordinate the Free French war effort.

On June 4, a military coup in Argentina is staged by generals Arturo Rawson and Pedro Ramirez.

On July 10, the Allies invade Sicily, overcoming the last remaining forces on the island at Messina on August 17.

On July 19, Allied forces bomb Rome for the first time.


On August 1, the Japanese grant independence to Burma, which declares war on the United States and Great Britain.

From August 14 to August 24, Allied representatives meet in Quebec to plan a war strategy.

On September 8, Eisenhower announces the unconditional surrender of Italy to the Allies. Stalin permits the reopening of many Soviet churches.

On September 9, Allied troops land near Salerno, Italy.

On September 10, Germany announces the occupation of Rome and northern Italy.

On September 12, German commandos led by Capt. Otto Skorzeny rescue Mussolini from house arrest in San Grasso and take him to northern Italy, where he forms a new Fascist government.

On September 29, the Allies occupy Naples, Italy.

On October 13, the Italian government led by Badoglio declares war on Germany.

On October 14, the Japanese declare the Philippines independent.

From October 19 to October 30, the Allies confer in Moscow and agree that Germany will be stripped of all territory acquired since 1938.

On November 1, American forces land at Bougainville in the Solomon Islands.

On November 6, the Russians retake Kiev.

On November 19, Sir Oswald Mosley, a British Fascist leader imprisoned since May 1940 as a security risk, is released on the grounds of failing health.

From November 22 to November 26, Churchill, Roosevelt, and Chinese Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek meet at Cairo, Egypt, to plan a postwar Asian policy.

From November 28 to December 1, Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt meet in Teheran, Iran, to discuss war strategy and plan the structure of the postwar world.

1944

- Béla Bartók composes his Sonata for Solo Violin Concerto.
- Max Beckmann paints his Self-Portrait in Black.
- Paul Hindemith composes his opera Herodias.
- Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno’s Dialectic of Enlightenment, a study of Western Marxism and authoritarianism, is published.
- Aldous Huxley’s novel Time Must Have a Stop is published.
Jean-Paul Sartre’s play
Henry Moore sculpts the first version of his Family Group.
Jean-Paul Sartre’s play No Exit premiers in Paris.
On January 11, Moroccan nationalists demand independence from France.
On January 22, Allied troops land at Anzio, Italy, in an attempt to outflank German defense positions in central Italy. Progress is slow, as they meet stubborn resistance.
On January 27, the German siege of Leningrad ends.
On January 30, at Brazzaville, in the Congo, African leaders discuss the postwar decolonization of Africa.
From February 24 to February 25, President Ramirez of Argentina is overthrown in a coup led by Gen. Edelmiro Farrell.
On March 4, American planes bomb Berlin.
On March 6, in a daylight raid American bombers drop 2,000 tons of bombs on Berlin.
On March 15, the Soviet Union officially replaces “The Internationale” with “Hymn of the Soviet Union” as its national anthem.
On June 4, Allied forces enter Rome.
On June 6, Allied forces establish beachheads in Normandy, France, and begin the liberation of Western Europe. The operation, code-named “Overlord,” involves more than four thousand ships, three thousand planes, and four million troops. The day becomes known as D-Day.
On June 13, the Germans begin attacking Britain with their V-1 rockets, launching more than seven thousand against England by August 24.
On June 15, American long-range Superfortress aircraft begin bombing operations against the Japanese home islands.
On July 1, the Allies confer in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, hoping to establish a stable postwar economic system.
On July 3, the Soviets announce their recapture of Minsk.
On July 18, Tojo resigns as Japanese prime minister.
On July 20, at Hitler’s East Prussian headquarters, a bombing assassination attempt fails. Plotters are executed during the night, including Col. Claus von Stauffenberg, chief of staff of the Home Army.
On August 12, Allied troops take Florence, Italy.
From August 21 to August 29, in Washington, D.C., at the Dumbarton Oaks conference, the Allies begin discussions on the formation of the United Nations (UN).
On September 4, Allied troops liberate Brussels.
On September 8, the Germans begin V-2 rocket attacks on England.
On September 12, Romania signs an armistice with the Allies.
From September 17 to September 28, Allied efforts to secure Rhine bridges and outflank the Germans at Eindhoven and Arnhem fail.
On September 19, Finland signs an armistice with the Allies.
On September 29, the Soviet Union invades Yugoslavia.
From October 9 to October 20, Churchill and Stalin confer in Moscow.
On October 20, American forces led by Gen. Douglas MacArthur land in the Philippines.
From October 23 to October 26, during the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the largest naval battle of World War II, American forces destroy the remainder of the Japanese fleet.
On December 16, German general Karl von Rundstedt launches an unsuccessful German offensive in the Ardennes. This “Battle of the Bulge” is the last major German military offensive of World War II.

1945

• Martin Buber’s theoretical study For the Sake of Heaven is published.
• Carlo Levi’s autobiographical work Christ Stopped at Eboli is published.
• Jean Giraudoux’s play The Madwoman of Chaillot premiers in Paris.
• George Orwell’s novel Animal Farm is published.
• Karl Popper’s The Open Society and Its Enemies, a study of authoritarianism, is published.
• Jean Renoir’s movie The Southerner is released.
• Roberto Rossellini’s movie Open City, filmed in postwar Rome, is released.
• Dmitry Shostakovich composes his Ninth Symphony.
• Igor Stravinsky composes his Symphony in Three Movements.
• Evelyn Waugh’s novel Brideshead Revisited is published.
• In France, women gain the right to vote.
• In January, part one of Sergey Eisenstein’s movie Ivan the Terrible is released and achieves instant success, earning Eisenstein a Stalin Prize. Completed in February 1946, part two, however, is denounced by the Central Committee of the Communist Party for its unflattering portrayal of Ivan and his bodyguard and is promptly banned. It is not publicly released until 1958.
• In January 1, in Egypt elections boycotted by the nationalist Wafd result in the election of Ahmed Maher Pasha as premier.
• On January 18, the Soviets announce the liberation of Warsaw.
• On January 20, the provisional Hungarian government of Gen. Bela Miklos signs an agreement of unconditional surrender to the Allies.
• On January 22, British troops retake Monywa, in Burma, reopening the land route to China.
• On January 26, Soviet troops reach the Prussian coast at Elbing, severing East Prussia from the rest of Germany.
• On January 27, the Red Army liberates Auschwitz.
• On January 29, Soviet troops cross the 1939 border between Poland and Germany, entering the province of Pomerania in northeastern Germany. By February 2, they control most of East Prussia.

Somerset Maugham’s novel The Razor’s Edge is published.
On March 6, Evelyn Waugh’s novel Brideshead Revisited is published.
Dmitry Shostakovich composes his Ninth Symphony.
In France, women gain the right to vote.
On January 20, the provisional Hungarian government of Gen. Bela Miklos signs an agreement of unconditional surrender to the Allies.
On January 22, British troops retake Monywa, in Burma, reopening the land route to China.
On January 26, Soviet troops reach the Prussian coast at Elbing, severing East Prussia from the rest of Germany.
On January 27, the Red Army liberates Auschwitz.
On January 29, Soviet troops cross the 1939 border between Poland and Germany, entering the province of Pomerania in northeastern Germany. By February 2, they control most of East Prussia.
• On January 31, Soviet troops cross the Oder River, coming within fifty miles of Berlin.

• From February 4 to February 11, Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, and other Allied leaders confer at Yalta, in the Crimea, on issues of postwar international organization. They agree to divide Germany into separate Allied occupation zones.

• On February 13, the Soviets capture Budapest after a fifty-day siege.

• On February 14, the Allies firebomb Dresden, Germany.

• On February 19, U.S. Marines land at Iwo Jima, 750 miles south of Tokyo. The island falls to the Americans on March 17, at a cost of four thousand American and twenty thousand Japanese lives.

• On February 21, the Inter-American Conference convenes in Mexico City to discuss economic issues such as conversion to a peacetime economy.

• On February 24, U.S. troops drive the last Japanese forces from Manila, the Philippines. After announcing the Egyptian declaration of war on Germany and Japan, Premier Ahmed Maher Pasha is assassinated in Cairo.

• On March 6, U.S. troops capture Cologne, Germany.

• On March 7, the American First Army crosses the Rhine at Remagen, Germany.

• On March 9, American Superfortress bombers drop more than 2,300 tons of incendiary bombs on Tokyo.

• On March 19, the Soviet Union formally denounces a 1925 nonaggression treaty with Turkey and demands diplomatic revisions.

• On March 30, the Soviets capture Danzig, Poland.

• On April 1, American forces invade Okinawa, 360 miles south of Tokyo.

• From April 9 to April 13, the Red Army enters Vienna.

• On April 12, President Roosevelt dies at Warm Springs, Georgia. He is succeeded by Vice President Harry S. Truman. American troops liberate Buchenwald concentration camp.

• On April 21, Soviet troops reach the outskirts of Berlin.

• On April 25, advancing armies of the United States and the Soviet Union meet at Torgau, on the Elbe River in Germany. The UN conference opens in San Francisco. The delegates complete the UN charter on June 26.

• On April 28, in Como, Italy, Mussolini is executed by Italian partisans.

• On April 29, the U.S. Seventh Army enters Munich and liberates the concentration camp at Dachau. German troops in Italy surrender to the Allies.

• On April 30, Hitler commits suicide at his bunker in Berlin.

• On May 2, the Germans surrender Berlin to the Soviets.

• On May 8, German military authorities formally surrender to the Allies, ending World War II in Europe. The day becomes known as V-E Day.

• On May 19, demonstrations erupt in Lebanon and Syria following the landing of French troops sent to reestablish colonial control.

• On May 22, Yonabaru, the key Japanese position on Okinawa, is taken by American forces. The Japanese surrender the island on June 21, at a cost of thirteen thousand American and one hundred thousand Japanese lives.

• On May 23, French authorities report 1,300 casualties in a nationalist uprising staged by Berber tribesmen in Algeria.

• On May 29, French artillery shells Damascus after street fighting breaks out between Syrians and French troops.

• From June 3 to June 25, French troops are withdrawn from Beirut and Damascus, as France requests UN mediation.

• On June 11, the Liberal Party, led by Prime Minister Mackenzie King, wins in the Canadian elections, but King loses his seat in the House of Commons.

• On July 5, the United States completes the reoccupation of the Philippines, at a cost of nearly twelve thousand men.

• On July 16, the United States successfully detonates the first atomic bomb at Alamagordo Air Force Base in New Mexico.

• From July 17 to July 26, Truman, Stalin, Churchill, and other Allied representatives meet in Potsdam, a suburb of Berlin, and issue the Potsdam Declaration, demanding unconditional surrender from Japan.

• On July 26, elections in Britain result in a Labour Party landslide; Clement Attlee succeeds Churchill as prime minister.

• On August 6, the U.S. Superfortress bomber Enola Gay drops an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima, killing more than fifty thousand people and leveling four square miles of the city.

• On August 8, the Soviet Union declares war on Japan and attacks Japanese forces in Manchuria the next day.

• On August 9, the United States detonates an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Nagasaki, killing more than forty thousand people and destroying a third of the city.

• On August 10, the Japanese Supreme Council votes to accept the surrender terms of the Potsdam Declaration.

• On August 14, the Soviet government concludes a treaty with the Chinese Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek.

• On August 15, the Allies accept the unconditional surrender of Japan to supervise the disarmament of the Japanese military.

• On September 2, in ceremonies aboard the U.S.S. Missouri, moored in Tokyo Bay, the Japanese formally surrender to the Allies, ending World War II.

• In Hanoi, Vietnamese nationalist leader Ho Chi Minh declares Vietnamese independence, using a copy of the American Declaration of Independence supplied by the Office of Strategic Services.

• On September 20, the All-India Congress Committee, led by Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, convenes. It rejects British proposals for national autonomy and calls for the removal of Britain from India.
Chronology of Selected World Events Outside the United States, 1940–1949

- On March 5, in a speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, Churchill warns that, in Europe, “an iron curtain [of communism] has descended across the continent.”
- On March 2, British troops complete their evacuation of Iran, but Soviet troops remain, violating the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1942. Following diplomatic pressure from the United States and Great Britain, the Soviet Union withdraws its troops by May 9.
- On March 5, in a speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, Churchill warns that, in Europe, “an iron curtain [of communism] has descended across the continent.”
- On March 22, Great Britain recognizes the independence of Transjordan, which came under British mandate after World War I.
- On April 18, the League of Nations conducts its final assembly in Geneva, turning over its assets to the UN.
- On June 3, Italians vote to replace their monarchy with a republic.
- On July 1 and July 25, the United States conducts atomic bomb tests at Bikini Atoll in the Pacific Ocean.
- On July 4, the United States grants independence to the Philippines.
- On September 8, Bulgarian voters reject their monarchy in favor of a republic; on September 15, Bulgaria is declared a people’s republic.
- On October 13, French voters approve a new constitution, which establishes the Fourth Republic.
- On October 16, at Nuremberg, as a result of their convictions for war crimes, ten leading Nazis are executed. Nazi chief Hermann Göring, scheduled to hang with the others, commits suicide two hours before the executions.
- On November 10, French Communists score significant electoral gains, resulting in political deadlock in the French Assembly.
- On November 22, French authorities, seeking the surrender of Vietnamese nationalists, bombard the cities of Haiphong and Hanoi, killing six thousand.
- On December 16, Socialists led by Léon Blum form a new French government.

1946

- Simone de Beauvoir’s novel All Men Are Mortal is published.
- Benjamin Britten composes his opera The Rape of Lucretia.
- Marcel Carné’s movie Les Portes de la Nuit is released.
- Ernest Cassirer’s The Myth of the State, a study of political science, is published.
- André Gide’s Journal, 1939–42 is published.
- David Lean’s movie Great Expectations is released.
- Michael Polanyi’s Science, Faith and Society, an analysis of scientific method and medicine, is published.
- Bertrand Russell’s A History of Western Philosophy is published.
- Dylan Thomas’s Deaths and Entrances, a collection of poems, is published.
- Women gain the right to vote in Italy.
- On February 24, Perón, leader of a Fascistic political movement, is elected president of Argentina.
- On March 2, British troops complete their evacuation of Iran, but Soviet troops remain, violating the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1942. Following diplomatic pressure from the United States and Great Britain, the Soviet Union withdraws its troops by May 9.
- On March 5, in a speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, Churchill warns that, in Europe, “an iron curtain [of communism] has descended across the continent.”

1947

- Benjamin Britten composes his opera Albert Herring.
- Albert Camus’s novel The Plague is published.
- Charlie Chaplin’s movie Monsieur Verdoux is released.
- Anne Frank’s The Diary of a Young Girl is published.
- Erich Fromm’s Man for Himself, a psychological study of ethics, is published.
- Alberto Giacometti sculpts Man Pointing.
- Le Corbusier begins the Unité d’habitation, an apartment complex intended to function as a self-sufficient community, in Marseilles.
- H.R. Trevor-Roper’s historical work The Last Days of Hitler is published.
- On January 1, the British and Americans join their German occupation zones into a single economic unit.
- On January 29, American envoys, led by General Marshall, abandon efforts to negotiate an end to the Chinese civil war.
- On February 10, the Allies sign formal peace treaties with Italy, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and Finland, officially ending the hostilities of World War II.
- On March 3, Martial law is declared in Palestine after increased incidences of Zionist attacks against British personnel.
- On March 4, France and England sign a fifty-year military alliance.
The first volume of Winston Churchill’s memoir, *The Second World War*, is published.

Graham Greene’s novel *The Heart of the Matter* is published.

Aldous Huxley’s novel *Ape and Essence* is published.

Laurence Olivier stars in a screen version of *Hamlet.*

Vittorio de Sica’s movie *The Bicycle Thieves* is released.

Belgium grants the right to vote to women.

On January 1, the Benelux Customs Union is established.

On January 4, Burma becomes an independent nation.

On January 20, Gandhi is assassinated.

On February 4, Ceylon becomes independent.

On February 25, communists seize control of the Czechoslovakian government. Czech nationalist Jan Masaryk dies on March 10 after falling from a window. Reported as a suicide, his death arouses suspicion in the West.

On March 1, British and American authorities establish a central bank to serve their occupation zones of Germany.

On March 17, France, the United Kingdom, and the Benelux countries sign the Brussels Pact, a fifty-year military alliance.

On April 3, the U.S. Congress appropriates $6 billion for the Marshall Plan to aid Western European reconstruction.

On May 1, North Korea proclaims itself a people’s republic and adopts a Soviet-style constitution.

On May 14, the state of Israel is declared, as the British mandate in Palestine comes to an end. At midnight, troops from Egypt, the Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq invade Palestine; the UN effects a truce on July 15.

On May 26, the United Party loses control of the South African House of Assembly after running on a platform that included a gradual increase in the rights of native Africans. The victorious Nationalist Party and its coalition partner, the Afrikaner Party, advocate a policy of strict apartheid.

On June 18, France merges its German occupation zone with the Anglo-American zone, forming a single West German political unit.

On June 20, a new currency, the deutsche mark, is established for West Germany.

On June 24, Soviet authorities halt all surface traffic from West Germany into Berlin, blockading the city. Western authorities respond with an airlift to supply the western sections of Berlin with vital necessities.

On June 28, the Soviet Union expels Yugoslavia from the Cominform, signaling hostile relations between the two communist governments.

On July 25, Britain ends the rationing of bread.

In August, Soviet scientists who disagree with the environmental evolutionary theories of geneticist T.D. Lysenko are purged from the Russian scientific establishment.

On August 15, South Korea formally proclaims itself the Democratic Republic of Korea.

On August 22, in Amsterdam, 147 Protestant and Orthodox denominations from forty-four countries found the World Council of Churches.

On November 12, an American military tribunal finds Tojo and six other Japanese defendants guilty of war crimes and sentences them to death. They are executed on December 23.

On December 27, Cardinal József Mindszenty is arrested by the Hungarian relations and urged Western intervention in Hungary. On February 8, 1949, he is sentenced to life imprisonment for high treason.

The first volume of Winston Churchill’s memoir, *The Second World War*, is published.

Graham Greene’s novel *The Heart of the Matter* is published.

Aldous Huxley’s novel *Ape and Essence* is published.

Laurence Olivier stars in a screen version of *Hamlet.*

Vittorio de Sica’s movie *The Bicycle Thieves* is released.

Belgium grants the right to vote to women.

On January 1, the Benelux Customs Union is established.

On January 4, Burma becomes an independent nation.

On January 20, Gandhi is assassinated.

On February 4, Ceylon becomes independent.

On February 25, communists seize control of the Czechoslovakian government. Czech nationalist Jan Masaryk dies on March 10 after falling from a window. Reported as a suicide, his death arouses suspicion in the West.

On March 1, British and American authorities establish a central bank to serve their occupation zones of Germany.

On March 17, France, the United Kingdom, and the Benelux countries sign the Brussels Pact, a fifty-year military alliance.

On April 3, the U.S. Congress appropriates $6 billion for the Marshall Plan to aid Western European reconstruction.

On May 1, North Korea proclaims itself a people’s republic and adopts a Soviet-style constitution.

On May 14, the state of Israel is declared, as the British mandate in Palestine comes to an end. At midnight, troops from Egypt, the Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq invade Palestine; the UN effects a truce on July 15.

On May 26, the United Party loses control of the South African House of Assembly after running on a platform that included a gradual increase in the rights of native Africans. The victorious Nationalist Party and its coalition partner, the Afrikaner Party, advocate a policy of strict apartheid.

On June 18, France merges its German occupation zone with the Anglo-American zone, forming a single West German political unit.

On June 20, a new currency, the deutsche mark, is established for West Germany.

On June 24, Soviet authorities halt all surface traffic from West Germany into Berlin, blockading the city. Western authorities respond with an airlift to supply the western sections of Berlin with vital necessities.

On June 28, the Soviet Union expels Yugoslavia from the Cominform, signaling hostile relations between the two communist governments.

On July 25, Britain ends the rationing of bread.

In August, Soviet scientists who disagree with the environmental evolutionary theories of geneticist T.D. Lysenko are purged from the Russian scientific establishment.

On August 15, South Korea formally proclaims itself the Democratic Republic of Korea.

On August 22, in Amsterdam, 147 Protestant and Orthodox denominations from forty-four countries found the World Council of Churches.

On November 12, an American military tribunal finds Tojo and six other Japanese defendants guilty of war crimes and sentences them to death. They are executed on December 23.

On December 27, Cardinal József Mindszenty is arrested by the communist government of Hungary on charges that he furnished Western powers with information about Soviet-Hungarian relations and urged Western intervention in Hungary. On February 8, 1949, he is sentenced to life imprisonment for high treason.
• George Orwell’s novel *1984* is published.

• Paul Tillich’s theological study *The Shaking of the Foundations* is published.

• From January 20 to January 23, representatives of nineteen Middle Eastern, Far Eastern, and Australasian nations meet in New Delhi to discuss Asian affairs. They issue a statement critical of Dutch efforts to prevent the Netherlands East Indies from becoming the independent nation of Indonesia.

• On January 25, the Soviet Union and communist countries of Eastern Europe announce that they have established the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance.

• On March 8, France agrees to recognize the independence of Vietnam within the French Union and to reinstall Vietnamese emperor Bao Dai.

• On April 4, twelve nations, including the United States and the Brussels Pact nations, form the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), committing themselves to mutual military assistance.

• On April 18, the Republic of Ireland is officially proclaimed.

• On May 5, ten Western European states form the Council of Europe to promote peace and foster European cooperation.

• On May 11, Israel is admitted to the UN.

• On May 12, Soviet authorities, announcing they have completed road and rail “repairs,” end the Berlin blockade.

• On June 29, American occupation forces are withdrawn from Korea. South Africa signals a hardening of apartheid restrictions by banning mixed marriages and automatic citizenship for immigrants from Commonwealth countries.

• On August 5, the United States terminates all military and economic assistance to the Nationalist Chinese government of Chiang Kai-shek.

• On August 14, the conservative Christian Democratic Party, led by Konrad Adenauer, garners 31 percent of the vote in the first postwar parliamentary election in the new Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany).

• On September 23, American, British, and Canadian officials announce that the Soviet Union has successfully detonated an atomic bomb.

• On October 1, the communist People’s Republic of China is proclaimed.

• On October 7, the eastern, Soviet-occupied zone of Germany declares itself the German Democratic Republic.

• On October 24, in New York, the permanent headquarters of the UN is dedicated.

• On November 8, Cambodia becomes an independent nation within the French Union.

• On November 26, India adopts a federal constitution and opts to remain within the British Commonwealth.

• On December 16, the British Parliament further restricts the powers of the House of Lords.

• On December 27, led by President Sukarno, the United States of Indonesia becomes an independent nation.