

ASPECTS OF TWENTIETH CENTURY WORLD

Unit – IV

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1. Disarmament – Efforts of League of Nations.

From January 1920 the League covenant became effective and since then the League council proceeded to put the principle of disarmament into practice. In May 1920 the Permanent Advisory Commission was set up to advise the League Council on the military affairs. In the first meeting of this Commission held in August 1920 a Committee of Assistance was appointed for the army, navy and air force. In 1921 the Council appointed a Temporary Mixed Commission for disarmament. The Commission prepared the draft of the Treaty of Mutual Assistance. It continued to work in co-operation with the Permanent Advisory Commission. The majority of the members of this commission were civilians. The commission during its tenure made four important efforts for disarmament.

- It made an effort to fix the land forces of the countries according to their national needs. This proposal was, however, rejected.
- It tried to extend the principles of the Washington Conference of 1922 to the non-signatory powers. This treaty made an effort to limit the naval armaments of the great naval powers of the world. This too failed.
- It prepared the draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance for international aid to victims of aggression. This treaty recommended arms reduction within two years and made an indirect effort to institute 'collective security' as a basis for the reduction of armaments. This treaty was also rejected by certain great powers.
- The commission produced the Geneva Protocol of 1924, which was an indirect approach to the problem of disarmament. This Protocol proposed to extend the area of compulsory arbitration and imposed sanctions against aggressor states. It thus created an atmosphere of security in which disarmament projects could be hopefully undertaken. This too was rejected.

When in 1925 the Locarno Pact was signed, the conditions for the settlement of the disarmament problem became more favourable. The French demand for security against possible attack of Germany was confirmed and the signatory states opined in favour of making effective the principle of disarmament as accepted by the League of Nations. Apart from this, the international situation became favourable for the discussion of the disarmament problem when Soviet Russia and U.S.A. joined the disarmament commission. Taking advantage of the favourable international situation the League council appointed the 'Preparatory Commission' for the reduction of armaments. In November 1927 the Preparatory Commission formed a

‘Committee on Arbitration and Security’ to consider measures capable of giving all states the guarantees of arbitration and security necessary to enable them to fix the level of their armaments at the lowest possible figures in an international disarmament agreement. It was in a session of the Preparatory Commission on December 3, 1927 that Litvinov surprised the world by proposing complete, universal and immediate disarmament. After six years of hard labour the commission adopted a draft convention which formed the basis of the world Disarmament Conference which eventually met in February 1932.

This draft convention provided that

- (i) the military personnel of states would be subject to limitation without regard, however, to the size of each state’s trained reserves and that the period of service for conscript forces would be limited;
- (ii) land war material was to be subject to budgetary limitation;
- (iii) naval war material would be limited in accordance with the terms of the Washington Conference (1922) and the London Naval Conference (1930);
- (iv) air armaments would be restricted according to horse power;
- (v) chemical and bacteriological warfare would be abolished; and
- (vi) a permanent disarmament commission would be established.

However, upon the failure of the preparatory commission to arrive at a final settlement, the League Council convened the world’s first Disarmament Conference at Geneva in February 1932. Representatives of 61 states attended the conference. The draft convention already prepared by the preparatory commission was placed before the conference. From the very beginning controversies amongst the representatives arose:

- Germany demanded that the general disarmament proposal and the principle of collective security as adopted in the League covenant should be recognized first. Besides, Germany demanded either to maintain her army and armaments in proportion to those of her neighbours or the reduction of armaments of all states to the level of Germany’s armaments as settled by the Treaty of Versailles. On the other hand, France did not agree to reduce her armaments and military equipments until she received guarantee of her security against possible attack on Germany. In short, Germany insisted on equality and France on that of security. The Franco-German rivalry complicated the disarmament problem.

- Difference of opinion also cropped up on the question of the power of the Permanent Disarmament Commission. France demanded that the Permanent Disarmament Commission would be given the right of temporary investigation. On the contrary, Britain proposed that the commission should be given the right of investigation only when any signatory state would suspect an infringement of the rules of Disarmament.
- The U.S. President Hoover proposed for a division of land army of all states into two, police-force for internal security and defence force for resisting foreign aggression. The U.S. President insisted on the reduction of the latter by one-third of its existing strength. But Britain and France could not agree to it.
- The British Prime Minister MacDonald presented a plan for the reduction of armaments and military personnel of all states and for specifying the allotments for each state. Besides this, MacDonald also proposed for a total prohibition of heavy cannon, tank and poisonous gas as offensive armaments. The French representatives insisted on the recognition of all armaments excepting the heavy tanks as defensive armaments. On the other hand, the German representatives demanded total prohibition of all sorts of offensive armaments.

After the two years of deliberation, in spite of differences mentioned above the Conference reached general agreement regarding prohibition of certain weapons such as bombs from aeroplanes or balloons, and bacteriological weapons and chemicals etc. The other points of agreement included the necessity of arms limitation, international supervision of arms business and publicity of arms budget.

In the meantime, the international situation took a turn which greatly jeopardized the efforts at disarmament. In 1931, Japan attacked Manchuria to the complete unconcern of the British and American governments. The worldwide economic crisis in some countries added to the general feeling of insecurity. On December 18, 1933 Germany in a memorandum pointed out that while she was genuinely discharging the disarmament obligations embodied in the Treaty of Versailles, the other heavily-armed states either had no intention of disarming or did not feel in a position to do so, and that if these states did not undertake not to exceed the present level of their armaments. Germany would also not abide by her obligations. The emergence of Hitler and his determination to rid his country from the security of the peace terms, made disarmament rather impossible. In October 1933, Germany withdrew from the Disarmament Conference. With her withdrawal the great effort for international disarmament practically came to an end.

The Disarmament Conference again assembled in May 1934. But a deadlock had set in due to disagreements between France and Russia on one hand, and England, Italy and the USA on the other. Russia and France put much stress upon security while England, Italy and USA put importance upon disarmament. On June 11, 1934 the Conference was adjourned which never met later. Thus all attempts at solving disarmament problem through the League failed utterly.

“By the beginning of 1937” observes Schuman, “all treaties imposing quantitative restrictions on the three great naval powers were at an end. In March, London announced plans for constructing 2, 38,000 tons of new battleships..... Washington followed suit and Tokyo struggled desperately to keep pace with her wealthier rivals in naval race which was far costlier and more dangerous than that which preceded 1914. On April 28, 1939 Hitler denounced the Anglo-German Naval Pact of 1935 on the ground that Britain’s alliance with Poland was hostile to the Reich and a violation of the purpose of the agreement. Disarmament had become a memory”.

2. Causes for the Failure of Disarmament

There are different reasons why the disarmament attempts undertaken by the League outside failed. Let us discuss them.

Firstly, it may be observed that although efforts were made by the League of Nations as well as outside the League to effect disarmament, much progress could not be achieved due to the attitude of different states. Almost all the states were interested in strengthening their position rather than in reducing the weapons. For example, France wanted that effective security arrangements must precede disarmament. She wanted a firm commitment from USA and Great Britain regarding the defence of European frontiers. Similarly, Japan wanted parity in naval armaments with other naval powers at the London Naval Conference and when her demand was not met, she withdrew from the conference. Again, she resorted to armed attack of Manchuria in violation of her international obligations. Germany under Hitler was also very keen to wipe out the humiliation pitted on her by the Treaty of Versailles. To undo the harm done by the Versailles Treaty she resorted to armament at the earliest available opportunity. She pleaded for arms equality with other leading powers and when it was denied to her, she left the Disarmament Conference in 1933. Likewise, the fascist regime of Italy and the Communist regime of USSR were more interested in promoting their national interests and

strengthening their respective position in the world than reducing the tension through disarmament.

Secondly, the failure of the League to deal effectively with states like Japan, Italy, Germany etc. who resorted to arms in violation of their obligation under the covenant of the League, proved another stumbling block in the way of achieving disarmament. This failure on the part of the League convinced other members that they could not put much reliance on the international body and they must raise their own forces to meet any unforeseen eventuality effectively. This desire particularly became strong after Germany embarked on the path of rearmament.

Thirdly, difference of opinion among the members of the Disarmament conference on various issues also created complications. This difference particularly existed between England, France, U.S.A. and Germany. While France argued that it was dangerous for the people to lay down arms until the total police power of the world was sufficient to guarantee the safety of the individual countries. Britain on the other hand took the stand that the pressure of great armaments makes the nations feel unsecure. By reducing the armaments their confidence will increase. This impose was the chief cause of inaction and led to the failure of the draft treaty of mutual assistance and the Geneva Protocol. Similar differences existed between the attitude of Germany and France. While France insisted on 'superiority in armaments over Germany' on the ground of security, Germany demanded equality in respect of armaments and demanded restoration of her original position. These differences contributed greatly to the failure of efforts at disarmament.

Fourthly, another difficulty in the way of disarmament was the difficulty in arriving at an accepted distinction between aggressive (offensive) and defensive (non-aggressive) weapons. While England considered submarine as an aggressive arm, most of the other states considered it defensive weapon, because it was the mainstay of the naval defence. This point has been beautifully presented by Strausz-Hupe and Passy in their book 'International Relations' thus: "Defensive and offensive are relative terms which have no meanings if used in an absolute sense. The same weapon can have offensive if used against one opponent, and defensive value if used against another. In a war against Italy or Spain, the French army of 1939 would have had offensive character. The same army, however, in its war against Germany proved to be no less than a defensive force".

Fifthly, another cause for the failure of disarmament was that the statesmen focused their attention solely on the reduction of armaments and war equipments. They paid no attention to the economic, psychological and political conditions prevailing in various countries on which the successes of disarmament problem largely rested. The actual reduction of arms should have been preceded by psychological disarmament. In the presence of mutual distrust and suspicion, fear and hatred everywhere, no disarmament could be possible.

The above discussion leads us to the conclusion that in spite of the best efforts of the League of Nations and some of the members outside the League, the problem of disarmament could not be solved. The chief obstacle in achieving effective results was the sense of insecurity prevailing among different nations of the world.

3. Origin, Nature and Results of the Second World War

Causes of WW-II

The devastation caused by World War I was of such magnitude that it was referred to as The Great War, or The War to End All Wars. The belligerent nations, especially the Allies, had no desire for a second prolonged conflict, and this was the main driving force behind their actions after the end of World War I. The immediate and primary cause of World War II was the aggressive military offensive undertaken by a resurgent Germany and a fast developing Japan.

Germany and Treaty of Versailles, 1919

The Treaty of Versailles ending World War I was signed in June 1919. Among the many clauses of the Treaty, three in particular caused great resentment among the Germans.

- (i) Germany was forced to give up territories to the west, north and east of the German border;
- (ii) Germany had to disarm and was allowed to retain only a very restricted armed force;
- (iii) as reparations for the War, Germany was expected to pay for the military and civilian cost of the War to the Allied nations

Failure of League of Nations

The Treaty also set up the League of Nations, on the initiative of President Woodrow Wilson of the United States. The League was expected to mediate between countries and take

action against countries which indulged in military aggression. The popular mood favoured the traditional isolationist approach, and therefore the United States did not become a member of the League. The other Allied nations were also determined to maintain a non-interventionist attitude and, in consequence, the League remained an ineffectual international body.

Post-War Crisis and Germany

As mentioned above the three main clauses of the Treaty of Versailles, especially the imposition of penal reparations caused great discontent in Germany. The problems which many countries faced in the post-World War I decades led to the rise of extreme right wing dictatorships in Italy (Mussolini), Germany (Hitler) and Spain (Franco).

Germany experienced both high unemployment and severe inflation after the War, and its currency became practically worthless. There are several pictures of the 1920s when ordinary people had to carry money in wheelbarrows to buy bread. This was blamed on the war reparations which Germany was forced to pay, though in the final analysis, the demands for war reparations were moderated over several rounds of negotiations.

The Rise of Adolf Hitler

Adolf Hitler was able to exploit the general discontent among the Germans. Gifted with great oratorical skills, he was able to sway the people by his impassioned speeches, promising a return to the glorious military past of Germany. He founded the National Socialist party, generally known as “the Nazis”. The fundamental platform on which Hitler built his support was the notion of the racial superiority of the Germans as a pure, ‘Aryan’ race and a deep-seated hatred of the Jews. Hitler came to power in 1933 and ruled Germany till 1945.

In direct contravention of the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles, Hitler began to re-arm Germany. The recruitment for the armed forces and the manufacture of armaments and machinery for the army, navy and air force with large amounts of government spending resulted in an economic revival and solved the problem of unemployment in Germany.

Italy’s break with Britain and France in the wake of Mussolini’s invasion of Ethiopia resulted in better relationship between Italy and Germany. In 1936, before Germany invaded the Rhineland, which was supposed to be a demilitarised zone, Rome – Berlin Axis had come into being. Later, with Japan joining this alliance, it became Rome- Berlin-Tokyo Axis. In 1938, Hitler invaded Austria and Czechoslovakia. Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia was German speaking, and Hitler’s claim was that the German speaking people should be united in to one nation.

Allies and Non-Intervention

There were also acts of aggression by Italy and Japan. Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935 and Albania in 1939. Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia appealed to the League of Nations, but got no help. In the East, Japan was pursuing its policy of military expansion. In 1931, Japan invaded Manchuria, and in 1937 it invaded China and seized Beijing. All these were ignored by the Allies and the League of Nations was unable to take any action.

In spite of all these manifestations of military activity by Germany, Italy and Japan, Britain and France continued to be non-interventionist. The mood in Britain was not in favour of starting another war. Prime Ministers Baldwin and Chamberlain did not feel justified in intervening in a region which was not officially in their sphere of interest. The United States was totally indifferent to the outside world, and was concerned with the revival of the economy after the Great Depression.

Munich Pact

A further factor was that the western powers and the Soviet Union distrusted each other. In 1938, Prime Minister Chamberlain concluded the Munich Pact with Germany, which was a shameful acceptance of Germany's invasion of Czechoslovakia to annex German-speaking Sudetenland. In 1939 the Soviet Union independently concluded a non-aggression pact with Germany. The continued passivity of the Allies and the reluctance to start building up their armies were also contributory causes of the extended scale of World War II.

Though Hitler gave an assurance in the Munich Pact that Germany would not attack any other country, this was broken immediately. In 1939 he invaded Czechoslovakia. Poland was attacked next, and this was the final act which resulted in the declaration of war by Britain and France against Germany. In Britain, Prime Minister Chamberlain resigned in 1940 and Winston Churchill, who had always warned about Hitler and his military ambitions, became Prime Minister.

Course of World War II

Nature of the War

World War II was fought on two distinct fronts - Europe and the Asia Pacific. In Europe, the war was fought by the Allies against Germany and Italy. In the Asia Pacific, the Allies fought Japan. World War II was a modern war fought with heavy military equipment such as tanks, submarines, battleships, aircraft carriers, fighter planes and bomber planes. This

involved a very large resource base, since all this equipment needed to be manufactured. There had to be raw materials, manufacturing capacity and technical inputs to improve the military hardware. This was an expensive and prolonged war of attrition.

Outbreak of War

Britain and France declared war on Germany in September 1939. In June 1940, Italy joined Germany, and in September 1940, Japan also joined the Axis powers. There was little action immediately after the declaration of war. Britain had already begun to build up its military capabilities, and all young men were conscripted for military duty.

The first years of the War were a time of spectacular successes of the Germany army which occupied Denmark and Norway and later France. By 1941, all of mainland Europe till the Russian frontier was under the Axis powers.

The German army followed a tactic of 'lightning strike' (Blitzkrieg) to storm into various countries and overrun them. The British Royal Navy continued to be the most powerful among the European naval forces and ensured that a sea-borne invasion of Britain was not possible. However, Britain depended on large scale imports of food, raw materials and industrial goods by sea from its Empire and the US. To attack this, Germany developed a fleet of submarines which caused havoc, especially in the Atlantic Ocean area, by sinking a large number of civilian ships carrying supplies to Britain.

Important Events

Dunkirk – In May 1940 more than 300,000 British and French soldiers were forced back to the beaches in Dunkirk. Britain would have found it difficult to regroup if so many of her soldiers had been lost at Dunkirk.

Battle of Britain– By July 1940, it was feared that the Germans were planning to invade Britain. Hitler wanted to force Britain to accept his proposals for peace by a prolonged air-borne bombing campaign. The German air force began to attack specific targets, especially the ports, airfields and industrial installations. In September 1940, London was bombed mercilessly, an action known as The Blitz. By October 1940, night bombing raids on London and other industrial cities began.

This campaign failed because with the aid of a newly developed and top secret device 'radar' for detecting aircraft while still at a distance, the fighter planes of the Royal Air Force (Spitfires and Hurricanes) were able to inflict severe losses on the German bombers. The raids

stopped after October 1940. The Germans dropped their plans to invade Britain because of the failure of the air battle.

Lend Lease 1941–1945

President Roosevelt realized that the United States had to change its policy of isolation, but could not intervene directly in the War in Europe, because it was not politically feasible. So he started a programme of “Lend Lease” in March 1941. Arms, food, military equipment and other supplies were sent to Britain, disguised as a “loan”, which would be returned after use. This augmented the resources of Britain to a great extent. Between 1941 and 1945, the total aid under Lend Lease amounted to \$46.5 billion.

Invasion of Russia 1941-1942

In June 1941 the German army invaded Russia. The long-term objectives of this move were to seize prime land for settling Germans, to destroy the communist regime, and also exploit Russia’s natural resources, especially oil. The German strategy of lightning strikes was initially successful and the army penetrated 1000 miles into Russian territory very soon. The German army then marched on Moscow. But ultimately, the resistance by the Soviet army, and the fierce Russian winter defeated the German army.

Battle of Stalingrad (17 July 1942 to 2 February 1943)

In August 1942, the Germans attacked Stalingrad. Stretching about 30 miles (50 km) along the banks of the Volga River, Stalingrad was a large industrial city producing armaments and tractors. Capturing the city would cut Soviet transport links with southern Russia, and Stalingrad would then enable the invading Germans to have access to the oil fields of the Caucasus. In addition, seizing the city that bore the name of Soviet leader Stalin would serve as a great personal and propaganda victory for Hitler. German war planners hoped to achieve that end with Fall Blau (“Operation Blue”). On June 28, 1942, operations began with significant German victories.

Russian people suffered not only from bad working and living conditions, but also from ill-treatment at German hands in the occupied areas. There were about 15 million civilian deaths during the war, and about 10 million members of the armed forces were killed. All together over one-tenth of Russia’s population died. Yet the people remained loyal to the government, despite Hitler’s hopes of an anti-Stalin revolution. They successfully defended the city of Stalingrad.

Battle of El Alamein 1942

In the early years of the War, German forces under General Rommel were remarkably successful in occupying North Africa rapidly, leaving the British with only Egypt. The Allied forces under General Montgomery counter-attacked and defeated the German and Italian forces at El Alamein in North Africa. The German army was chased across the desert, out of North Africa. This provided the base for the Allied forces to invade Italy.

Surrender of Italy 1943

Mussolini had been thrown out and the new government of Italy surrendered to the Allies in 1943. However, the Germans set Mussolini up in a puppet regime in the north. Mussolini was killed in April 1945, by Italian partisans.

End of Hitler

The Allied forces under the command of General Eisenhower invaded Normandy in France. Slowly, the German army was forced back. But the Germans fought back and the War continued for nearly another year, and finally ended in May 1945. Hitler committed suicide in April 1945.

From 1944, the Russian army began to attack Germany from the East and captured much of Eastern Europe and Poland. In 1945, they occupied parts of Berlin, so that Germany was divided into two sections after the War.

War in the Asia-Pacific Region

Japan had entertained visions of a glorious empire, very much on the same lines as Hitler. The Japanese army invaded Manchuria in 1931. Though China appealed to the League of Nations, this act of aggression did not attract the attention of the United States or Britain. In 1937, Japan invaded China, and seized Beijing (Peking, as it was then known) which had traditionally been the capital of China. The region around Shanghai was also captured, and Nanjing (Nanking), the capital was captured at the end of the year. The Japanese army indulged in the biggest slaughter ever known in history in Nanjing. Civilians were killed en masse for sport, and all females – from children to old women – were tortured and killed. Guangzhou (Canton) and many other parts of China were overrun. The Chinese army, under Chiang Kaishek retreated to the west to the hilly country from where they continued to fight the Japanese.

Pearl Harbour 1941

On December 1941, Japan attacked American naval installations in Pearl Harbour, Hawaii, without warning. The idea was to cripple America's Pacific fleet so that Japan would not face any opposition in its offensive against South-east Asian countries. Many battleships and numerous fighter planes were destroyed.

The United States declared war on Japan, with Britain and China also joining in. This brought together both the Asia Pacific and the European war into one common cause. Most importantly, it brought the United States with its enormous resources into the war as a part of the Allies.

Japanese Aggression in South-east Asia

The Japanese had spectacular success in their plan to extend their empire throughout South-east Asia. Guam, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaya, the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) and Burma, all fell to the Japanese.

Battle of Midway and Battle of Guadalcanal 1942

The US navy defeated the Japanese navy in the Battle of Midway, which turned the tide in favour of the Allies. The Battle of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands was a combined offensive involving the army and the navy, and lasted for several months. Both were crushing defeats for the Japanese. After this, the American forces were able to re-take the Philippines. Gradually the Japanese were thrown out of most of their conquered territories. In 1944, the combined British and Indian armies were able to push back the Japanese who attempted to invade the north-east of India. Then, along with the Chinese, they pushed the Japanese out of Burma, and liberated Malaya and Singapore.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki, August 1945

As a top secret project, using the latest scientific advances, the US developed an atomic bomb immensely more powerful than conventional explosives. The Japanese generals refused to surrender and finally the US dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. As the Japanese still refused to surrender, another atom bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Japan ultimately announced surrender on 15 August 1945 and formally signed 2 September 1945 bringing an end to World War II.

Results of the Second World War

An extensive and so devastating a war like the Second World War had never occurred before in the world history. The war was brought to a close in 1945. By some way or other almost all the countries of the world were drawn into this war and consequently sustained loss. Though the issues which ultimately culminated in the Second World War terminated at the end of the war, yet a new set of issues cropped up after the war which has not yet been finally settled. During the war the allies had issued declarations time and again about the future reconstruction of the world. The representatives of the allied powers had met in the number of conferences and discussed the future of the nations freed from the Axis domination as well as the future peace and security of the world. Langsam observes, "The optimists were; certain that future peace would be assured by the continuance, after hostilities ceased, of the unity that characterized the difficult war years".

Firstly, it has not been possible to ascertain even today the magnitude of the loss both in human and material resources on account of the Second World War. Of the victorious states, Britain, France and Russia particularly sustained incalculable loss. Comparatively the loss of America was less. Of the defeated powers the loss of Germany and Japan was by far the heaviest.

Secondly, the most remarkable result of the war was the end of the wartime alliance and co-operation among the allies. The United States, Britain and France had entered the war against the Fascist powers in close collaboration with Soviet Russia. The western powers including the US and USSR went closer to each other, but after the end of the war the war-time cooperation and friendship among the Allies dried up. Soviet Russia and the United States emerged from the war with more power and influence. Since the end of the war antagonism and dispute between Soviet Union and the western powers grew up in place of war-time cooperation and understating. Under the leadership of these two powers the world was split up into two rival blocs vying with each other for world leadership. The antagonism between these two rival blocs was termed 'cold war' or a battle of nerves.

Thirdly, after the war, Europe lost its dominance over the rest of the world and it turned into a problem-ridden continent; various problems that arose simultaneously at the close of the war undermined the political unity and cohesion of Europe and the rival blocs kept it divided. As an outcome of the war various problems cropped up which demanded immediate solution. The more pressing of these included: the rehabilitation of the millions of refugees; the

economic and cultural reconstruction of Europe; the capture and trial of the war criminals; the elimination of Nazism from central Europe; the creation of an atmosphere conducive to the development of democratic institutions in Germany and the neighbouring regions; the drafting of peace treaties with the former enemy states; the problem of atomic bomb and its reaction on international relations; reparation, restoration of world trade; territorial readjustment; the rival claims of different races; disarmament and the rising nationalism in Africa and Asia.

Fourthly, there has been a great reorientation of the balance of power of the preceding period as a result of the World War II. The power and position of Germany and Italy in Europe underwent a great transformation; France, being reduced to a problematic state became weak, and the former power and prestige of Britain was greatly undermined. On the other side, Soviet Russia and the United States emerged from the war as the leading powers of the world. Germany lost her political integrity and remained divided into two parts. In Eastern Germany Communist regime was established while a Democratic Federal Republic was established in Western Germany. Consequently, mutual enmity of the two parts of Germany and the question of their unification created complications.

Fifthly, the situation in Europe was made worse by ideological considerations. Immediately after the war, almost everywhere in Eastern Europe there began communist movement. Poland, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Finland all came within the Soviet orbit. The independence of states like Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania etc. disappeared and Russian domination was established in this hemisphere. Again as an outcome of the war Italy was reduced to a third- rate power. She lost her African colonies and was compelled to surrender some parts of her own territory to Yugoslavia and Greece. Besides, monarchy got abolished in Italy and a republican government came into being. France got back the two principalities of Alsace and Lorraine. But the former power and prestige of France was largely undermined. Immediately after the war anarchy and disturbances had swept Italy and France and communist activities had assumed a violent form in these two countries. But at least in France and Italy the electorates rejected communism and the ideals of democracy triumphed.

Sixthly, the impact of the world war also fell upon Asia and Africa. Most of Asia was involved in the World War II. Throughout the continent the post-war years witnessed a restless and surging nationalism that aimed at bringing to an end the Asiatic colonialism of the weakened western powers. During the period between the two world wars revolutionary movements in the Asian countries against the mastery of Europe assumed great proportions and in many cases the ruling western powers were compelled to concede various facilities to

their governed. But after the war the nationalist movements in the Asian countries were transformed into armed revolts and many countries of this continent secured political independence or right of self-rule one after another. Consequently, the structure of European Mastery collapsed.

In August 1947, independent India and Pakistan came into existence; in 1949 Indonesia achieved independence; Burma and Ceylon also gained independence; and Malaya and Singapore too became independent. Four independent states came into existence in French IndoChina, viz. Vietnam, Vietminh, Cambodia and Laos. In 1949, Communist rule was established in China. Korea was divided into two parts; in Northern Korea communist regime was established in collaboration with China and Russia. In South Korea and influence of the United States gained ground. An independent Jewish state was born in the Middle East. Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon etc. gained freedom. In Egypt monarchy was replaced by a republic.

Like Asia, Africa also felt the impact of the World War II. After the war, countries like Sudan, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria etc. were freed from the fetters of western domination. The most remarkable impact of the world war upon the continent of Africa was the rising nationalism in the areas inhabited by the Negroes. The Negro countries like Gold Coast (modern Ghana), Cameroon, Mali, Nigeria, Somaliland, Congo, and Tanganyika etc. also achieved independence.

Seventhly, as an outcome of the world war everywhere in the world socialism made a remarkable progress. In the under-developed countries of Asia and Africa serious attempts were made to formulate economic plans based upon socialistic principles. In the Asian and African countries the Governments took great interest in regard to political and economic reconstruction.

And finally, as an effect of the Second World War everywhere internationalism and idea of world federation gained popularity. The split up of the world into two main rival camps after the world war and large scale productions of atomic weapons rose much apprehension in nations' minds that complete annihilation of civilization would be certain if a third world war breaks out. Hence, as a measure to prevent such eventuality, if at all happens in future, the idea of a world federation gained currency.

To sum up, this war was the outcome of the follies of victories, the miscalculations of democracies, the economic crisis of the thirties, which became the bulwark for the emergence of Fascism and above all, the aggressive aptitudes of the Nazis, who tried to establish their

monstrous regime over the rest of the world. No doubt, the genesis and kernel of the World War II lay like a dead volcano in the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles which had the Achilles' heel in it. Defeated Germany, disappointed Italy and ambitious Japan blazed a trail and blew the siren of the new age of imperialism that exhibited its cankers to eat into the vitals of the European peace. The Treaty of Versailles which was the magnum opus of the Paris Peace-makers was a "mill-stone around the neck of Weimar republic". The developments of European politics after 1930 demonstrated the fact that the peace-makers had created a peaceless Europe. And thus, the Treaty of Versailles was but the beginning of the end which culminated in the World War II with the German imperialism in its epilogue. While the people stood bereft of peace and as breathless spectators of tragedy, the Second World War broke out, inserting the last nail in the coffin of the League and drowning the world into the dreaded catacomb of a destructive global war.

4. Nationalist Movement and Decolonization

Decolonisation is a process through which colonial powers transferred institutional and legal control over their colonies to the indigenous nationalist governments.

Rise of Anti-Colonialism

Indo-China (today's Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam) had shown its discontent right from the beginning of the French occupation (1887). While the Indo-Chinese resisted the imposition of French language and culture, they learned from them the ideas of revolution. During the First World War about 100,000 Indo-Chinese fought in France and returned with first-hand knowledge of how the French had fought and suffered during the War. Communist ideas from mainland China were also a major influence. Many became convinced that the considerable wealth of Indo-China was benefiting only the colonial power.

The Emergence of Viet Minh

The mainstream political party in Indo- China was the Vietnam Nationalist Party. Formed in 1927, it was composed of the wealthy and middle class sections of the population. In 1929 the Vietnamese soldiers mutinied, and there was a failed attempt to assassinate the French Governor-General. This was followed by a large scale peasant revolt led by the Communists. The revolt was crushed followed by what is called "White Terror." Thousands of rebels were killed. After the White Terror, Ho Chi Minh left for Moscow and spent the 1930s in Moscow and China. When France was defeated by Germany in 1940, Ho Chi Minh and his

lieutenants used this turn of events to advance the Vietnamese cause. Crossing over the border into Vietnam in January 1941, they organized the League for the Independence of Vietnam, or Viet Minh. This gave renewed emphasis to a distinct Vietnamese nationalism.

Decolonisation in India

Diarchy in Provinces

The decolonization process started in India from the beginning of the twentieth century with the launch of the Swadeshi Movement in 1905. The outbreak of the First World War brought about rapid political as well as economic changes. In 1919, the Government of India Act introduced Diarchy that provided for elected provincial assemblies as well as for Indian ministers to hold certain portfolios under Transferred Subjects. The Indian National Congress rejected Diarchy and decided to boycott the legislature.

Lack of Measures to Industrialise India

Despite the discriminating protection given to certain select industries such as sugar, cement, and chemicals, there was no change in the colonial economic policy. But in the case of indigenous industries, support was only in the form of providing “technical advice and education, and the establishment of pioneer factories in new industries”. However, even this policy was soon abandoned as many British enterprises were opposed to this. Impact of Depression on Indian Agriculture The ‘Great Depression’ also dealt a death blow to Indian agriculture and the indigenous manufacturing sector. The value of farm produce, declined by half while the land rent to be paid by the peasant remained unchanged. In terms of prices of agricultural commodities, the obligation of the farmers to the state doubled.

The great fall in prices prompted Indian nationalists to demand protection for the internal economy. The 1930s saw the emergence of the Indian National Congress as a militant mass movement.

Government of India Act, 1935

The British had to appease the Indian nationalists and the outcome was the passage of the Government of India Act, 1935. This provided for greater power to the local governments and the introduction of direct elections. In the 1937 elections the Congress won a resounding victory in most of the provinces. However, the decision of Britain to involve India in the Second World War, without consulting the popular Congress ministries, forced the latter to resign from office.