

I. The United Nations

In April 1945, 51 nations met in San Francisco to draft a charter for the United Nations. The U.N would last much longer and play a much greater role in world affairs than the League of Nations.

The Security Council was given great power. Its five permanent members are the United States, Great Britain, France, China and the Soviet Union. These countries were given more power to ensure world peace.

The Purpose of the U.N

Article 1 Clause 1: The main purpose of the U.N is to maintain international peace and security, to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace.

Article 1 Clause 2: To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

Article 1 Clause 3: To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.

1. Why were these FIVE countries picked for the Security Council?
2. What were some of the reasons the U.N was created?

II. Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Article 1-All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

Article 2-Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, or religion.

Article 3-Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 7-All are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law.

The Declaration of Human Rights had 30 clauses that set the groundwork for human rights around the world.

1. Why was it necessary to create the Declaration of Human Rights?
2. What were some of its most important articles and why?

Genocide Convention

The Genocide Convention was set up to declare what genocide is and the punishment that will follow if it is committed.

Article I: The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.

Article II: In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

(a) Killing members of the group or causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

Article III: The following acts shall be punishable:

(a) Genocide, attempting to commit genocide or complicity in genocide.

Article IV: Persons committing genocide or any of the other acts detailed in article III shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals.

These clauses carry the main idea of the conference, that genocide is a crime and punishment shall be given to those who commit it.

1. Why do you think they had this convention?

2. Do you think it was necessary?

The Marshall Plan

On June 5, 1947, Secretary of State George Marshall proposed a solution to the wide-spread hunger, unemployment, and housing shortages that faced Europeans in the aftermath of WWII. Raw materials and food were in short supply, and war-damaged industries needed machinery and capital before production could be resumed.

Marshall suggested the Economic Recovery Program, known as "The Marshall Plan." Under the plan, the United States provided aid to prevent starvation, repair the devastation, and begin economic reconstruction. The plan had two major aims: to prevent the spread of communism in Western Europe and to stabilize the international order to develop democracy and free-market economies.

Over the four-years of the Marshall Plan, Congress appropriated \$13.3 billion for European recovery. The aid supplied materials for production. The U.S. also benefited from the plan by developing valuable trading partners and reliable allies.

The plan was the most successful, and certainly the most expensive foreign policy ever attempted in peacetime. The Marshall Plan has had far-reaching consequences. In the short run, it relieved widespread privation and averted the threat of a serious economic depression. In the long run, it enabled the West European nations to recover and maintain not only economic but political independence. It also paved the way for other forms of international cooperation such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and today's European Union.

1. What was the purpose of the Marshall Plan?

2. What did the plan help pave the way for in Europe?

The Nuremberg Trials

No trial provides a better basis for understanding the nature and causes of evil than do the Nuremberg trials from 1945 to 1949. Those who come to the trials expecting to find sadistic monsters are generally disappointed. What is shocking about Nuremberg is the ordinariness of the defendants:

men who may be good fathers, kind to animals, even unassuming--yet who committed unspeakable crimes.

From the years 1945-1949 over 100 top ranking Nazi officials from the SS, SA, the Gestapo, and other major offices were charged with war crimes. Some of these men were vital to the Nazi Party, but the most important Nazi officials would escape trial and punishment. Before the war was over, in a bunker twenty feet below the Berlin sewer system, Adolf Hitler shot himself. Soon thereafter before the Nuremberg Trials, Heinrich Himmler--perhaps the most terrifying figure in the Nazi regime--took a cyanide crystal while being examined by a British doctor and died within minutes. Also unavailable for trial were Joseph Goebbels (dead) and Martin Bormann (missing).

Still, many important Axis leaders had fell into Allied hands, either through surrender or capture. Deputy Fuhrer Rudolph Hess had been held in England since 1941, when he had parachuted into the English sky in a solo effort to convince British leaders to make peace with the Nazi government. Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering surrendered to Americans on May 6, 1945. Hans Frank, "the Jew Butcher of Krakow," received less hospitable treatment from American soldiers in Bavaria, who forced him to run through a seventy-foot line of soldiers, getting kicked and punched the whole way. Other suspected war criminals were rounded up on May 23. This group included Karl Doenitz (Hitler's successor as Führer), Field Marshall Wilhelm Keitel, Nazi Party philosopher Alfred Rosenberg, General Alfred Jodl, and Armaments Minister Albert Speer. Eventually, twenty-two of these captured major Nazi figures would be indicted.

These are some quotes of the infamous men on trial.

Karl Doenitz: German admiral who would eventually command entire navy. He was chosen by Hitler to succeed him as Führer. He negotiated surrender following Hitler's suicide. He was sentenced to ten years in prison.

Hans Frank: Governor-general of Nazi-occupied Poland called the "Jew butcher of Krakow." "The Jews must be eliminated. Whenever we catch one, it is his end"...."This territory [Poland] is in its entirety the booty of the German Reich"...."I have not been hesitant in declaring that when a German is shot, up to 100 Poles shall be shot too." This was taken from the diary of Hans Frank. He was hanged for his crimes in 1946.

Hermann Goering: Reichsmarschall and Luftwaffe (Air Force) Chief; President of Reichstag; and Director of "Four Year Plan" Goering committed suicide on the day before his scheduled hanging by taking a cyanide pill that was smuggled into his cell. Goering wrote in his suicide note, "I would have no objection to getting shot," but he thought hanging was inappropriate for a man of his position.

Rudolf Hess: Deputy to the Fuhrer and Nazi Party Leader. During his detention following his failed putsch, Hitler dictated *Mein Kampf* to Hess...Hess flew to England in 1941 in an attempt to end the war on his own terms. He stayed there until the war ended....Hess suffered from paranoid delusions, apathy, amnesia, and was diagnosed as having a "hysterical personality." Hess was sentenced to life in prison. He remained--lost in his own mind-- in Spandau prison (for many years as its only prisoner) until he committed suicide in 1987 at age 93.

Albert Speer: Reich minister of Armaments and Munitions. Speer served his 20-year sentence. He wrote two books about his life. He died in 1981 at age 76.

Karl Adolf Eichmann: SS-was head of the Department for Jewish Affairs in the Gestapo from 1941 to 1945 and was chief of operations in the deportation of three million Jews to extermination camps. At the end of the war, Eichmann was arrested and confined to an American internment camp, but he was able to escape unrecognized. He fled to Argentina and lived under the assumed name of Ricardo Klement for ten years until Israeli Mossad agents abducted him in 1960 to stand trial in Jerusalem. The controversial and highly publicized trial lasted from April 2 to August 14, 1961. Eichmann was sentenced to death and executed in Ramleh Prison on May 31, 1962.

1. Why do you think these trials took place?
2. Why was it important to put these men on trial?
3. Was it fair to sentence some of these men to death for their crimes?