Your notes

KS3 History: revision notes

The German Occupation of the Channel Islands

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1940: evacuation and invasion

- In June 1940, Britain decided it couldn't defend the Channel Islands. About 17,000 people, including most of Guernsey's schoolchildren, were evacuated to England.
- On 28 June 1940, German planes bombed St Peter Port harbour, killing more than 30 people. German forces arrived on 30 June 1940.
- The island was run by the Bailiff, Victor Carey, and a Controlling Committee (led first by Ambrose Sherwill), under German orders.

Life under occupation

- Clocks changed to German time, traffic drove on the right, a **curfew** was imposed, newspapers were censored and German money was used.
- From 1942, islanders' radios were confiscated to stop them hearing BBC news.
- In September 1942, hundreds of British-born islanders were deported to internment camps in Germany.
- Three Jewish women living in Guernsey were deported in 1942 and murdered at Auschwitz.
- Some islanders resisted: the Guernsey Underground News Service (GUNS) secretly spread BBC news until its members were caught in 1944, and people hid radios and painted V-for-victory signs.

Fortress islands

- Hitler ordered the islands turned into a fortress as part of the **Atlantic Wall**. Bunkers, gun batteries and observation towers were built all over Guernsey.
- The work was done by forced labourers of the **Organisation Todt**, many from occupied Europe, who were treated harshly.

- Alderney was almost completely evacuated. The Germans built camps there, including an SS camp, where many forced labourers and prisoners died.

1944 to 1945: hunger and liberation

- After D-Day in June 1944, the islands were cut off from France, and food and fuel ran desperately short.
- The Red Cross ship SS Vega brought food parcels, first reaching Guernsey in December 1944.
- The German surrender was signed on board HMS Bulldog, and Guernsey was liberated on 9 May 1945. **Liberation** Day is celebrated every year on 9 May.

Key terms

Occupation	When a country or area is controlled by a foreign army.
Evacuation	Moving people away from danger.
Deportation	Forcing people to leave a place.
Curfew	A rule that people must stay indoors at certain times.
Censorship	Controlling what can be published or said.
Organisation Todt	The German organisation that used forced labour to build fortifications.
Atlantic Wall	German defences along the coast of Europe.
Resistance	Actions taken to oppose the occupiers.
Liberation	Being set free from occupation.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. On what date did German forces arrive in Guernsey?
2. What happened in St Peter Port on 28 June 1940?
3. About how many people were evacuated from Guernsey to England in June 1940?
4. What is celebrated in Guernsey on 9 May?
5. Which island was almost completely evacuated and had camps built on it?
6. Why did the Germans build bunkers and towers all over the islands?
7. Who did most of the building work on the fortifications?
8. What happened to many British-born islanders in September 1942?

Answers

1. 30 June 1940
2. German planes bombed the harbour, killing more than 30 people
3. About 17,000, including most schoolchildren
4. Liberation Day, the end of the occupation in 1945

Your notes

5. Alderney
6. Hitler wanted the islands turned into a fortress as part of the Atlantic Wall
7. Forced labourers of the Organisation Todt
8. They were deported to internment camps in Germany

What to do next

Practise 14 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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