

## France during the war

Defeat of France:

- Declared war when Germany invaded Poland, although sent no aid.
  - Phoney war
  - Reynard leader of government
- Germans attack France
  - Bypass Maginot line
  - Overwhelm the spread-out and unprepared French troops
  - Took almost 2 million prisoners.
  - Took Paris when government abandoned it.
  - Government moved to Bordeaux
- France surrenders
  - Demand for armistice increases, Reynard resigns
  - Replaced by Pétain
  - France divided into two zones
    - German zone – north and all coast
    - French – chunk in the middle and south
  - France agreed to pay costs of occupying army
  - French POWs kept as hostages
- De Gaulle sets up Free French government in exile in Britain, but is ignored.

Vichy Government:

- Collaborated with Germans
- Pétain in charge, Pierre Laval vice
- Pétain initially popular, saved France from chaos
- Changes:
  - New constitution and encouraged German ideals (work, family, homeland) rather than French (liberty, equality and fraternity)
  - Trade unions banned, corporate state introduced
  - Increased influence of Catholic Church
  - Jews and Communists removed from civil service.
- Popular after poor Third Republic
- Support from fascists, big business, landowners, Catholics
  - Groups united by hatred of communists
- Basically did whatever Germany told them and tried to make it look like their idea

Collaboration

- Hoped it would lead to better treatment by the Germans (were sure Germany would win quickly)
- They hoped for:
  - Return of POWs
  - Decrease in war costs France had to pay

- Respect for Vichy's independence
- Had no power, Germany didn't listen to them
- People supported collaboration because they gave up hope
- Germans
  - Needed only 30,000 troops to police France
  - Wanted revenge on France
- French police (Milice) helped German causes

#### Economy in Vichy France

- Had no money because of war costs and loss of most of the industry to the Germans
- Bad harvest led to starvations and emergency measures
  - Rationing (1,200 calories a day)
  - Strict control of wages and prices
- War costs rose to 500 million francs a day
- Forced labour in German factories introduced (650,000 people)

Allied troops took over French provinces Algeria and Morocco, in response Germany invaded Vichy France

#### Anti-Semitism in France

- Jews banned from holding elective office, working in civil service, teaching and journalism
- Jewish property seized with help of Vichy officials
- French police rounded up Jews and deported them
  - Sent to Drancy transit camp, then Auschwitz
  - Mainly non-French Jews – tried to protect French Jews
- 75% of Jews survived
  - Fled to Italian-occupied France who refused to hand over Jews
  - Were helped by non-Jewish French families
  - Laval helped French Jews
  - Archbishop of Toulouse spoke out against treatment of Jews

#### The Resistance

- Germany invaded USSR, now French Communist Party resisted
  - Germany had previously had an agreement with USSR, now they had broken it
  - Communist Party had a large underground organisation
  - They organised the Resistance
- Resistance supported by Britain and Free France
- Role of Resistance
  - Gathering intelligence
  - Establishing escape routes
  - Sabotage
  - Assassination of collaborators and Germans
- Capture meant torture and death
- First victory – taking Corsica

- Resistance nicknamed Maquis
- Milice helped to fight against the Resistance

#### De Gaulle and the Free French

- Didn't get on well with Britain and US (they didn't take him seriously)
  - Didn't tell him about D-Day until night before
- His position was strengthened when more and more French territory was liberated
- Liberated French territory was under control of the Free French
- Resistance movements united and looked to Free French for support
  - De Gaulle became head of this
  - Called French Committee for National Liberation
  - Had an army of 500,000

#### End of Vichy France

- Widespread Resistance revolutions coincided with D-Day landings in Normandy
  - Their destruction of railways and bridges hampered German response to Allied landings
- Allied broke out from Normandy, revolt began in Paris
- Free French captured Paris
  - Set up provisional government with De Gaulle as head
  - A bit over a month after, Germans had been driven out from most of France
- Revenge against collaborators
  - Especially against Milice – 10,000 people shot without trial
  - Women with German boyfriends humiliated
- French government restored order
  - Began trials of Vichy government
  - Laval executed after unfair trial
  - Pétain imprisoned