**WORLD WAR II**

**Economic and Political Situation in the World on the Eve of the World War II**

The whole world had to suffer economic and political consequences of the World War I. The conquest of the natural forces and the production of material goods and arms were considered the marks of a nation’s prosperity and strength. Such countries were held in high respect but after the World War the condition of all these countries became very wretched. Economic rivalry between nations increased. There was explosion of population in several countries. Politically the world divided into two camps: the totalitarian states and the democratic states.

**1.Economic Rivalry –** The world-wide economic depression that followed the World War I foisted hardships on all governments. Industry was in straits, export was declining and unemployment was wide rampant. National income fell, making it difficult to repay loans. To cope with this situation many countries devalued their currency. England gave up gold standard in 1931 and 35 governments followed suit in 1932. Most of the countries restricted imports and increased exports. Some raised tariff and resorted to barter system. But all these measures failed to bring in stability. They simply aroused animosity and jealousy. It was said at this time ‘If goods are not allowed to cross border, armies will.’

**2.Opulent vs. Indigent Countries –** Economic disparity between the countries increased as a consequence of treaties signed after the World War I. Relations with Germany, Italy and Japan became bitter because they thought that injustice had been done to them. In 1930, Britain, France and the USA occupied 30 million square miles of land whereas Germany, Italy and Japan shared only 1 million square miles. Out of the seven big nations four were prosperous and owned enough land and natural resources whereas the other three were resourceless and forbidden to expand their territory.

**3.Growing Pressure of Population –** The distribution of colonies that was affected after the World War I was not rational. There was no space for the growing population of Germany, Italy, and Japan whereas Britain, Russia, America and France possessed vast areas sparsely populated. As a solution to this problem 10 million Italians immigrated to the new world, Canada and Latin America between 1880 and 1930. During the same period two million Germans immigrated to the USA. This exodus slackened after 1930 and some Europeans settled in British colonies and Latin America. Later on like America, Britain also banned the entry of Asians and Africans into her colonies.

**4.Totalitarianism vs. Democracy –** The World War I culminated into a struggle between democratic (Britain, France and America) and totalitarian (Germany, Austria and Hungary) powers. The Allied Powers came out victorious on the belief that this was a war to finish war, In the name of strengthening democracy, the USA supported Britain and France. The Russian revolution did away with the despotism of the Czar but installed in its place all the more absolute but efficient communist dictatorship. Discontent with its parliamentary democracy, Italy in 1922 handed over power to Fascists under Benito Mussolini. Frustrated with its defeat, Germany whole heartedly supported Nazi party to establish its dictatorship in 1933. These events proved fatal to democracy.

Communist, Fascist and Nazi governments differed with each other in their ideology and objectives still they had significant similiarities. They were all totalitarian governments where the power was concentrated in the hands of a disciplined organization which did not want to share it with any one, for all political parties were wiped out of existence. The life, property and freedom of the people were at the mercy of the government which subscribed to the ideal ‘Government of the Party, by the Party for the Party’. These differences between ideologies aggravated international tension and paved the way for the World War.

**The Background of World War II-** After a peace for twenty years the flame of war once again engulfed the whole of Europe on September 1, 1939 and the struggle became world-wide. The apprehension of war had begun after the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 when the German delegates were coerced to sign the ‘dictated’ and ‘humiliating treaty’ of Versailles. They considered the Treaty of Versailles a profane document and wanted to overthrow the restrictions imposed on them. Though Germany had been defeated and crushed, it could not be neglected. At the time of Paris Treaty, the German delegate Erzberger had said with great confidence, ‘The nation with 60 million oppressed people could never perish.’

The ‘German problem’ which remained one of the most complicated and disturbing problems of Europe during the period between the World Wars finally became the most prominent cause of the Second World War. At the Paris Peace Conference Germany was not treated in a befitting manner. The French policy of extracting reparation from Germany in a harsh manner intensified her indignation. America had gradually adopted the policy of isolationism. Discontented with the peace treaties, Italy joined the revisionists. France wanted to reduce Germany to a state of extinction but Britain wanted to see her a prosperous nation able to maintain balance in Europe, and act as a shield against communism. Thus Germany got an opportunity of violating the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles.

Japan was also discontented with the Paris Peace Treaties. Prompted by militarism she started implementing her expansionist policies. Japan attacked and captured Manchuria in September 1931, renamed it Manchukuo and set up a puppet government there. When the League of Nations found Japan guilty of aggression and condemned her, she quit it.

At this time, Mussolini’s nationalism touched its high and he attacked Abyssinia. Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis came into existence and divided the whole World into two powerful camps. The Axis Powers on one side and the Democratic states on the other. Hitler disregarded the Treaty of Versailles and the German troops entered Rhineland. Republicanism died in Austria and it was merged with Germany on April 10, 1938.

Another important event was the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. The Germany population in one of her provinces, Sudetenland, was above 50 per cent. So it was merged with Germany. This temporarily averted the danger of war but cast a fatal effect on the international situation. Through her diplomatic manoeuvres Germany won over the Baltic states to her side and signed a treaty with Russia. Britain wanted Germany to peacefully resolve the problem of Poland but Hitler preferred a stern policy. Hitler demanded from Poland the port of Danzing and the Polish corridor to reach the sea. With this demand Hitler attacked Poland on the morning of September 1, 1939. This was the beginning of World War II.

**Causes of World War II –** The crisis caused by the German demand for Danzing and Polish corridor was the immediate cause of World War II, but the ground for it had been prepared since the end of World War I. The fundamental causes of this great war were:

**1.Harsh Terms and Conditions of the Treaty of Versailles –** In World War I Germany was defeated and made to sign the humiliating treaty of Versailles. The Allied Powers invoked the Fourteen Principles of Wilson but Loyd George, Clemenceau and their fellow diplomats were so overwhelmed by the feelings of revenge, national self-interest and future security that they tried to create an order in which defeated Germany would never be able to raise her head. ‘As a result of this treaty Germany had to lose one-eight of her territories in Europe and 7 million people together with all her colonies. Her naval force which rivaled the naval force of Britain was destroyed and her army was reduced to one lakh. She had to forgo 2/3 of her coal fields, 2/3 of iron, 7/10 of zinc and more than half of lead deposits. Churchill writes about this treaty,’ The economic clauses of the Treaty were foolish and harmful. They assisted in conjuring up the curse of militarism and economic crisis.’ A self-respecting country like Germany could not bear such harsh and humiliating conditions for long. Therefore, as soon as the opportunity appeared Germany took up arms against the Allied Powers to seek venegeance.

**2.Rise of Dictators –** After World War I democracy had been set up in the defeated as well as newly created states. Weimar republic which was established in Germany was accused of signing the Treaty of Versailles, so the Nazi Party rose. It wanted to re-establish the prestige of Germany in the international field. Hitler tried to convince the people of the world that he aimed at establishing peace but soon he turned aggressive. In 1935, he flouted the military clauses in the Treaty of Versailles and declared re-armament. In 1938 he annexed Austria and dismembered Czechoslovakia. Now the clouds of war began to gather on all sides.

After World War I, Mussolini established dictatorship in Italy. He opposed the Treaty of Versailles. Italy demonstrated her imperialistic designs by attacking Abyssinia. The League of Nations failed to take any action against Italy, which exhibited the weakness of the League.

Japan also unfolded her imperialistic desires and disregarding the League of Nations, occupied Manchuria. In 1937, Italy joined the Anti-Comintern Pact and the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis came into existence. In May 1939, Italy signed a ten-year Treaty with Germany and both the states promised to cooperate with each other in case of war. With the help of the dictators of Italy and Germany Franco established his dictatorship in Spain. Thus these dictators drove the countries of the world to the verge of war.

**3.Failure of the League of Nations-End of the system of Collective Security –** The League of Nations failed to fulfil its objectives. America did not join the League. This deprived it of the support and assistance of a powerful nation. In the beginning the membership of the League was not open to the vanquished nations.

Impressed by the commendable work done by the League of Nations in certain fields between 1925 and 1929, fifty nations obtained its membership, but this was a temporary phase. The Allied Powers used the League to grind their own axe. The aim of France was to see that the terms and conditions of the Peace Conference were observed. Japan ignored the proposals of the League and quit it. Mussolini attacked Abyssinia in 1935, and grabbed it. The League failed to take effective steps during these world crises.

**4.Failure of Disarmament Efforts –** Politicians the world over believed that to ensure peace and security the arms race should cease. After the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, the arms and armed forces of the vanquished nations had been greatly reduced. The Allied Powers had assured Germany that after some time general disarmament would be implemented to ascertain collective security, but the policies adopted by different nations only encouraged armament.

The first attempt towards disarmament was made in 1921 in the Washington Conference in which the major naval powers Britain, America and Japan agreed to delimit the proportions of the tonnage of their warships. The German Disarmament Conference held in 1932 made efforts to reduce the arms and to put a check on them. The Five Power Conference, the Four Power Pact and the Mac Donald Plan were some of the important steps taken in the direction of establishing peace and implementing disarmament, but because of the differences between France and Germany no decisions could be taken and small states began to augment their military power and the world once again sank into the same international chaos in which Europe had been before the First World War began. The atmosphere that developed all round made a future war seem imminent.

**5.Contradictory Policies of Western Nations and the Failure of the Policy of Appeasement –** The mutual disputes among the Allied Powers also contributed to the development of the power of Italy and Germany. After the Paris Peace Conference, the group of ‘Five Allied Powers’ came to an end and the responsibility for enforcing the peace treaties mainly fell on the shoulders of France and Britain. But differences between these two states had increased on the questions of reparation, collective security and disarmament.

It was unfortunate that for the sake of her commercial benefits, Britain implicitly helped Germany in her plans of rearmament. To maintain her world wide empire and international trade Britain wanted to ward off any danger in the Mediterranean region and the Far East. This was why she appeased Italy. Britain did not oppose Japan (from Manchurian crisis till Sino-Japanese war) because it appeared to be the only way of safeguarding her immediate and future trade interests in Far and South-East Asia.

Another reason for adopting the policy of appeasement was that after World War I France had become very powerful in Europe and to keep her under control Britain wanted to strengthen Germany. This enraged the Allied Powers and France made separate treaties with Poland. Belgium and Czechoslovakia. Hitler and Mussolini took full advantage of the differences between France and England and of the policy of appeasement. Mutual distrust weakened the front of Allied Powers and they found it difficult to check the growing power of the dictators. Thus the policy of appeasement completely demolished the concept of collective security.

**6.Spirit of Extreme Nationalism –** As in World War I, the spirit of extreme nationalism was one of the important causes of the conflict. Because of industrial revolution, economic competition had been growing in the world. This economic nationalism was responsible for the War. The need for controlling this nationalism had been felt since World War I came to an end. The spirit of internationalism failed to grow. The influence of extreme nationalism was pre-eminent in Italy, Germany and Japan. Nationalism there aimed at making the nation strong and glorious. Hitler made the concept of ‘master race’ the basis of national greatness. The economic depression played an important role in accentuating the spirit of nationalism.

**7.Rise of the Two Rival Military Blocs –** Before World War I, the whole world was divided into two rival military camps: the one stood for democracy and the other for despotism. Now before World War II again there were two rival military camps. On the one side were nations like Germany, Italy and Japan which formed the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis. On the other side were allied powers like Britain, France, Soviet Russia and America. They formed a strong treaty organization. When the German armed forces under Hitler attacked Poland, Britain and France supported Poland, and the Second World War broke out.

**8.The Discontent of the Minorities –** When the Paris treaties shifted boundaries of the states, exchange of races was inevitable. Austria was separated from Germany and Czechoslovakia was recognized as an independent state. This complicated the situation in Balkan peninsula and central Europe. While the Treaties were under preparation, the Allied Powers dispelled the fear of the minorities by asserting the principle of ‘self-determination’. But these minorities became a source of exiting ‘mutual discord;, agitation and discontent which finally initiated mutual struggle between various states.

**9.The Immediate Cause of War : German Attack on Poland –** Hitler suddenly stormed Poland on September 1, 1939. On September 3, Britain and France warned Germany to stop war, but Hitler turned a deaf ear. Consequently, Britain and France declared war against Germany. In a short time the war spread like wild fire. This was the origin of World War II.

**Events of World War II –** For the sake of convenience the events of the World War II can be put into four phases –

**Phase One –** It comprises events from September 1, 1939 to June 21, 1941 when Germany attacked Poland, Denmark, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, France, Britain and Greece.

**Phase Two –** Between June 22, 1941 and December 6, 1941. The Axis Powers attacked Africa and Germany attacked Russia.

**Phase Three –** From December 7, 1941 to November 7, 1942. It includes Japanese attack on Perl Harbour and occupation of Netherlands, east Indies and Caucasus by the armed forces of the Allied Powers.

**Phase Four –** From November 8, 1941 to May 6, 1945. It includes American attack on French North Africa and the surrender of Germany as well as the surrender of Japan between May 7, 1945 to August 14, 1945.

**Attack on Poland :** **The war begins –** On September 1, 1993 Hitler’s forces crossed into the boundary of Poland, captured western Poland within two weeks and besieged her capital Warsaw.

Meanwhile, Britain and France declared war against Germany on September 3. The Commonwealth countries (Austria, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada and India) also joined the war against Germany. On September 17, Russia attacked Poland and occupied the eastern part. Thus by September 27, the whole of Poland passed under foreign rule. On September 28 Germany and Russia signed an agreement according to which the western part of Poland remained with Germany and the eastern with Russia.

**Russia occupies Baltic States and attacks Finland –** After the Russo-German agreement, Germany engaged in war with Britain and France on the Western Front. Russia made treaties of cooperation with the three small states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the Baltic region and sought from them an assurance to station her forces there. For the security of Leningrad she wanted facilities to build a military base in Finland. When negotiations between them failed Russia attacked Finland and forced her to surrender on March 12, 1940. Under a Treaty Finland had to cede to Russia a large portion of her territory together with Ladoga lake as well as consent the construction of a naval base at Hango. Thus Russia reoccupied all the states that had slipped out of her hands after World War I.

**Fall of Denmark and Norway –** After occupying Poland, Hitler asked Britain and France to cease fire. But the Allied Powers turned down his proposal. Thereupon in April 1940, Germany attacked and defeated Norway and Denmark. The defeat of these two states invited people’s censure of the Chamberlin government. Chamberlain resigned and Churchill became the Prime Minister in his place. He proved to be a great war leader and conducted the war very efficiently.

**German Attack on Holland and Belgium –** On May 10, Germany attacked Luxemburg, Belgium and Holland. Luxumburg fell the very same day, Holland was occupied after five days and Belgium surrendered on May 28, 1940.

**Fall of France –** Hitler attacked France on May 10. On May 17, the German forces broke the French line of defence, captured a vast area of 60 miles and created a rift between the combined French, Belgian and British forces stationed in the north and the French forces in the south. France and the Allied Powers were in a fragile position now. Balon fell on May 25, Calais on May 27, and the German forces converged near the port of Dunkirk. The Belgian ruler Loepold surrendered on May 28 and ceased fire. This made the leftwing of the Allied Forces stationed in the north vulnerable and presaged their defeat. Germany again attacked France on June 5 and on June 10 the French government shifted from Paris to Tours.

**Italy joins the War –** On June 10, Italy declared war against France and Britain. On June 14, the German forces easily entered Paris because French government had withdraw her troops from there. Armistice was signed between France and Germany on June 22. According to the terms and conditions of the Armistice, France had to cede more than half of her territory which contained most of her industrial estates and all the seaports on the coast of Atlantic. Armistice with Italy was signed on June 23, 1940 according to which France ceded to Italy all the territory she had already won as well as conceded to demilitarize her major bases of Tulou, Tunisia, Corsica and Algeria spread along the Italian border. Some French patriots who still wanted to continue war with Germany reached England under the leadership of De Gualle, formed an independent French government there and organized an independent French army. This independent French government carried on war with Germany.

**Germany attacks Britain –** The French defeat weakened the position of Britain. Germany now held sway over all the seas from Norway to South Spain. Encouraged by all this, Germany launched a fierce attack on England on June 18, 1940. The German airplanes bombarded England for five months. But the Churchill government faced Germany with great fortitude Churchill not only made enthusiastic speeches but made all possible preparations for the defence of England. Therefore, Hitler gradually slowed down his attacks. On the other hand Italy occupied Somaliland, Kenya and Sudan as well as attacked north Egypt and then Greece. Greece with the help of other states repulsed the Italian forces out of her territory. Now Germany came to help Italy and occupied Greece in April 1941. Russia which was also occupying Balkan region signed an agreement with Italy and Germany in September 1941 and entered war on the side of the Axis Powers. Within two months Hungary, Rumania, and Slovakia also joined the Axis Powers. In February 1941, German forces put British forces to rout in Libya, attacked Yugoslavia on April 9, 1941 and conquered her. To finish the British empire Germany attacked Iraq, Iran and Syria, but here Germany had to give in before the British power. This closed the eastern road for Germany.

**Germany attacks Russia –** Though Russia and Germany had signed a non-aggression pact in August 1939, Hitler wanted to defeat Russia to ensure the safety of his eastern frontier. Both Germany and Russia wanted to increase their influence in the Balkan region. This caused rivalry between them. On June 22, 1941 German forces attacked Russia, and brought Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and eastern Poland under her rule. But Hitler failed to capture Moscow and destroy the Russian army.

Germany made a mistake by attacking Moscow. When the winter set in, it became difficult for Germany to advance further. Counter attack by Russian army forced German forces to retreat from the suburbs of Moscow. However, they occupied 5 lakh square miles of Russian territory.

**Japan attack America –** Japan had already been trying to establish her influence in Asia and the Pacific region. With Germany she formed the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis. Taking advantage of the fall of France, Japan occupied French Indo-China and captured her military and naval bases. These activities of Japan alerted Britain and America. America warned Japan not to disturb the peace of the Pacific region. But all of a sudden Japan attacked Pearl Harbour in the Hawai islands on December 7, 1941. 19 naval ships including 8 warships were either sunk or damaged badly, 177 airplanes were lost, 2,343 soldiers were killed and more than 2000 wounded. On the next day, that is on December 8, America and England declared war on Japan and made the war a World War in the true sense.

**Japan’s Military Campaign (December 1941 – May 1942) –** Japan like Germany achieved great success in the beginning. Having attacked Pearl Harbour, she quickly moved towards European empires in South East Asia and the Pacific as well as the American islands and by the end of December 1941 captured Siam. She deprived Britain of Hong Kong and in January 1942 brought a large portion of Philippine Islands under her control. By the middle of February, the British naval base at Singapore passed under the control of Japan. She defeated Burma by the end of March and closed all the routes of sending military equipment to China. In March itself she defeated the joint fleets of Holland, America, England and Australia, sent some of her armed forces into Java and within a few weeks occupied the whole of Dutch East Indies and sailed upto Australia. In May 1942 she captured Watan and Coregidar, the remaining bases in the Philippines. Thus within six months she destroyed the European and American empires in East Asia and the Pacific region.

**The Russian Front –** In spite of a prolonged struggle the German armed forces failed to penetrate any further into Russia. In the winter of 1941, the Russians attacked German forces and forced them to retreat. German forces failed to capture Moscow, but they soon trampled over Crimea and occupied Sebastipole. During the summer a division of the German forces moved south towards Caucasus and captured its rich oil fields; another division moved east in the direction of Stalingrad on the Volga and reached there by the end of August. Thus by March 1942 the German armed forces had captured the whole of western region, Ukraine and Crimea in the south and had penetrated deep into the Caucasus region in the east. In August-September Stalin reorganized his defence mechanism and inspired the Russian army and citizens to resist the enemy with new enthusiasm. In August 1942, Churchill visited Russia, explained the plan of Allied Powers to Stalin and obtained his concurrence. On November 19, 1942 the Russian army mounted a fierce counter attack against Germany and besieged twenty-two divisions of German army between the Volga and Don rivers. This gave a momentous shock to German armed forces as well as the prestige of Hitler. This put an end to German dream of ever establishing control over Russia.

**The War takes a New Turn-Defeat of Axis Powers in Africa and Europe –** Upto the middle of 1942, the Axis Powers carried on their victory march successfully in Europe, Africa and East Asia and Britain, America and Russia had to recede at every front. But by the end of 1942, the progress of the Axis Powers came to a halt. In November 1942, the joint forces of Britain and America began to drive out Italian and German forces from north Africa and ultimately the Allied Powers established their control there. In this victory campaign General Montgomery and Eisenhour showed great prowess.

**Defeat of Italy –** The condition of Allied Powers improved in 1943. On July 10, they attacked Sicily. Italian forces were very weak and suffered defeat at every place. Mussolini asked Hitler to help but he could not send any help. The joint forces of Allied Powers attacked Italy on July 18. After a fierce struggle Mussolini was arrested on July 23. Italy surrendered on December 3, 1943. Meanwhile the German paratroopers liberated Mussolini who once again tried to bring Italy under his influence with the help of Germany, but in vain. Ultimately, the Allied Powers occupied Rome on June 4, 1944.

**Defeat of Germany –** The defeat of Germany started from Stalingrad when the Russian army surrounded the German armed forces. By February 1943 more than one lakh German soldiers had been killed. The danger to Moscow had passed off. In the summer Russia frustrated the German forces. In the struggle that lasted about two months more than one lakh eighty thousand German soldiers perished and about 3500 German planes, 20 thousand military vehicles and other arms and weapons including 1300 tanks were destroyed. The Russian armed forces now entered Poland, devastated Nazi forces and conquered Rumania, Finland and Bulgaria. Finally on March 8, 1944 two thousand American bombers bombarded Berlin. The armies of the Allied Powers were landed on the north western seacoast of France. By 1944 the number of forces in France reached 3 lakh. German fortification on the French border was pulled down. On August 15, 1944 the forces of Allied Powers were landed on the east Mediterranean coast of France; they captured the ports of Toulouse and Marseilles. The German occupied Paris fell on August 25 and the German army surrendered.

After the liberation of France the Allied Forces liberated all other states occupied by Germany. Almost all the states in the Balkan peninsula sided with the Allied Powers. In November 1944 the Allied Forces entered Germany via Holland. When these forces had crossed the river Rhine, the German people turned against Hitler and a conspiracy was hatched to murder him. Meanwhile, Russian forces liberated all the states under German rule in the eastern region and marched towards Berlin. On April 22, 1945 Russia attacked Berlin. British, French and American forces also converged there. Finally, Berlin fell on May 2, 1945 and the German army surrendered on May 4. Hitler with his wife Iva Braun committed suicide and the Italian patriots shot Mussolini and his wife dead. Armistice was signed on May 7, 1945 and on May 8 the War in Europe came to an end.

**Defeat of Japan and the End of the World War –** After the defeat of Germany Allied Powers turned their attention towards Japan. Now the British forces made a rapid advance in the Far East and liberated Burma. Then Malaya, Philippines and Singapore were liberated. Lastly a fierce attack was mounted on Japan. In the Potsdam Conference held on July 26, 1945, the Allied Powers asked Japan to make an unconditional surrender, but Japan turned a deaf ear. As a result, on August 6, 1945, America dropped the first atom bomb on the prosperous city of Hiroshima. A second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki on August 9. Japan offered to surrender on the terms of Potsdam declaration on August 10 and the war came to an end on August 14. Thus the fierce and annihilating Second World War lasted almost six years.

**Political Consequence of World War II**

The Second World War was the most barbarous, fierce and devastating war in human history; it was so colossal and consequential that an age ended with it. Many new ideologies were born in Europe after World War II. The new ideologies of democracy and nationalism that had emerged after the French Revolution had successfully stood the test of time. But after the World War some of these ideologies had worn out. The spirit of nationalism began to decline. The new awakening brought about by the industrial revolution and the development of science enhanced the importance of economic organization of society. The political consequences of this war were:

**1.Change in the Techniques of Warfare : Beginning of the Nuclear Age –** The techniques used in this war greatly differed from those used in the previous wars. Hitler’s technique of Blitzkreig surprised in the whole world. The victories that required years and months to accomplish were now attained in weeks and days. Army and navy did not have as much importance in this war as the airforce and aeroplanes. New methods of attack and counter-attack were successfully tested. The use of the atom bomb brought the world on the verge of disaster. All the scientists the world over realized that man had attained superhuman powers in the form of atomic energy. In the present day man has developed intercontinental, supersonic jet planes, missiles carrying nuclear heads as well as planes and submarines powered with nuclear energy.

**2.Division of Society into Two Ideologies –** Several new tendencies were born in the history of Europe after World War II. The spirit of nationalism had waned and was being replaced by those new ideologies that aimed at reorganizing society in a new way. Society was now divided into two ideologies : communism and democracy. The communists wanted the means of production to be owned by the public as a whole and nobody should get any income without engaging himself in productive labour. Difference between high and low should be abolished, a classless society should be established and the government should control all business activities. On the other hand believers in democracy, no doubt, favoured the abolition of social distinction between high and low, but they held that the government should make laws to control the origin, exchange and distribution of property to maintain coordination between capital and labor, land owners and peasants and every one should get an adequate share of property. During the World War many people felt no scruples in helping the enemy if it held identical ideas against which their own national governments were fighting. Now loyalty to the nation, patriotism and the spirit of sacrifice for the motherland were replaced by devotion to ideology.

**3.Weakening of the Spirit of Nationalism –** Scientific development has annihilated time and space. Differences based on language, religion, race and culture have dissolved. Nations have now begun to organize themselves into various groups. After World War Ii the East European nations which followed the Communist ideology decided to form a bloc under the overall patronage of Russia. Similarly, the West European nations which stood for democracy decided to join into a group to avert communism.

**4.Emphasis on Totalitarianism –** Although democracy triumphed in the second World War, the War revealed inefficacy and hollowness of democratic countries. In spite of their victory in the war, England and France failed to avoid economic crisis. Therefore, totalitarianism began to replace democracy. National governments everywhere felt insecure because of these conflicting ideologies. In every state emerged political parties which were more concerned with ideology than with the security of their state. It became imperative for national governments to put several restrictions on such political parties and to suppress their anti-national activities. This is why a freedom-loving countries like England was forced to adopt several measures against the Communist party. Freedom of ideas and true democracy were now on the wane.

**5.Beginning of the Cold War –** After the end of the World War politicians and people of the world hoped that now a lasting peace would reign in the world and the Allied Powers, would be able to solve manifold post war problems. But people’s expectation did not come true. After the war two great powers, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., appeared on the international stage. They represented contrasting ideologies, so soon difference between them cropped up on various counts. These differences generated so much tension and animosity that a fierce war of charges and counter-charges, and propogation of mutually contradictory ideologies continued for many years. This is known as the ‘Cold War’. Thus the nations which opposed each other maintained diplomatic relations and did not resort to overt clashes, but treated each other with hostility. The press in these countries continued to hurl charges and counter-charges till 1991. With the disintegration of the USSR the Cold War has theoretically come to an end. The bipolar system of the Cold War days is changing into a unipolar one and this can be seen in America’s anxiety for evolving a global economy. However, Communist China obdurately obstructs her efforts.

**6.Non-alignment –** Most of the new sovereign states which came into existence after the World War, decided to keep themselves away from the tussle of the cold war. India led the way in this situation and raised her voice for non-alignment. Jawaharlal Nehru, said, ‘As far as possible we must keep ourselves away from the politics of the two opposing camps, which has already brought about two world wars.; He called upon all the recently liberated African and Asian countries to rally together to form an international power. About 102 countries have joined the non-alignment movement at present. The Non-aligned summits have succeeded in providing a forum to all the countries which have not joined either of the power blocs and are struggling against colonialism.

**7.Development of Regional Organisations –** To ensure their future security both the power blocs formed regional organizations. Those under the leadership of the U.S.A. wanted to check the onward march of Communism. While the U.S.S.R. created communist governments between herself and the western nations with a view to strengthening her security. Among the security organizations of the western countries the chief are North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) and the Baghdad Pact. Among the communist security organizations the Warsaw Pact was the most prominent.

**8.End of Colonialism and the Rise of Independent States –** World War II sparked off the spirit of independence and freedom movements in Asian countries gathered momentum and forced the imperialistic powers to grant freedom to the occupied countries. The British government changed her policies and India, Burma, Malaya, Lanka, Egypt and other countries were liberated. Several countries like Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam etc. in French Indo-China got rid of French domination and became independent. The Dutch colonies-Java, Sumatra and Borneo etc. formed a federal state of Indonesia and overthrew the Dutch domination. Thus a large portion of the British, French and Dutch empires slipped out of their yoke. It was something unprecedented.

**9.End of Imperialism and Colonialism –** Some European imperialistic powers lost in this war and their colonies set up national governments. The myth of the invulnerability of European powers was broken and they found themselves unable to hold their empires together. Communist ideology also denounced imperialism and colonialism. National political consciousness had awakened in the colonies and it was impossible to suppress it. The centre of power struggle now shifted to Asia, Africa and Latin America. The peoples in these regions challenged the supremacy of the European civilization and culture.

**10.Balance of Terror in place of Balance of Power –** The traditional concept of balance of power disappeared because preponderance of power could not be established against a nuclear power. Its place has now been taken by balance of terror. No doubt it has established peace, it is very dangerous and hazardous because even an insignificant misunderstanding or erroneous decision might cause devastation of the whole world. Menace of destruction coupled with mutual disbelief haunts the policy makers all over the world.

**11.Establishment of the United Nations Organization –** After the havoc caused by World War ii some prudent politicians felt an urgent need for creating an international organization for the security of mankind and the establishment of a lasting peace. Efforts in this direction had already started while the war was still going on. During the Moscow Conference held in October 1943 the need for establishing an international organization for general security was discussed and accepted. Then in several meetings the outline of its organization and constitution was prepared and was given a final shape in the San-Fransisco Conference held in April-June, 1945. The constitution of the United Nations Organization was put into practice on October 24, 1945. The 51 states which signed the Charter in the San-Francisco Conference, were considered the founder members of the U.N.O. At present the number of its members has risen up to 190, the latest being the state of Palau in the Pacific region.

In conclusion, it can be said that World War II was a very fierce and devastating war. No country in the world was left untouched by its influence. Even the countries which remained neutral during the war could not remained unaffected. The war changed the face of imperialism. Now it was replaced by areas divided according to their allegiance to different ideolgoies. The balance of power passed out of the hands of Britain into the hands of America. To get rid of the shortcomings of the League of Nations and to maintain peace and cordial relations in the world in future United Nations Organisation was established. This is the most important gift of World War II.