

Name: _____

Date: _____

Postwar

The Allied forces emerged victorious from the war by the end of the summer of 1945, but at a horrible price. More than fifty million people lost their lives. The world lost not just the soldiers, but it also lost the contributions they would have made later in their lives.

Europe had been devastated by the war. Allied and Axis bombs had laid waste to large portions of the continent. All that remained in many cities were the burned out shells of what were once buildings. Two military “superpower” nations emerged from the rubble: the United States and the Soviet Union. The Soviets used the end of the war as an opportunity to expand their empire. Britain, France, and America briefly occupied the conquered nations, and then gradually allowed them to return to self-rule. The Soviets imposed totalitarian governments throughout the land they occupied in Eastern Europe.

An uneasy “Cold War” followed as the United States and the Soviet Union, competed for supremacy. Both nations stockpiled enough arms to guarantee the destruction of the planet many times over. This policy was known as “Mutually Assured Destruction,” and while costly and terrifying, it worked. Neither nation used their deadly arsenal, but both nations funded smaller wars to advance their interests. The Cold War ended with the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Immediately after the Second World War, the United States feared that the Soviets would impose their totalitarian style of government on the ruined

European nations. The United States decided that rebuilding Europe would prevent Soviet expansion. The Marshall Plan provided more than \$35 billion in aid to Europe after the war.

Representatives of 51 nations met in San Francisco in August 1945. They formed the United Nations, an international body that would resolve disputes through diplomacy rather than armed conflict. Today more than 180 nations belong to the United Nations. The United Nations has made many contributions to world peace, but has not prevented war.

Almost all European Jews perished in the Holocaust. The few remaining Holocaust survivors did not want to return to the countries that participated in their destruction. Anti-Semitic sentiment still existed in many European nations even after the terrible war had ended. Some found it was still not safe to return to their homes.

Many Jews wished to return to their traditional homeland on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. The British controlled the land, but it was occupied mainly by Arab Muslims. The Arabs were upset with Jewish immigrants on what they felt was their land. The United Nations declared Israel an independent Jewish homeland in 1948. After more than two thousand years, the Jewish people finally had a nation of their own, but they would remain in conflict with its neighbors to this day.



The United Nations building in New York City



Answer in complete sentences

- *1. Contrast the governing of the defeated nations of World War II by the two military “superpower” nations.

*This is a higher order learning question. You must answer the question to the best of your ability, but any reasonable answer will be graded as correct.

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Answer in complete sentences

*2. Was the Marshall Plan a good idea? Defend your answer.

*3. What is the dictionary definition of totalitarianism?

*4. Woodrow Wilson first proposed a “League of Nations” many years earlier. He said, “Friendship is the only cement that will hold the world together.” The United States refused to join the League of Nations, and the organization eventually dissolved. Why do you think the nations of the world were more receptive to the United Nations than the League of Nations?

*5. Write a paragraph describing why the United Nations created a Jewish homeland in the modern nation of Israel. Your paragraph must have a topic sentence, at least two supporting sentences, and a conclusion that restates but does not repeat the topic sentence.

*6. Please reread the first paragraph from “A Powder Keg in Europe.” In your opinion, have we learned anything from the events of the previous century? Defend your answer.

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