



Lesson : Second World War: Causes and Consequences

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Introduction

Historian John Keegan writes, "The Second World War was the continuation of the First" "and indeed [World War II] is inexplicable except in terms of the rancor and instabilities left by the earlier conflict."¹

Europe before the second world war



Source:

<http://tiefenbrun10a.wikispaces.com/file/view/map36wii.jpg/123811577/map36wii.jpg> accessed on 24 January 2015

The historians consider the First and Second World Wars part of the same struggle. First World War left all the European states desperate for security. Yet international conflicts persisted throughout early 1920s. After a compromise on reparation between France and Germany in 1924, the European states entered into a period of improved relations that lasted for a decade. France and the US proposed that the nations of the world swear not to

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start wars of aggression. More than twenty states signed such an agreement on September 1928. Eleven years after this treaty, Europe plunged into a war of much greater destruction known as the Greater War. The terrible war happened because of the failure of the system of collective security and the growth of international anarchy. Britain and France had gone to war to defend a threatened ally and to stop the spread of fascism. The Second World War was a war for democracy.

Causes Of World War II

1. **Treaty of Versailles:** An attempt was made at Paris Peace conference in 1919 to establish just world order. But the treaty was drafted by victors and Germany was told to sign it. Germany raised many objections. But France had taken its revenge, Germany was deprived of all its overseas colonies. The treaty of Versailles had imposed humiliating conditions on the Central powers and sowed the seeds of the Second World War.
2. **Rise of dictatorship in Italy and Germany:** The dictatorship of the Fascist party, under the leadership of Mussolini, was established in Italy in 1922. The dictatorship of the Nazi party was established in Germany after Hitler came to power in 1933.

Value addition-Know it more

Speech of Adolf Hitler, 1930

If the German people does not solve the problem of its lack of space, and if it does not open up the domestic market for its industry, then 2,000 years have been in vain. Germany will then make its exit from the world stage and peoples with more vigor will come into our heritage. Space must be fought for and maintained. People who are lazy have no right to the soil. Soil is for him who tills it and protects it. If a people disclaims soil, it disclaims life. If a nation loses in the defense of its soil, then the individual loses. is only power, which creates justice ... Parliaments do not create all of the rights on this earth; force also creates rights. My question is whether we wish to live or die. We have more right to soil than all the other nations because we are so thickly populated. I am of the opinion that in this respect too the principle can be applied: God helps him who helps himself.

Source: Völkischer Beobachter, May 7, 1930. Available at:
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/wjhs/depts/socialst/Cohen/ww2pacific/tanka.html> Accessed Date: 5 November 14

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3. **Expansionist policy of the Axis Powers:** Germany, Italy and Japan were the Axis Powers which had pursued the expansionist policy during the inter-war period. Germany brought about the unification of the all-German speaking provinces by the annexation of Austria and Czechoslovakia. Italy annexed Ethiopia in 1936 and Albania in 1939. Japan invaded China in 1937 and occupied three-fourths of its territory by the middle of 1939.

4. **Failure of Disarmament:** The task of preparing a plan for reduction of armaments was entrusted to the League of Nations. No success could be achieved in this area. The temporary Mixed Commission appointed by the League in 1920 could not do any substantial work. In 1925 Preparatory Commission was constituted. It could not do any substantial work. Finally, a Disarmament Conference met in Geneva in February 1932 but could not reach any agreement. In 1935, Germany declared that she was no more bound by the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles.

5. **The Problem of National Minorities:** The US President Wilson had advocated the concept of self-determination but his principle could not be implemented on various occasions. For instance, large German minorities were in company with non-Germans in Poland and Czechoslovakia. There were Russian minorities in Poland and Rumania. This gave rise to feeling of insecurity among the minorities.

6. **Policy of Appeasement:** England and France ignored the acts of aggression by Germany and Italy and succumbed to their pressure. Appeasement was started by Prime Minister Baldwin but pursued by Neville Chamberlain in 1938. The policy of appeasement emboldened the aggressive nations.

7. **The weakness of the League of Nations:** The League of Nations was a helpless spectator when the Axis powers committed acts of aggression due to the fact that England and France followed the policy of appeasement towards the axis powers. It failed to maintain peace, to protect smaller nations against big powers. The US President Wilson was the principal architect of the league and promoter of disarmament. His own country could never become the member of the League. The League of Nations had several other shortcomings.

Events Leading Upto World War II

Toward Security and Peace

The causes of the breakdown of collective security were inherent in the First World War and the political and economic arrangements that followed. During the peace negotiations at the

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end of the First World War, French representatives made sure that their country would remain safe from further German aggression. President Wilson struggled to incorporate into the Paris treaties the peacemaking ideals he had expressed in the fourteen points. The Allied powers concluded the Peace of Paris in June 1919. The League of Nations assembled for the first time in Geneva without representatives from the US. The American Senate had rejected the treaties that Wilson signed at Paris. This left the League under British and French domination. During most crises, the League usually played little or no role at all. The formation of the League of Nations did not transform the international relations. Totalitarianism in Italy, Germany and Japan had posed a new threat to peace.

German troops in Paris after the fall of France



<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/30/Nazi-parading-in-elysian-fields-paris-desert-1940.png>, Accessed on 27 January, 2015

Italy under the leadership of Benito Mussolini, had inaugurated the first totalitarian state in 1922. Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany in 1933, improved on the Italian model. Japan borrowed methods and techniques from these European powers. Totalitarianism had developed in those states that had suffered defeat in the First World War. To them democratic processes were too slow for the reforms.

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Defense Alliances

At the time of the Paris peace negotiations, the US and Britain concluded an agreement with France. They pledged to aid France if Germany ever attacked. Months later, the Americans and British withdrew their promise of assistance. France built a new system to restrain Germany by arranging defense treaty with Belgium (1920) and Poland (1921).

The Quest for Improved Relations

French and British leaders convened an economic conference at Genoa, Italy in April 1922. They hoped to stimulate European economic recovery by getting the Soviet government to pay foreign debts left by imperial Russia. But a resolution of the economic conflict became impossible.

The Rapallo Treaty

Before the Genoa conference ended, the Germans and Soviets revealed that they had recently met in Rapallo, Germany to sign a treaty of friendship and economic cooperation.

The Locarno Agreements

In 1925, European leaders held extended negotiations in Locarno, Switzerland that produced better results than Genoa meeting. These Locarno conferences led to a series of treaties that ended disagreements about the location of German, Belgian, and French borders. These three nations decided to accept existing boundaries. The Locarno agreements left many international problems unsettled.

The Campaign against Weapons and War

The Disarmament Campaign

In November 1921, the US opened the Washington Conference for a consideration of naval armaments and the issues related to Asia. The representatives of six European and two Asian states joined the Americans for three months of negotiations to conclude two agreements on Asian affairs and one on naval armaments. The US, Britain, Japan, France, and Italy signed the naval arms treaty. They accepted limits on the size of their heavy warship fleets and pledged not to build large vessels for ten years. These five nations met

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for the London Naval Conference in 1930 and agreed to put limits on smaller vessels, including submarines. The League of Nations established a commission in 1926 to prepare for a conference that would bring large group of nations to arrange limits on the full range of military forces. This led to a series of Geneva Disarmament Conferences that began in February 1932 attended by sixty states. Negotiations came to halt in October 1933 when Hitler withdrew from the Conference.

The Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact

An agreement arranged by Frank Kellogg, the American secretary of state, and Aristide Briand, the French foreign minister came to be known as the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact. The pact presented to the world in 1928 proposed that nations pledge to stop using war to achieve their goals. Every state with the power to wage war on a significant scale signed this pact formally known as the Pact of Paris.

The Resurgence of the German Threat

Hitler intended to have a more powerful German military force. In the mid-1920s he published *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), in which he gave a summary of his ideas. In January 1933 he became Reich Chancellor of Germany and in August 1934, he was officially confirmed as the fuhrer of a nation. The production of military equipment proceeded at great speed in Germany. In October 1933, nine months after Hitler became German chancellor, he withdrew from the Geneva arms talks and the League of Nations.

Dust jacket of the book *Mein Kampf*, written by Adolf Hitler. .



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http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/30/Mein_Kampf_dust_jacket.jpeg

accessed on 27 January,2015

Courtesy of New York public library digital system

Germany's Nullification of the Versailles Military Limits

Hitler considered the military limitations placed on Germany by the Versailles Treaty to be even more insufferable than League membership. In March 1935, he proclaimed that Germany no longer recognized the Versailles arms limitations clauses. France, Italy, and Britain met to consider Germany's response.

The Remilitarization of the Rhineland

The Versailles treaty required the demilitarization of German territory on the Rhine River. Hitler ordered troops to return to the Rhineland in March 1936. The Fuehrer's generals opposed this move because they feared a French attack and Germany was too weak to resist. Hitler's forces met no opposition. Hitler's success in the Rhineland made it more difficult for the European leaders to resist Nazi aggressiveness in future. Despite the similarities between Italian fascism and German Nazism, Mussolini viewed Hitler as a threat to Italian interests until 1935.

The Italian Conquest of Ethiopia

Italy tried to conquer Ethiopia during Europe's imperial campaigns in Africa in the late 1800s. The Ethiopian triumph over Italy's troops in 1896 humiliated the Italians. Mussolini was determined to take the revenge. He also claimed that a Mediterranean-African empire was Italy's destiny. These incentives led to an Italian attack on Ethiopia in October 1935. Hitler supported this aggressive act, to Mussolini's great pleasure. The members of the League of Nations condemned Italy and voted to impose economic sanctions. The member states were to stop trading with Italy so that resource shortages would force an end to aggression. The sanctions failed to have this effect because of the League's inability to prevent the shipping of petroleum to Italy. Ethiopia fell in May 1936. Mussolini's victory under these circumstances marked the failure of the League of Nations.

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Rome-Berlin Axis

In 1936, Mussolini and Hitler supplied military aid to Franco and the fascist rebels to destroy the Spanish rebels. This assistance made it possible for Franco to win by 1939. Soviet Russia sent advisers to assist the Spanish government. However, it had no significant influence on the outcome of the civil war in Spain. Negotiations between Italy and Germany conducted in October 1936 resulted in a strengthened Fascist relationship called "the Rome-Berlin axis." Mussolini announced this association on 1 November 1936. In November 1937, Fascist Japan joined with Italy and Germany to form the Anti Comintern (anti-Communist) Pact

Hitler's Annexation of Austria

Hitler's doctrines emphasized the Nazi plan to build a German empire (Reich), the third in history. This required that the nation had to expand. Since the early 1920s, the Fuehrer had proclaimed that enlarged Germany had to include Austria, his homeland.

Dismantling of the Austrian border post by the German and Austrian border police



http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a2/Bundesarchiv_Bild_137-049278%2C_Anschluss_%C3%96sterreich.jpg Accessed on 27 January 2015

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Austria was small and her population was largely German. Her strategic position was on the road to Italy and on the flank of Czechoslovakia. Hitler began his annexation campaign in 1938 by ordering Austrian Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg to allow the revival of the party and add Nazis to the Austrian cabinet or face a German invasion. Schuschnigg submitted to these demands but announced plans for a plebiscite in which Austrians would vote on whether to remain free and independent. Hitler prepared to invade and told Schuschnigg to turn the government over to Arthur von Seyss-Inquart, an Austrian Nazi. When Britain and France refused to assist Schuschnigg, he resigned and Seyss-Inquart became chancellor. The new leader invited German forces to establish order. Hitler's troops marched in, and Austria merged with Germany on 13 March 1938. While Britain and France held conferences which were of no use, Germany had added seven million people to her strength.

World War II saw the new application of many new technologies by military forces on all sides of the conflict, and some of them had a profound impact on the war. The airplane in particular became a fundamental instrument of war and changed the way many battles were fought. Much the same may be said of the aircraft carrier, which became crucial to the United States after its battleships were lost at Pearl Harbor. As a result of these developments, the Battle of Britain in 1940 marked the first time in history when air power alone determined the course of a major battle, and the Battle of the Coral Sea in 1942 was the first naval battle in history fought exclusively in the air, by carrier-based planes. Both sides also realized the effectiveness of radar as a way of warning against approaching enemy planes. Germany experimented with new missile technologies as well as both jet- and rocket-powered aircraft, but none of these projects was perfected in time to change the outcome of the war.

Although the majority of these new technologies had an effect on the war, they generally were created by one side in response to similar technologies being developed by the other

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side—the net effect of which was to balance out the new power these technologies offered. The notable exception was the atomic bomb, which the United States developed in secret from 1942 to 1945 and which Japan had no way to counter at the time. Indeed, Japan declared its surrender just days after the bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

The Czechoslovakian Crisis

The Sudetenland, a region in Czechoslovakia, stretched around the border next to Germany. Most of the Sudetenland's population was ethnically German. In March 1938, Hitler induced these Germans to begin a campaign for complete control over government within Czechoslovakia. Hitler expected a Czech refusal, which could be used as an excuse to invade. As the Czech government tried to resolve the conflict with the Sudeten Germans, Hitler gathered his forces for an attack. The Czech had two defense treaties that promised them protection. One required France to aid Czechoslovakia if any aggressor invaded. The other obligated the Soviets to assist in Czech defense whenever the French did. Pressure from Britain convinced France not to aid Czechoslovakia. Without French support, the Czechs could not expect assistance from the Soviets. In early September 1938, the Czech government surrendered authority over the Sudetenland to its German inhabitants. Hitler presented more demands until late September 1938, when the Fuehrer insisted on the annexation of the Sudetenland to Germany and the surrender of all fortifications in the region. Czechoslovakia refused to comply.

Appeasement Policy

Neville Chamberlain, the British prime minister beginning in 1937, had encouraged repeated Czech surrenders to Germany. He believed that Europe could avoid war by a policy of appeasement. In Chamberlain's opinion, the Fuehrer would not insist on anything else, once

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the German regions were added to the Nazi state. Edouard Daladier, the French premier, agreed with Chamberlain and joined the policy of appeasement.

The Munich Agreement

On 29-30 September 1938, Chamberlain, Daladier, Mussolini, and Hitler met in Munich, Germany to discuss the conflict over the Sudetenland. They did not invite Czech and Soviet representatives to the conference. In the discussion, the three leaders offered Hitler everything he wanted. He accepted the gift of the Sudetenland and its forts.

The German Annexation of Czechoslovakia

On their return, Chamberlain and Daladier told their citizens that the Munich agreement guaranteed "peace in our time."² But Winston Churchill said, "Britain and France had to choose between war and dishonor. They chose dishonor. They will have war."³ It was correct. Thus by 1938 the system of collective security had completely failed. In mid-March 1939, less than six months after the Munich conference, Germany took control of all Czech territory under the pretense of stooping political disorder.

The territorial disputes indicated that Hitler might threaten Poland. Britain and France tried to enforce peace by vowing to defend Poland against aggression. They presented guarantees against attack on Greece and Rumania. Britain concluded an alliance with Turkey.

The Nazi-Soviet Pact

Fascists supported capitalism and fought communism. This tendency of fascist and democratic governments in West Europe to have hostile attitude toward communism made it difficult for British and French leaders to cooperate with the Soviets. Britain and France became more hostile toward Germany after the fall of Czechoslovakia. The German and Soviet dictators realized that they could benefit by joining hands. Germany and the Soviet Union wanted to regain territory lost to Poland at the end of the First World War. Stalin saw an additional advantage in reaching an understanding with Hitler. On 24 August 1939

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German foreign minister and Soviet foreign minister announced the signing of a ten-year Treaty of Non-Aggression. This pact contained public pledges that Germany and the Soviet Union would neither attack each other nor join any group of nations hostile to the signatories of this agreement. Secretly, Stalin and Hitler arranged for the Soviets to annex Latvia, Lithuania, Bessarabia (part of Romania), and a section of Poland. This agreement removed the last barrier to Hitler's attack on Poland.

Outbreak of World War II 1939

The Nazi and Soviet Campaigns in Northeast Europe: The Conquest of Poland

The Germans tested for the first time the tactics of *Blitzkrieg* "lightning war" against Poland. From Northern Germany to the forests on the Russian border there was scarcely a natural obstacle to stop an invading army. On 1 September 1939, an attack by Germany on Poland began the warfare that lasted six years and spread around the globe. Twelve hours after Hitler had attacked Poland, he replied to Roosevelt that he had, "left nothing untried for the purpose of settling the dispute in a friendly manner."⁴ Poland fought alone as Czechoslovakia was dismembered and Russia had a non-aggression pact with Germany.

The German invasion of Poland brought French and British declarations of war on the Nazi state within two days. Italy did not enter the war at this time. Within less than two weeks, war tactics subdued most of Poland. Alarmed by this formidable military display, the Soviets rushed into their assault on eastern Poland in mid-September. On 17 September, Stalin ordered the invasion of Poland by the Red Army. After a week, Polish resistance ended with the capture of the capital city of Warsaw. The Polish government surrendered. The Soviet Union and Germany each took about half of the conquered territory. Hitler annexed the former Free City of Danzig, the Corridor, and a number of other districts in the West. Stalin annexed Eastern Poland up to the frontier that Lord Curzon had originally proposed in 1919. Soon after the Soviets secured their holdings in Poland, they forcibly annexed the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) to provide an expanded security zone in the northwest.

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Germany's Triumph over Western Europe

As Stalin made an effort to seize security zones around the Baltic coast, Hitler prepared to take all of West Europe. Since Hitler did not attack France and Britain, Chamberlain responded in kind.

The Phony War

Britain and France were at war with Germany beginning in September 1939. But for six months, France and Britain were not attacking when German armies were fighting in Poland. During this *drole de guerre*, *Sitzkrieg*, "phony war," was not a war, it was the blockade. Britain strengthened its military force. After the Great War, France had built the Maginotline, a series of forts facing Germany. The French did nothing to increase the nation's military power from September 1939, until April 1940.

The War in Finland

The Winter war between Finland and the Soviet Union was fought apart from the main conflict. By the Nazi-Soviet Pact, Stalin obtained from Hitler a free hand to strengthen his defensive position by expanding into Poland and toward the Baltic.

The USSR attempted to make its borders north of Leningrad more secure by taking Finnish territory north of Leningrad. The Finns refused to allow this annexation and prepared for war. From November 1939 and March 1940, Finland fought the USSR. When the French and British were ready to help Finland, it had already succumbed to Soviet arms. The Soviet army broke through, and Finland sued for peace. The peace treaty gave Stalin - the Karelian Isthmus, the city of Viipuri, and a naval base at Hango. The settlement with Finland provided protection for the Leningrad.

The Fall of France

Norway would offer a threat to Britain if it fell into German hands. It could provide the German navy with protected submarine bases. The British sought to prevent this. On 8 April 1940, the British and French announced that they were about to mine Norwegian territorial waters to cutoff the passage of German ships.⁵ The Norwegians protested this violation of

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their neutrality. When the Nazi forces launched the Westward assault on 9 April 1940, they seized Denmark on the first day and conquered Norway within three weeks. By 20 April, when the Anglo-French expeditionary force arrived, it was too late. After some days German armies invaded the Netherlands and Belgium. The Dutch fell on 14 May and Belgium fell ten days later.

The French Surrender

As Hitler's armies approached Paris, Mussolini decided to declare war on France and Britain. The Germans needed no help in France. They took Paris by mid-June and continued towards South. France surrendered on 22 June. The Germans imposed their will on the vanquished in that very same railroad car at Compiegne in which Foch had handed his armistice terms to the Germans in November 1918.⁶ Although the Germans occupied and directly controlled most of France, they left a southwestern quadrant of the country under a puppet government



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French troops surrender in Second World War-1940



[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2f/Bundesarchiv_Bild_121-0427, Franz%C3%B6sische Kriegsgefangene.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2f/Bundesarchiv_Bild_121-0427_Franz%C3%B6sische_Kriegsgefangene.jpg) accessed on 28 January 2015

The fall of France came as the greatest shock to the Western democracy. The fall of France in June 1940 left Hitler supreme in the continent. His armies had conquered six nations. Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland remained neutral and posed no threat to Germany. Only Britain and the USSR stood between Hitler and the conquest of entire Europe.

The Battle of Britain and Hitler's First Defeat

Chamberlain resigned and Winston Churchill became the British prime minister in May 1940. He denounced the policy of appeasement and demanded more powerful and speedy

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preparation for war. The intervention of the United States or the Soviet Union could give Britain a hope of victory. Britain's Royal Air Force and German Air Force fought the Battle of Britain until November 1940. A few thousand intrepid pilots of the RAF had won the Battle of Britain. As Churchill expressed, "Never in human history have so many owed so much to so few."⁷

After May and June 1941 Germany gave up the plan to invade Britain and turned its forces against the Soviet Union. This war cost the Nazis dearly which weakened the German Air Force. Soon after the Battle of Britain began, Mussolini decided to expand his empire. By December the Italians were losing on all the southern fronts.

The Conquest of Greece and Yugoslavia

On 28 October, Mussolini attacked Greece from bases in Albania. By December, the Greeks had chased them back into the mountain of Albania. Stalin continued the restoration of Russian frontiers of 1914 by seizing Bessarabia from Rumania and annexing the Baltic States. He undertook to protect Rumania against Russia. In return he ordered the Rumanians to give up additional territory to their neighbours, half of Transylvania to Hungary and a smaller area of Danube to Bulgaria. In March 1941, the weak Yugoslav government gave in to Hitler's demand for subserviency. Yugoslavs chose to fight rather than succumb. On 6 April the German attack began both from the North and from Bulgaria. In eleven days the Germans conquered Yugoslavia. Greece too had been invaded. A week after the capitulation of Yugoslavia, Greece signed an armistice. But the Battle of Britain and the wars started by Mussolini had reduced Germany's military resources which forced Hitler to delay the invasion of the Soviet Union.

The End of the Nazi-Soviet Pact: A Soviet Triumph and Soviet Collapse

As Hitler had announced in *Mein Kampf*, he was resolved to eliminate the power of Russia. The Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact (1939) in no way reduced Hitler's commitment. Russia had moved in to create a defensive barrier in eastern Poland, Finland, the Baltic States and Bessarabia. Germany had extended its influence to Hungary, Bulgaria, and Rumania and

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smashed its way into Yugoslavia and Greece. The non-aggression pact was a "marriage of convenience" to be broken when it suited. On 12 November 1940, foreign minister Molotov arrived in Berlin. The two did not reach a settlement. In late June 1941, a Nazi force stood for Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union. Hitler had several alternatives before him: to wage an all-out war against Great Britain, to seize the Mediterranean lands and march into the Middle East, or to start a new war against Russia. Hitler had concluded that a preventive war against Russia was an urgent necessity. He wanted to avoid a two-front war. Britain was not strong enough to create a second front if Germany attacked Russia. This led to Hitler to conclude that Russia was to be conquered before Britain. Britain with the aid of the United States could create a serious diversion. These were the principle considerations which motivated the attack upon Russia.⁸ Stalin was warned by British, American and Soviet intelligence services. Stalin did not even listen to the friendly warning that the German ambassador gave them on the eve of attack. At first three offensives met with spectacular success. After the first two weeks, Hitler found that his tactics did not work in Russia. With six months of secret preparation, German army attacked the Russian frontier. On 22 June 1941, the Nazi invasion began. Hitler was fighting on two fronts. The quality of Soviet equipment and military leadership did not match to that of Germany's advance weapons. Stalin disappeared for eleven days leaving his people to fight "The Great Patriotic War."⁹ In September 1941, Nazi forces reached the outskirts of Leningrad and Moscow. On 3 July 1941 Stalin emerged, Soviets responded and stopped the Nazi line of advance in the North and Central regions by the autumn of 1941. In late 1941 and 1942, the nation rallied to the cause of resistance.

The Counterattack

The Germans started their second general offensive against Moscow on 16 November. On 6 December 1941, the Red Army mounted its first counter attack along the entire front. The Red Army drive failed in the South while the Germans continued to advance there. The Soviets stopped them and inflicted a punishing defeat at Stalingrad. The Soviets

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counterattack finally began to succeed in the North in January 1944. The Red Army liberated almost all Soviet territory and pursued the Germans into Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria.

The Holocaust

The Nazi's occupation of Poland and the Western USSR brought almost all European Jews under Hitler's rule. By mid-1943, the Nazis and Fascists still ruled most of the continent which enabled Hitler to threaten the existence of Britain, Soviet Russia, and the Jews. During July and August 1943, Hitler faced enemies committed to the total defeat of the Nazis and allies.

The Anti-Fascist Coalition

From the beginning of the war, the United States provided support to Britain. America's Lend-Lease Act was established and expanded this programme in March 1941. After the Nazis invaded the USSR in June 1941, Britain and the Soviets signed a mutual aid agreement. Then the US began lend-lease assistance to the Soviet Union. As its consequence, an anti-Fascist coalition had begun to emerge.

The Atlantic Charter

Churchill and Roosevelt discussed peace and military aid at a conference in August 1941 that produced the Atlantic Charter. This declaration contained a pledge to stop aggressors and ensure the right of all nations to choose their form of government. Britain and the United States promised to advance the welfare of societies and hence pursued peace during the next four years.

The Intervention of the United States

With the American intervention, the Second World War attained its final form. Britain and the United States shared with the Soviet Union a common enemy in Fascism. The US provided aid to Britain and the USSR in the war. Until December 1941, the US was not fighting. Events in Asia transformed the European conflict into a global war with the US as a main participant. Under militant nationalist influence, Japan conquered territory in China in

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1931 and 1937. With an air attack on the US Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands on 7 December 1941, Japan intended to end this influence in Asia. Japan's Italian and German allies declared war on the United States on 11 December. Immediately the US entered the war in Asia becoming an ally of Britain and the USSR in Europe.

The War in 1942: The Casablanca Conference

In 1942, as the Soviets pounded against Hitler's forces in East Europe, the British and Americans opened their combined West European campaign against Nazi military. The US also joined the British war against Rommel in North Africa in November 1942. The Western allies completed the victory in North Africa by May 1943. Stalin had insisted throughout 1942 that the Western Allies open a second front in West Europe. As British and American troops battled toward victory in North Africa, Roosevelt and Churchill met at Casablanca, Morocco, to consider war plans.

Casablanca conference-1943



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casablanca_Conference

The ten day conference ended on 24 January 1943. The Western Allies proclaimed their decision to fight Italy, Germany, and Japan. Roosevelt and Churchill secretly agreed to

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invade Southern Europe through Sicily. Stalin could not attend the Casablanca conference but Soviet representatives attended it. The plan to open a second front pleased Stalin but he preferred an attack across the English Channel into Northern France.

The Defeat of Fascist Italy

On 10 July 1943, the US and Britain launched invasions of Sicily and began intensive attack on Italy. King Victor Emmanuel III reasserted his authority and dismissed Mussolini as premier. Pietro Badoglio, the new premier ordered the Fascist Party to disband and opened peace talks with the Western Allies. On 3 September 1943 Badoglio government agreed to unconditional surrender. Hitler had anticipated the collapse of his Italian ally and rushed troops to central and northern Italy. Hitler sent a force to rescue Mussolini, who had been under arrest since his dismissal. The Nazis then reestablished Mussolini as the head of a German puppet state in northern Italy. As the Nazi defeat in Italy neared by the end of April 1945, Mussolini tried to escape to Switzerland. Italian anti-Fascist resistance forces captured and executed Mussolini on 28 April 1945.

The Teheran Conference

Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin met in Teheran, Iran for the conference from 28 November 1943 to 12 January 1944. At Teheran, they reaffirmed the agreements made in Moscow, decided the timing of a cross-Channel invasion, and promised to form a new world organization. Roosevelt was reluctant to make territorial commitments for the future. Stalin agreed for Roosevelt's desire for postponement. For nearly two years Stalin had been asking for a major second front in France that would relieve German pressure on his own forces. American military leaders also desired the same thing. Churchill was doubtful about a cross-Channel invasion. The great achievement of the Teheran Conference was to confirm the tentative decision the British and Americans had reached six months earlier i.e., a major landing would be made in France in May 1944. General Eisenhower was to be the commander of the operation.

The Liberation of Rome

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Italy was to be both an active front and a secondary front. In January 1944, the Allies made a landing at Anzio, 30 miles from Rome and a simultaneous assault on the Germans defending the mountain abbey of Cassino. Both expectations were disappointed as the British and American forces were on the low ground and the German artillery dominated from the surrounding hills. The advance on Rome had to be postponed. The French colonial forces began to advance on Rome in mid-May. The Germans did not try to defend the Italian capital. On 4 June, the Allies entered Rome. Rome was the first capital to be freed from the Nazi control. A new Italian army was being trained to fight with the British, the Americans and the French to liberate the northern cities.

World War II Ends

The Battle of the Bulge

The allied groups drove the Nazis from Brussels, Belgium, on 2 September 1944 and crossed the German border in ten days. In December, after three months, Hitler ordered a powerful counterattack toward Belgium. The Germans caught the Americans thoroughly. Soon a whole sector of the Allied line in Belgium and Luxemburg was staggering back. A great "bulge" opened which had to be closed. Eisenhower summoned reserves from the South. In December 1944, the Nazi's offensive divided the allied forces in northwestern Europe. The American soldiers stopped the German offensive during the ten day Battle of the Bulge that ended on 25 December 1944. By the third week of January, Eisenhower's forces had stopped the German offensive and pushed the attackers back out of the bulge. American, British, and French forces completed the liberation of West Europe by early 1945.

The Soviet Conquest of East Europe

The Soviet troops reached a small northeastern pocket in Bulgaria by June 1944 and from there to the Baltic Sea. Soon after the Western Allies landed at Normandy on 6 June, Soviet forces charged into Nazi lines in the east and moved toward Poland and Romania. On 1 August, the Polish began to fight the Germans in Warsaw.

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Soviet invasion of Poland



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_invasion_of_Poland

On Churchill and Roosevelt's insistence, Stalin offered token help to the Polish insurgents at the very end. After two months of struggle, the Polish insurgents succumbed to German army. On 23 August, the Red Army reached Rumania. King Michael II took his country out of the war and opened the gates of the Balkans to the Soviet forces. The Germans got out of the peninsula as fast as possible. Following Rumania, Bulgaria sued for peace. Tito had received help from the Soviet Union at the very end, when the Red Army marched through Yugoslavia from Rumania on its way to attack the Germans in Hungary. In Hungary, the Red Army encountered a firm German stand. Stalin's purpose was achieved, the whole of East Central Europe was under Soviet domination.

The Anti-Nazi Uprising in Warsaw

On 1 August, underground forces in Warsaw, Poland, revolted against the Germans as the Red Army reached there. The Nazis waged war on the rebels for two months and crushed the rebellions and completed the destruction of Warsaw by October 1944. The Soviet army took three months to capture Warsaw in mid-January 1945 after the Nazis completed their war. Once the Soviets resumed their attack, they continued the fight westward, reaching

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the borders of Germany within weeks. East Prussia and Upper Silesia were in their grasp. The Big Three (Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin) met at Yalta for the second time.

The Yalta Conference

On 7 February 1945, Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin met at Yalta on the Soviet Crimean peninsula in the Black sea. The character of the war had changed entirely. Eight nations had been freed from the Nazi grasp. They needed to make decisions about the restoration of the states that the allies had liberated in East and West Europe. The three leaders planned the final steps to victory, decided the postwar fate of Germany, and considered peace building methods. The conference decided to break up the Reich into several separate states. The Big Three agree to admit France to equal partnership in the future control of Germany. Roosevelt was prepared to make large concessions in the interests of Allied unity. Within three months of the adjournment of the Yalta Conference, the war in Europe was over.

The Agreements on East Europe

Churchill and Roosevelt agreed to Stalin in case of Poland. Stalin came to Yalta with the Red army in control of most of East Europe and made several demands. Stalin insisted that the Soviets must keep the territory acquired from Poland in 1939. The Poland must have a government friendly to the USSR. Since Poland and Russia had a long history of hostile relations, the insistence on a pro-Soviet Polish government meant that Stalin did not want to allow this country to choose its leader. Roosevelt and Churchill accepted the Polish border changes in principle but left the precise boundaries between Poland and Germany unspecified. The three leaders agreed to establish a government in Poland led by the Lublin Poles (a pro-Soviet group). In keeping with American demands, the three allies pledged to provide for the free election of democratic governments in nations liberated from the fascists.

The US expected an extended battle with Japan and believed that it was important to have Soviet help against this enemy. The USSR promised to declare war on Japan within

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three months after the defeat of Germany. In return, Roosevelt agreed to Soviet territorial gains in Asia, including the acquisition of the Japanese Kuril Islands.

The Fate of Germany

Stalin believed that the security of the USSR and the peace of Europe required that Germany be demilitarized, divided into smaller states, and be devoid of its industries. By February 1945 Roosevelt favoured milder treatment of Germany. Churchill took a more lenient position toward Germany. The British leader argued for French participation in the postwar control of Germany. Churchill's aim was to give the Germans and French sufficient strength and influence to counter Soviet power on the continent. In the negotiations on German issues, Churchill and Stalin fought to achieve their aims. Despite Roosevelt's attitude, Churchill achieved his goals than did Stalin. Germany was divided into four zones of occupation. Churchill and Roosevelt had ignored Stalin's objections and given France an area to control. Although Berlin was sixty miles inside the Soviet zone, the negotiators arranged for each of the four occupying nations to take charge of a section of the capital. The allies pledged that once they took charge in Germany, they would nullify Nazism and militarism. The Western allies refused to accept the Soviet plan to strip Germany of its industry and split the nation into separate states. Churchill and Roosevelt also rejected Stalin's demand that the Germany pay a large reparations sum to the Soviet Union.

Consequences of World War II

- The End of the European Age: With the end of the Second World War, the European age had come to an end.
- The rise of the US and the Soviet Union to superpower status : When the Second World War ended, the US and the Soviet Union emerged as the super powers, main challengers of each other's supremacy and leaders of two different ideologies.
- The emergence of the Cold War: As soon as the enemy was defeated, East-West ideological conflict reemerged. Post-Second World War was different in regard to the level of tension.

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- The beginning of the nuclear age: The Soviet Union developed its nuclear weapon in 1949. Earlier only the US had its monopoly over nuclear powers. Thus, the nuclear age had begun.
- The rise of nationalism and independence movements in Asia and Africa: At the end of the Second World War, there occurred decline in the influence of colonial powers. The two super powers followed anti-colonial approach.
- A renewed effort to secure lasting peace through international organizations: The United Nations was set up in 1945 to replace the League of Nations as it had failed to maintain peace.

Related effects

The Commitment to form the United Nations

The Big Three expressed their support for the plan to establish a new global association to replace the League of Nations. The Allies promised to participate in a United Nations organizational conference scheduled for April 1945 in San Francisco.

The Destruction of the Nazi Reich

The final stage of the Second World War began the month after the Yalta Conference as US troops poured across the Rhine River into Germany and the Soviets gathered an assault on Berlin. Hitler did not allow his nation to surrender. Germany would fight until the Third *Reich* was destroyed. By mid-1944, the Western Allies had completely overwhelmed the German air force. In January and February 1945, there were rumours that the Germans were withdrawing. In March 1945, the armies of the Western allies under the command of US General Dwight Eisenhower attacked east out of France toward the Rhine. Rolling up the German resistance in the Ruhr, this battle came to an end. The US set off to the east to cut the Reich in two. Eisenhower's forces reached the Elbe River, sixty miles from Berlin, by 11 April. On 12 April Roosevelt died and Harry Truman became the new President. Churchill wanted to keep the Soviets out of East Germany. He urged Eisenhower to cross the Elbe and continue on to the German capital. But the General refused. To him, the best way was for the Western Allies to swing into southwestern Germany while the Soviets conquered

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eastern Germany. Vienna, the Austrian capital, fell to the Soviets on 13 April. The Red Army forces under Marshall Georgi Zhukov began the offensive sixty miles east of Berlin on 16 April 1945. The Red Army contingents fought on westward and met the Americans at Torgau on the Elbe on 25 April. Hitler remained hidden in the air-raid bunker below the Reich Chancellery in Berlin, as Allied forces triumphed over Germany. The Americans had broken across the Rhine and were close to Berlin. They were already on the Elbe. With the Red Army fighting the last Nazi defenders of Berlin, Hitler killed himself on 30 April. Truman and Churchill declared victory in Europe on 8 May. On 8 May 1945, in Berlin, representatives of the German High Command signed the Instrument of unconditional surrender of the German armed forces. The Nazi high command surrendered on 9 May, Stalin designated that date as the day of triumph. The Fascist era in Europe had become over.

The Asian Holocaust

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in December 1941, the Japanese and Americans fought each other. Stalin was busy in defending himself in Europe. Japan conquered the Philippines and advanced toward Australia until March 1942. The Americans devastated the Japanese navy in May in the Battle of the Coral Sea and in June at Midway Island. The US naval bombardments, aerial assaults, and ground attacks exterminated the Japanese troops on islands such as Tarawa and Peleliu. By June 1944, the US Army Air Force opened its war on Japan. On 6 August 1945 the US plane dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima killing 80,000 to 100,000 people instantly. Stalin declared war on Japan on 8 August 1945. On the following day, the US dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki, Japan, Killing about 60,000 people. On 10 August, President Truman told the enemy that more atomic bombs would be dropped unless surrender was immediate.¹⁰ Japanese leaders surrendered within two days. They officially yielded on 14 August and signed the surrender documents on 2 September. Victory brought not exultation, but a recollection of the objective which the great architect of victory, Franklin Roosevelt, had proclaimed:

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***"The true goal we seek is far above and beyond the ugly field of battle. When we resort to force, as now we must, we are determined that this force shall be directed toward ultimate good as well as against immediate evil."*¹¹**

Conclusion

Germany was totally defeated, and the Nazi regime brought down. Its leaders were tried for crimes against humanity at Nuremberg. Hitler escaped trial and execution by committing suicide in his Berlin bunker. Germany was divided into 4 zones of occupation by the victorious powers, pending a more permanent political settlement. Japan also was in ruins from extensive bombing. But the emperor was allowed to retain his position. Japan was temporarily placed under U.S. military rule. England was devastated by the war, having experienced extensive bombing during the 1940 blitz by the Germans. The economy depended for recovery upon aid from the United States. France had not experienced the enormous human losses sustained in the First World War, but would have to recover from the effects of Nazi occupation. England and France no longer held a status of power comparable either to the United States or the Soviet Union. The Russian people had suffered immeasurably during the war, but, in the process of defeating the Germans, the Russians had built a large and powerful army. The great resources and population of Russia assured that the Soviet Union would be, along with the United States, one of two super-powers. Spared the physical destruction of war, the U.S. economy dominated the world economy.

The Second World War had finally come to an end. The six-year struggle with Nazism had ended. In 1945, the men of violence suffered a total defeat. Their reign of terror left an even greater chaos than had existed after World War I. It made clear that humanity could not survive another war. The new contest over the future of Europe had already begun. A cold war had begun between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union. This conflict created a threat of nuclear holocaust.

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End notes:

- ¹ Freedman, Russell. *The War to End All the Wars: World War I*. New York: Clarion Books, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010, P. 157.
- ² John R. Barber, *Modern European History*, Harper Perennial, USA, p.313.
- ³ Commager, Henry Steel. *The Story of The Second World War*, US: Brassey's (US), INC. 1991, P.6.
- ⁴ Morison, S. E. *The Growth of the American Republic (Vol. 2)*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1942.
- ⁵ Hughes, H. Stuart. *Contemporary Europe: A History*, 4th Edition, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1961, p.327
- ⁶ Hughes, H. Stuart. *Contemporary Europe: A History*, 4th Edition, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1961, p.330.
- ⁷ Hughes, H. Stuart. *Contemporary Europe: A History*, 4th Edition, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1961, p.334.
- ⁸ Grove Haines and Ross Hoffman, *Origins and Background of the Second World War*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1943.
- ⁹ Barber, John R. *Modern European History*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1993, p.318.
- ¹⁰ Commager, Henry Steel. *The Story of The Second World War*, US: Brassey's (US), INC. 1991, P. 334.
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Glossary

- Alliance -- A close association of nations or other groups, formed to advance common interests or causes.
- Assault -- A violent physical attack, as with blows.
- Exterminated -- To get rid of by destroying completely
- Fuhrer -- A leader, especially one exercising the powers of a tyrant.
- Inflict -- To force to undergo or experience (something unwanted).
- Insufferable -- Intolerable; Unendurable
- Intervention-- The systematic process of assessment and planning employed to remediate or prevent a social, educational, or developmental problem.
- Plebiscite. A direct vote in which the entire electorate is invited to accept or refuse a proposal.
- Restoration -- Something, such as a renovated building, that has been restored.
- Subservient -- Subordinate in capacity or function.

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Essay type questions:

1. Briefly examine U.S. foreign policies dealing with Europe after World War I.
2. Examine the Japanese, German, and Italian acts of aggression that brought Europe and Asia into WWII.
3. Discuss the various factors that led to the American entry into the war.
4. Examine the consequences of WWII for the world and the U.S.
5. Examine the American policies that led to the creation and maintenance of the Japanese Relocation Camps.

Objective type questions:

1. How did the US officially enter war with Germany?
 1. Germany declared war on the US.
 2. The US declared war on Germany.
 3. The US and Germany never declared war on each other.
 4. None of the above
2. A major cause of the growth of state and federal highway systems after World War II was the
 1. Increased use of mass transit systems
 2. Growing prosperity of inner-city areas
 3. Rapid development of suburbs
 4. Return of city dwellers to farm areas
3. Who used the term 'axis' for the first time to describe a military alliance during World War II?
 1. Adolf Hitler
 2. Benito Mussolini
 3. Emperor Hirohito
 4. Winston Churchill
4. What was the name of the long running air attack of Germany on Great Britain that lasted from July 1940 until October 1940?
 1. Battle of Britain
 2. Battle of Bulge
 3. D-Day
 4. Battle of London

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5 The Japanese justified their invasion of China as

1. Providing resources essential to their economic survival
2. Rescuing the Chinese people from foreign imperialism
3. Claiming land that should have come to them by the Treaty of Versailles
4. Justifiable revenge for the Sino-Japanese War of 1894.

6. The purpose of the Marshall Plan was

1. To discourage communism in Western Europe by strengthening capitalism
2. To help rebuild war-torn Europe with massive aid.
3. To be an economic adjunct to the Truman Doctrine
4. All of the above.

7. The first offensive the US took against Japan was at

1. Guadalcanal
2. Saipan
3. Tarawa
4. Okinawa

8. Where did World War II begin

1. Germany
2. Europe
3. Spain
4. None of the above

9. For Hitler, it was most important that Germany

1. Develops its Navy
2. Develop its air force
3. Maintain satisfactory trade agreements with the rest of Europe
4. Build a large army and seek to expand its territory especially toward the East

10. The Soviet Union's position regarding the American and British campaigns in North

Africa and Italy was to

1. Favor both because they tied down the Axis forces.
2. Oppose both because they delayed the cross-channel invasion of France.
3. Oppose North Africa but favor Italy since it was closer to Germany.

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4. Favor North Africa but oppose Italy because it was after the Stalingrad victory.

Answer key

1- Ans-1.

2- Ans. 3

3- Ans- 2

4- Ans- 1

5- Ans-1.

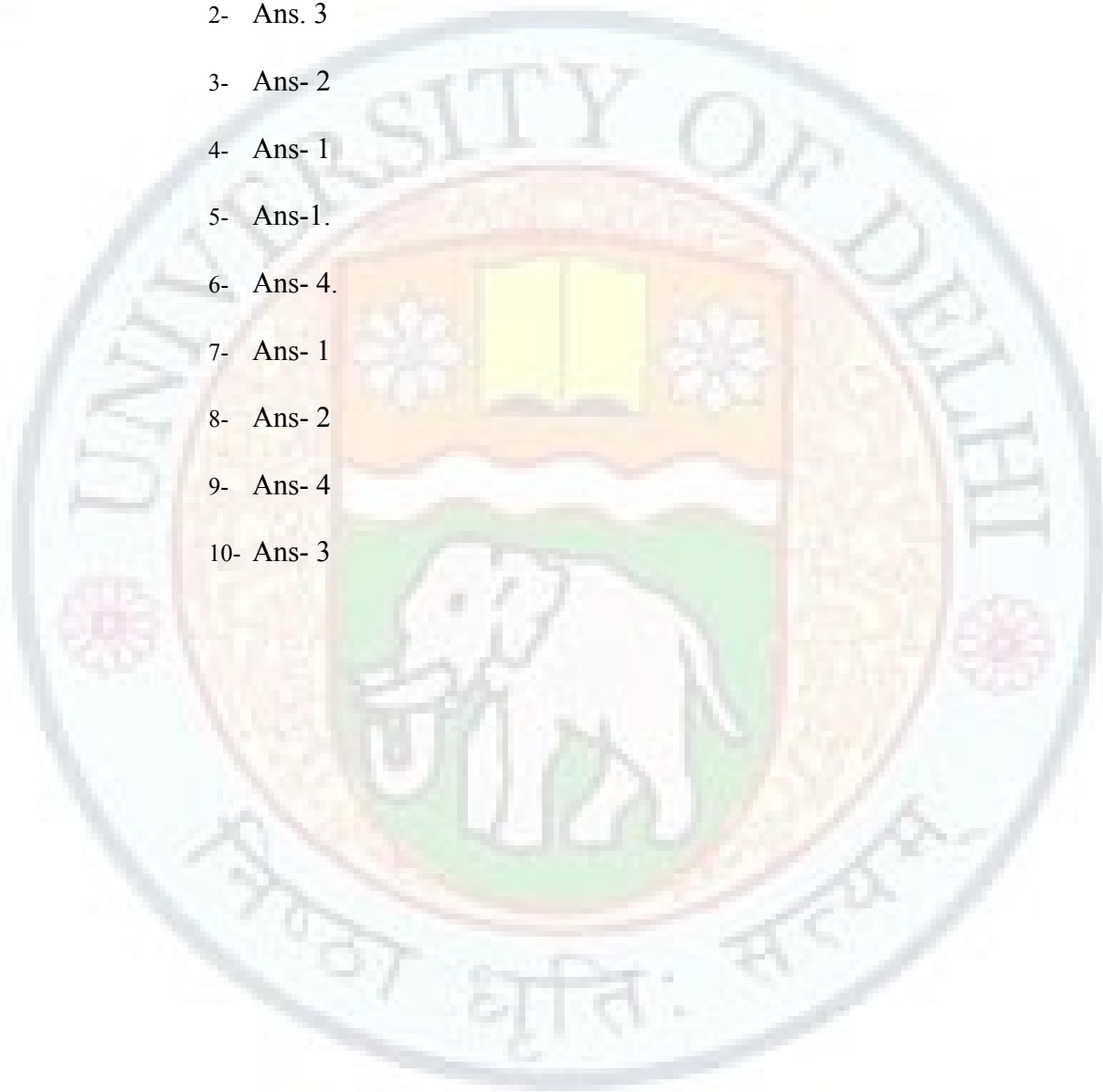
6- Ans- 4.

7- Ans- 1

8- Ans- 2

9- Ans- 4

10- Ans- 3



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Some Famous Quotes

1939



"This is a sad day for all of us, and to none is it sadder than to me. Everything that I have worked for, everything that I have believed in during my public life, has crashed into ruins. There is only one thing left for me to do: That is, to devote what strength and powers I have to forwarding the victory of the cause for which we have to sacrifice so much... I trust I may live to see the day when Hitlerism has been destroyed and a liberated Europe has been re-established."

Neville Chamberlain - 3rd September 1939

1940



"Dunkirk has fallen... with it has ended the greatest battle of world history. Soldiers! My confidence in you knew no bounds. You have not disappointed me."

Adolf Hitler - Order of the Day - 5th June 1940



"Never in the field of human conflict, has so much, been owed by so many, to so few!"

Winston Churchill - September 1940



"Nothing would please me better than if they would give me three months and then attack here."

General Douglas Macarthur - Supreme Allied Commander of South-West Pacific - (Speaking of the Philippines) 5th **December** 1940

1941



"We did not intend to fight enemy warships...but we took up the fight. The crew have behaved magnificently. we shall win or die."

Admiral Lütjens - Commander of the Bismarck's Naval Squadron - 25th May 1941

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"I've had my fill of Hitler. These conferences called by a ringing of a bell are not to my liking; the bell is rung when people call their servants. And besides, what kind of conferences are these? For five hours I am forced to listen to a monologue which is quite fruitless and boring."

Benito Mussolini - (To his son in law) - 10th June 1941



"This war is not an ordinary war. It is the war of the entire Russian people. Not only to eliminate the danger hanging over our heads, but to aid all people groaning under the yoke of Fascism"

Josef Stalin - 22nd June 1941



"The Russian colossus...has been underestimated by us...whenever a dozen divisions are destroyed the Russians replace them with another dozen."

General Franz Halder - Army Chief of Staff - August 1941



"A gigantic fleet... has massed in Pearl Harbor. This fleet will be utterly crushed with one blow at the very beginning of hostilities...Heaven will bear witness to the righteousness of our struggle."

Rear-Admiral Ito - Chief of Staff of the Combined Fleet - November 1941



"I'll come back as soon as I can with as much as I can. In the meantime, you've got to hold."

General MacArthur - Speaking to General Wainwright - March 1942



"The fruits of victory are tumbling into our mouths too quickly."

Emperor Hirohito (On his Birthday) - 29th April 1942



"Never in history has the navy landed an army at the planned time and place. But if you land us anywhere within 50 miles of Fedela and within 1 week of D-Day. I'll go ahead and win."

Major General George Patton - November 1942 (Commenting of the North Africa Landings)



"Even without the allied offensive, I should have had to capitulate by the 1st June at the latest as I had no more to eat."

General Oberst von Arnim - May 1943 - (Commenting after the Axis surrender in Tunisia)





"The enemy knows that he must wipe out our fighters. Once he has done that, he will be able to play football with the German people."


Field Marshal Erhard Milch - 1943




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 "Sure, we want to go home. We want this war over with. The quickest way to get it over with is to go get the bastards who started it. The quicker they are whipped, the quicker we can go home. The shortest way home is through Berlin and Tokyo. And when we get to Berlin, I am personally going to shoot that paper hanging son-of-a-bitch Hitler. Just like I'd shoot a snake!"
General George S. Patton - (addressing to his troops before Operation Overlord) - 5th June 1944


 "Hell is on us."
Mamoru Shigemitsu - Japanese Foreign Minister's comments at the capture of Saipan - June 1944

 "Attended thanksgiving service...for liberation of Paris...hearing the Marseillaise gave me a great thrill. France seemed to wake again after being knocked out for five years."
General Sir Alan Brooke - 28th August 1944


 "We shall solve this problem, and afterwards Warsaw as the Capital and the pool of intelligentsia of that nation will be destroyed."
Heinrich Himmler - August 1944

1945

 "Among the men who fought on Iwo Jima, uncommon valor was a common virtue."
Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz - 16th March 1945

 "It is on this beautiful day that we celebrate the Fuhrers birthday and thank him for he is the only reason why Germany is still alive today"
Josef Goebbels - Ministry of Propaganda - 26th April 1945

After World War 2

 "The battle of Kursk... the forcing of the Dnieper... and the liberation of Kiev, left Hitlerite Germany facing catastrophe."
General Vasili I. Chuikov - Commander of the 8th Guards Army - (Speaking after the war)

Source: www.worldwar-2.net/famous-quotes/famous-quotes-index.htm

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