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THE INTER-WAR PERIOD AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The first half of the twentieth century is known in history as the era of world wars. The First World War was considered by many to be ‘a war to end all wars’. Yet, the developments during the next twenty years, led the world into another war—more destructive, more widespread and much larger in scale. In order to understand the reasons for the outbreak of this war, we need to study the inter-war period in detail.

The end of the First World War did not end the rivalries between the European nation. Even the peace Treaties failed to ensure peace. The treaties were harsh on the defeated countries and thus sowed the seeds of future conflicts. They even failed to satisfy the territorial ambitions of some of the allied powers. In many of the countries strong dictators rose to power and spread the message of national chauvinism. The most important fact was that, imperialism, the basic cause of war, was not destroyed.

The Russian Revolution and the emergence of the Soviet Union also divided the world into two groups—those who favored the revolution and those who fear effects. Most of the west European countries belonged to the latter group. They considered socialism to be a threat to their social and economic systems. Soviet Russia was also anti-imperialist and supported the freedom struggles in the colonies of Asia and Africa. This chapter will tell you how all these combined to create conditions for another war.



OBJECTIVES

After studying the lesson, you will be able to:

- analyze the peace treaties and the changed map of Europe;
- trace the rise of totalitarian regimes – Italy, Germany and Japan;
- explain effects of Great Depression on U.S.A., U.S.S.R and Europe ;
- correlate aggression and appeasement and
- explain the course of war.

**Notes****24.1 THE PEACE TREATIES**

The First World War ended with the signing of the peace treaties at a conference held in Paris. The important leaders at the conference were the U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, the British Prime Minister Lloyd George, and the French Prime Minister George Clemenceau.

League of nations:

One of the first acts of the peace conference was the decision to create a world organization, called the League of Nations, for the promotion of 'international cooperation, peace and security. The Covenant (formal agreement) of the League was approved in April 1919.

The agreement required all member to reduce armaments in the interest of peace. If any member country resorted to war, then collective action would be taken against that country. The trade relations with the aggressor country would also be cut off. However, the League of Nations could never be an effective organization. Two major countries-Soviet Union and Germany - were not allowed to become its members for many years. United States, despite its leading role in the formation of the League, decided not to join it. Hence, when aggression began in the 1930s, the League failed to prevent it.

The Treaty of Versailles:

The peace treaties were to be based on President Wilson's peace proposals or Fourteen Points, which promised to bring in an era of peace, freedom, democracy, self-determination (the right to have a say in one's own government). But these principles were ignored when the allies signed the Treaty of Versailles with Germany.

According to the treaty:

1. Germany was blamed as the aggressor and forced to accept responsibility for the damage caused to the Allies during war.
2. Germany was to pay \$6,600 million as compensation to them.
3. The German coal mining area in Saar valley was put under the control of the league for 15 years, while the mines were transferred to France for that period.
4. The newly created state of Poland (see Map.1) was provided a corridor which give her an outlet to the Baltic Sea. This corridor separated East Prussia from the rest of Germany. The port of Danzig, which lay in the corridor, was made a free city.
5. The strength of the German army was to be limited to 100,000 and it was permitted to have any air force or navy.
6. Germany's colonial possessions were divided amongst the victorious powers. We shall read more about the territories lost by Germany after a study of the map of Europe.

Germany was made to sign this treaty under threat of invasion. In fact no German representative was invited to attend the conference. So the Germans called it a "dictated peace".

Some of the seeds of the Second World Was were thus sown at Versailles.



Notes



Map 24.1 Territorial Changes as a Result of World War I



Map 24.2 The Changed map of Europe 2 Block



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24.2 THE CHANGED MAP OF EUROPE 2 BLOCK

A study of the post-war map of Europe shows us that almost all European countries emerge from war with changed frontiers. **Germany** surrendered Alsace Lorraine to France, which it had captured in 1871. In the north it gave up some areas to Belgium and Denmark. The area given to Poland has already been mentioned. Apart from losses in Europe, Germany also gave up right on its African colonies and privileges in China. Thus, after war, the Germans were a discontented lot.

Italy has fought the war on the Allied side to satisfy her territorial ambitions in Austria, Turkish Empire and Africa. But all that Italy gained from the peace settlement was a small part of Austria.

Russia suffered more casualties in war than all the Allies put together. It withdrew from war in March 1918 after signing a treaty with Germany. By this treaty it accepted the independence of Poland, Finland and the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Added to this were the problems of civil war, military intervention and economic collapse.

Poland, which had disappeared from the map in 1815, after being annexed by the three empires of Austria, Prussia and Russia, now reappeared when the three empires declined together. However, the old enmity with the new neighboring countries could not be wiped out so easily.

By a separate treaty, **Austria** was reduced to a small state and it lost all its imperial glory. Austria recognized the independence of the newly formed countries of Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. You would remember that Italy had also gained some territory at the cost of Austria. All the newly formed countries had to deal with the problems of border disputed, political upheavals and economic difficulties.

Britain was given Palestine and Iraq as MANDATES and France was given Syria. They would administer them till the people learnt to govern themselves. But these Mandates were also governed as colonies.

The treaty with **Turkey** resulted in the complete dismemberment of the Turkish Empire. Turkey lost its Arab possessions in North Africa, in Southwest Asia and almost all its territories in Europe. Some of these territories came under British and French control as mandates. Russia and Greece also gained some areas. Turkey was thus reduced to a small state. The Turks rose in rebellion against the treaty under the leadership of Mustafa Komal. The Sultan was removed from power and a republic was established in Turkey in 1923 with Mustafa Kemal as its first president. He began the process of modernization of the country. The people called him 'ATATURK' or Father of the Turks.

You have just read about the changes that occurred in various European countries. An understanding of these changes tells us that most countries remained dissatisfied with the peace treaties. Was another re-division of the world necessary? Was another war the only solution?

This chapter will help you find the answers.



Notes



INTEXT QUESTIONS 24.1

A. Match the following :

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Treaty of Versailles | Outlet to Baltic Sea |
| 2. Russian Revolution | Covenant |
| 3. The League of Nations | Dictated Peace |
| 4. Iraq and Palestine | Mandates |
| 5. Polish Corridor | Allied intervention |

B. Complete the following statements:

- The League of Nations was created for _____.
- Wilson’s Fourteen Points promised to bring in _____.
- Russia withdrew from war after _____.
- The Baltic States which gained independence after war, were _____.
- Poland was formed after the decline of _____ and _____.

24.2 RISE OF TOTALITARIAN REGIMES

The immediate post war years were full of problems for almost all countries of Europe. These included reorganization of the economy, resettlement of the survivors of war, and growing unemployment. The working classes in many countries tried to organize socialist revolutions on the Soviet pattern, but they were ruthlessly suppressed. In their place, strong, anti-democratic movements arose in Hungary, Poland, Italy, Portugal, Germany and Spain, which can generally be termed as ‘Fascist’.

Emergence of Fascism in Italy:

The term ‘Fascism’ is of Italian origin and was first used for the movement started by **Beni to Mussolini** in Italy. The fascists adopted as their symbol ‘the fasces’ or a bundle of rods, which represented state power. The main features of these movements were opposition to democracy and socialism, establishment of dictatorial rule, extreme nationalism and militarism.

Mussolini made eloquent speeches about the glory of ancient Roman Empire and urged people to restore Italy’s honor. Many ex-soldiers, after listening to his speeches, joined his armed gangs, which was a private army called ‘Blackshirts’. Mussolini used these gangs to break up strikes and to spread terror among the socialists and communists. The ruling classes of Italy did not curb their action because they also wanted to prevent a socialist revolution.

In 1921, Mussolini set up the National Fascist Party. In October next year, he sent 30,000 of his Blackshirts in a march on Rome. The government surrendered without a fight and the king asked Mussolini to form the new government. By 1928, Mussolini had destroyed all parliamentary opposition and had begun to rule as a dictator. All non-fascist parties were banned. He used imprisonment torture and organized killings to suppress the socialists and the communists. He set up the Fascist Grand



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Council and took the title of **Il Duce** of The Leader. He tried to make Italy a great power by advocating a policy of war and expansion.

Hitler and Nazi Germany:

You already know about the humiliating defeat of Germany and the downfall of its monarchy. In 1919, a Republican form of government was established under a new constitution, which provided for a President, a Chancellor and an elected Parliament. During the world war, **Adolf Hitler** had been a soldier in the German army and had fought bravely for four years, winning an Iron Cross. Disappointed at Germany's defeat, he now decided to join politics. In 1921, Hitler's powerful speeches and his organizational skills made him the leader of the National socialist German Workers' Party, in short, the **Nazi** party. Like Fascists, it had its own army called the 'Storm Troopers' or the 'Brownshirts.' By 1930, the Brown shirts number about 100,000 men.

After the Fascist captured power in Italy, Corporal Adolf Hitler made a similar attempt in Germany in 1923. The attempt failed and Hitler was jailed. While in jail Hitler wrote his book **Mein Kampf** (My struggle), in which he set out his plans to create the most barbaric dictatorship of modern times.

The aim of Nazi policies was to wipe out the humiliation of Versailles and to make Germany powerful and feared in the world.

The Nazis were similar to Fascism in their opposition to democracy, civil liberties and socialism. They used brutal force to crush any opposition.

Hitler put the blame for Germany's defeat in war on the Jews, so extermination of the Jewish race became an important feature of Nazism. He believed in the purity and superiority of the German race-calling them pure blood Aryans-and wanted the union of all Germans to create a Greater Germany. A very large section of the people were marked by the Nazi politics. They appealed to the national pride of Germans and gained support for Nazi politics.

The 1936 Olympics were held in Berlin. Hitler wanted to use the games to prove his theory of Aryan racial superiority. But his attempt failed as the most popular hero of the games was an Afro-American sprinter -Jesse Owens.

The economic development of the 1930s helped in Hitler's rise to power. A severe depression hit America and Europe. As a result almost 8 million workers in Germany became unemployed. The Nazi party now began to spread its influence. The Communists and the Socialists failed to unite against the Nazis. Consequently, the Nazi party, which had won only 12 seats in the Parliament in 1928, became the single Largest party in 1932. President Hindenburg appointed Hitler as Chancellor and asked him to form the new government.

Soon after coming to power, Hitler unleashed a reign of terror. All democratic principles were put aside. In February 1933, the Nazis set the Parliament building on fire and put the blame on the socialists and communists. Over 60,000 people were imprisoned or sent to concentration camps. By mid-1933 all political parties, other than the Nazi party, were banned. Following Hindenburg's death on August 2 1934, Hitler became the President of Germany. An organized campaign for the total

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extermination of Jews was launched. Simultaneously a programme of militarization was introduced. The victory of Nazism brought the world closer to war.

Hitler was so ruthless that he ordered the killings of hundreds of storm Troopers, who had helped in his rise to power, in one night. June 30 1934 is known as the night of Long Knives.

Military Fascism in Japan:

Japan had been the only country in Asia to escape colonization. By the end of the nineteenth century, Japan's expansionist policy led her to a war with China. The defeat of China enabled Japan to gain a foothold in the country. In 1905, Japan defeated Russia in war and took over Manchuria, the Russian sphere of influence in China. This was the first instance of an Asian country defeating a mighty European nation in war. Later Japan also annexed Korea.

The outbreak of the First World War gave her a chance to acquire Germany's possessions in China and some German-held islands in the Pacific. After the war the League gave her the mandate over the islands. By this time, Japan's military had become a dominating force in society. It destroyed democracy within the country and advocate of extreme nationalism and expansionism. In less than fifty years Japan changed from a peaceful country to an aggressive military power. During one 1930s she was to establish close relations with the fascist governments of Germany and Italy for another re-division of the world.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 24.2****A. State whether True or False:**

1. In 1920s, the socialist revolutions succeeded in many countries.

2. The term 'Fascism' is used to describe democratic movements.

3. Hitler set up the most barbaric regime of modern times.

4. The European governments supported the rise of socialism.

5. Japan adopted a peaceful policy towards China.

B. Fill in the blanks:

1. Mussolini's armed gangs were called _____.

2. Hitler wrote _____ while he was in jail.

3. Like Fascists, Nazis were also opposed to _____ and _____.



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4. Mussolini came to power by organizing a _____ on _____
5. After defeating Russia in war, Japan took over _____ in _____.

24.3 THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND ITS EFFECTS

A significant development after the First World War was the decline in the supremacy of Europe and the growing importance of the United States of America. While the war damaged the economy of the European countries, the U.S. economy became stronger. No war was fought on the U.S. soil and the industrial expansion also continued during war as it supplied arms and other materials to the Allies. However, a decade later serious economic problems arose in the country, which later spread to the rest of Europe.

You know that America followed the capitalist system of production, in which maximum profit was made by the owners of industry. Most of the workers, however, lived below the poverty line. Thus, not many people had the means to buy goods, which were being produced by the industries. So ‘overproduction’ and ‘maldistribution of purchasing power’ were the two main causes of The Great Depression, which hit U.S.A. in Oct. 1929 and then spread worldwide.

The Crisis began with a fall in the share prices leading to a collapse of the U.S. stock market. In one day, nearly 16 million shares were sold on the New York stock exchange.

During the next four years, almost 9000 banks closed operations and millions of people lost their life’s savings.

As goods remained unsold, thousands of factories shut down, resulting in unemployment, poverty and starvation.

Most of the European countries, except Soviet Union, also suffered as they had become dependent on the U.S. economy, especially on the American bank. The effects of the crisis in these countries were similar. The number of unemployed in the world rose to over 50 million, of which 15 million were in U.S. alone

The economic crisis also affected the political conditions in these countries. In U.S. the Democratic Party came to power with Franklin D. Roosevelt as President. He introduced a programme of economic reform and social welfare called New Deal. In Britain and France, labour friendly governments came to power. Though fascist movements arose in Britain and France they were not successful.

In Germany and Italy as you have read above, post war discontent and Depression led to victories of fascist parties.

During the 1930s the foreign policies of U.S, Britain and France were also similar. They did not adopt a strong position against the fascists. Their main concern was to check the spread of socialist ideas and workers’ movements. Thus when fascist aggression began, they did nothing to check it. Instead they chose to appease Fascism in the hope that it would destroy communism.

Developments in the USSR

We have already discussed Russia’s participation in war and the Russian Revolution. This was followed by a civil war and the allied military intervention. All this had resulted in the collapse of the Russian economy. There was a severe shortage of food and the industrial production declined drastically.

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The consequent famine worsened the conditions further.

Lenin was forced to take strict measures. The soviet government forcibly seized surplus food from rich farmers (kulaks), to feed the rest of the population. Nothing could be bought or sold in the markets. The industrial produce was distributed to the workers in lieu of wages. People were encouraged and even forced to work for the good of their fellow men rather than for motive. This grim state of affairs, which lasted from 1918–1921. was called ‘War Communism’.

The fierce opposition to this system mainly from the peasantry and some members of his above party led Lenin to replace it by the New Economic Policy in 1921. The harsh measures of War Communism were withdrawn. Now the peasant gave one-tenth of their produce as tax and were allowed to sell the rest in the open markets. Though most of the industries remained under state control, yet smaller industries were given back to private owners. Payment of wages in cash was reintroduced.

A new constitution was introduced in 1924, under which Russia became the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic. But after Lenin’s death in 1924 a fierce power struggle arose within the party. There were serious differences among the senior leaders over the policies to be followed. Finally, Stalin, emerged victorious, became the General Secretary of the Communist Party, and soon assumed great powers.

Within a few years, the U.S.S.R. started a vigorous program of industrialization through a series of Five Years Plans. The first plan was introduced in 1929. One of the aims of the Plan was to bring about changes in agriculture. After the revolution, agricultural land had been redistributed among peasants resulting in millions of small, less productive land holdings. To increase production, the government promoted the idea of Collectivization of small farms. The peasants were both encouraged and forced to give up private ownership of farms, land was pooled and they had to become members and joint owners of the collective farms. The kulaks, who opposed collectivization, were severely dealt with. It is estimated that thousands perished during this period.

The main effort of the plan was towards industrialization. Here the success was greater and soon Soviet Russia emerged a major, industrial power in the world. It is important to remember that the capitalist economies at this time faced a severe economic crisis. The Soviet example of a successful socialist economy stood out and was adopted later by many colonies after independence. Most of the European countries and U.S.A., however, did not recognize Soviet Russia till 1933. It became a member of the League of Nations only in 1934. The hostility towards Soviet Union continued even after this. When fascist aggression began in the 1930s, Soviet Union was the only major power that actively opposed them.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 24.3****A. Match the following :**

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. New Deal | U.S.S.R |
| 2. Rich farmers | Co-operative farms |
| 3. New Economic Policy | U.S.A. |



- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 4. Collectivisation | Kulaks |
| 5. Overproduction | Great Depression |

B. State whether True or False:

1. Most of the European countries were dependent on the U.S. economy.
2. In the capitalist system, workers were paid low wages.
3. The people were happy with Lenin's policy of war Communism.
4. Russia introduced Five Year Plans for rapid industrialization.
5. Many colonies after independence adopted the Soviet example of a socialist economy.

24.4 AGGRESSION AND APPEASEMENT

The 1930s witnessed several acts of aggression by Italy, Germany and Japan. In this section, we will see that most of the western powers not only remained mute spectators to these acts but even supported some of them, thereby helping the fascists prepare the stage for war.

Appeasement is a policy of making concessions for an aggressor at the cost of weaker nations.

Japanese invasion of Manchuria

The first major act of aggression was the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931. Trouble began with an explosion on the Japanese railway line and Japanese military officers used it as an excuse to take over Manchuria. China appealed to the League of Nations but no action was taken. Japan quit the League of Nations and it launched another attack on China in 1937.

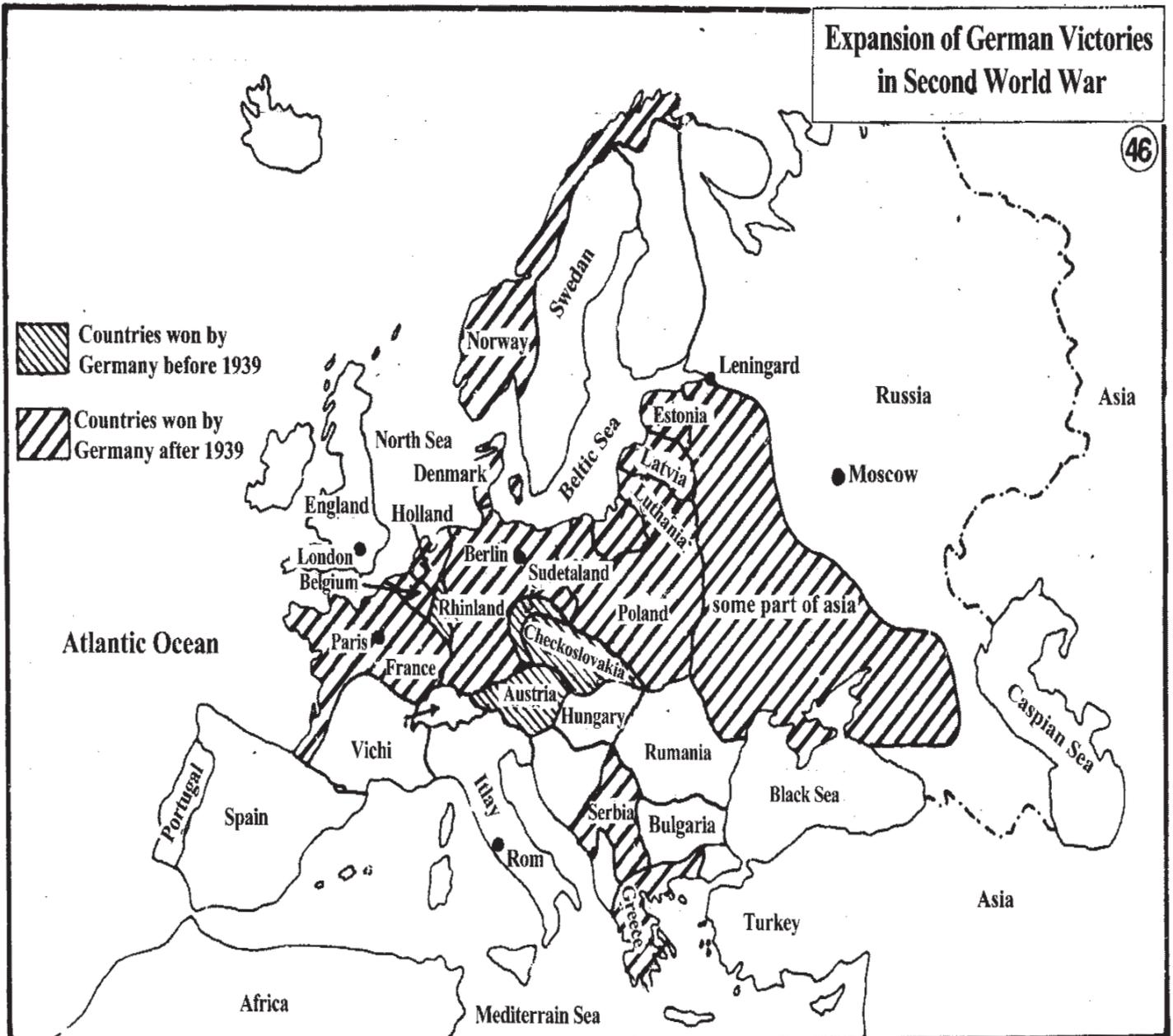
Italy takes over Ethiopia

In 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia and an appeal was made to the League. The League condemned Italy as an aggressor and put a ban on the sale of arms to Italy. By 1936, however, Italy completed the conquest of Ethiopia and the League, once again, failed to resist aggression.

Expansion of Nazi Germany

In our study of Hitler's rise to power, we saw that he became the Chancellor as well as the President of Germany. He then started the process of re-militarization of Germany in violation of the Treaty of Versailles.

The German troops entered Rhineland, which had been demilitarized by the treaty. Moreover, the troops now numbered 800,000 as against the Treaty limit of 100,000. The absence of any retaliatory action by France and Britain gave Hitler increased confidence to build up an Air force and a Navy. The Saar valley was also reunited with Germany. In 1936, Hitler and Mussolini signed the Rome-Berlin Axis, and in 1937, they signed the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan.



Map 24.3 German expansion in second world war

Hitler's next Plan was the annexation of Austria. The union of Austria and Germany or the Anschluss was completed in 1938. The same year, at a conference in Munich, Britain and France signed the Munich Pact. By this pact, they agreed to the German occupation of Sude tenland in Czechoslovakia. The Czechs had no role in these talks. Germany wanted Sudetenland because this area had a large German population and was the hub of coal chemical and iron and steel industries. A few months later, Germany took over the whole of Czechoslovakia. The Munich Pact was the last act of appeasement by the western powers.



Notes

In an article in National Herald dated 5th Oct. 1938, Pt. Nehru wrote that Britain and France should 'hang their heads in shame' for signing the Munich Pact.

A dress rehearsal of Second World War

The first example of joint German-Italian aggression was seen during the Spanish Civil War (1936–39). It had serious consequence for the entire world and is considered to be a dress rehearsal of the Second World War.

In 1936, a Popular Front Government, comprising the socialists, communists and other anti fascist parties, came to power in Spain. They formed a democratic republic under the leadership of General Franco, a section of the army planned to overthrow this government. Germany and Italy gave armed support to Franco's men and German aircrafts carried out air raids on Spanish towns and villages. They captured many parts of the country and terrorized people into submission.

The Republican government appealed for help but Britain, France and U.S.A. accepted a policy of non-intervention. Only the Soviet Union offered to help the Republicans. The anti-fascists from all over the world came together to form an International Brigade to fight for the Republic. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru went to Spain to offer the support of the Indian Freedom Movement to the Republic. The Spanish Civil War was no longer a Spanish affair as thousands of non-Spaniards sacrificed their lives to save the Republic from the fascists. The civil war continued for three years. By 1939, Spain fell to the fascists and the new government was recognized by most of the western powers.

Towards Poland

You can understand that the policy of appeasement adopted by the western powers encouraged the fascist towards more aggression. The Soviets demanded an anti-fascist alliance but the western powers did not agree. To protect its own interests the USSR signed a Non-Aggression pact with Germany in August 1939.

Hitler now directed his attention towards Poland. He wanted both, the Danzig Free City and the Polish Corridor, which, you remember, had separated East Prussia from the rest of Germany. The British and French governments declared that they would attack Germany if it invaded Poland. But Hitler could not be stopped now. On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Two days later, Britain and France declared war on Germany. The Second World War had begun.



24.4 INTEXT QUESTIONS

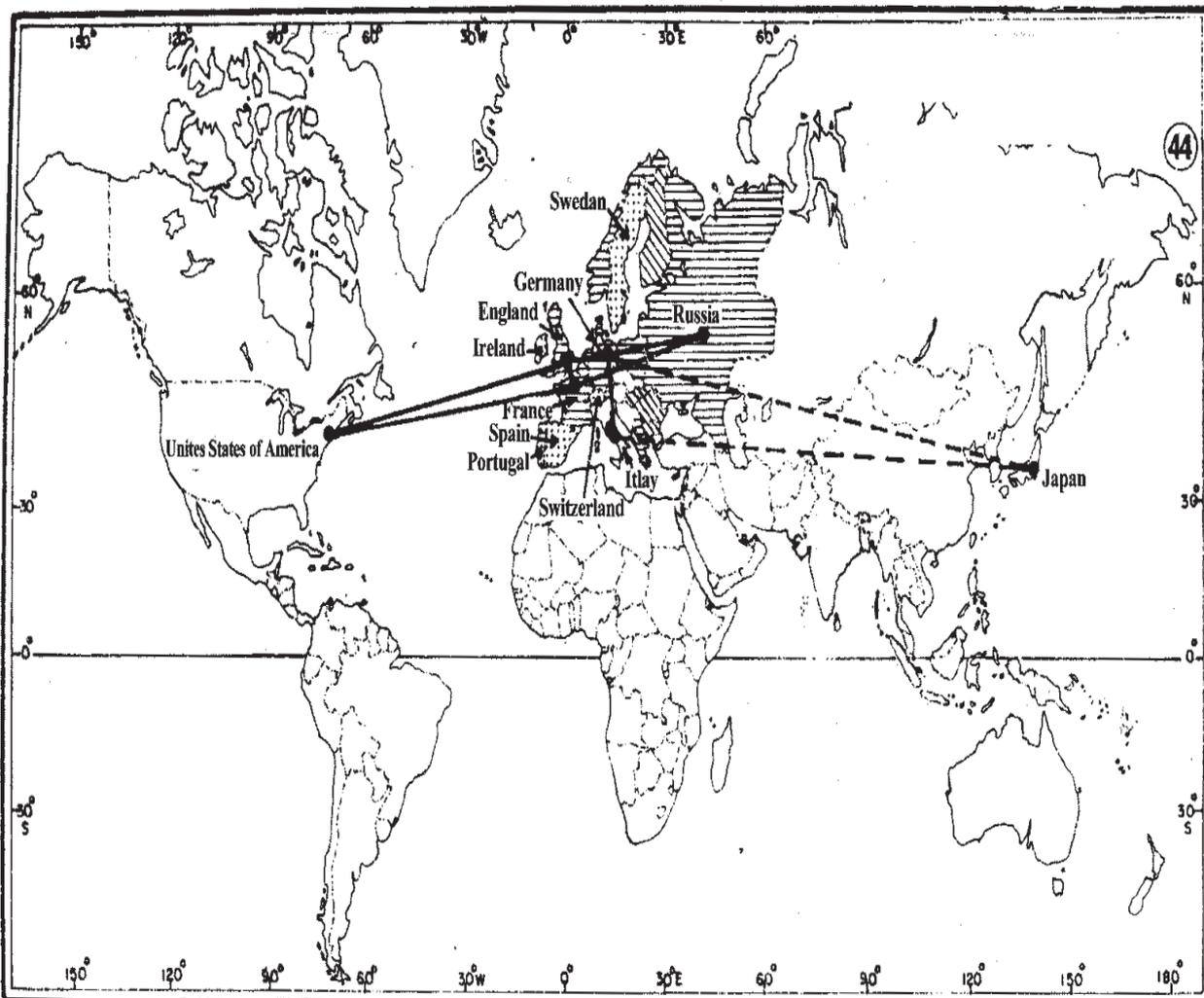
Complete the following sentences:

1. The League failed to prevent _____
2. In 1931, Japan invaded _____
3. Italy defied the League to take over _____
4. German troops entered the demilitarized zone of _____
5. The Munich Pact allowed Germany to occupy _____
6. Anschluss refers to the union of _____ and _____

7. The Popular Front Government in Spain consisted of _____
8. The Second World War began with the invasion of _____
9. The Anti-Comintern Pact was signed between _____
10. The policy of appeasement encouraged _____

**Notes****24.5 THE WORLD AT WAR**

We have just read that the invasion of Poland marked the beginning of the Second World War. The German army crossed the Polish frontier from the west and completed the conquest of Poland in three weeks. Despite declaration of war, no help reached Poland. The Soviet Red Army took the opportunity to get back the territories which had earlier been part of the Russian empire. By 1940, the Russians had taken over the Baltic States—Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—and forced a treaty on Finland. As there was little actual fighting for the first six months, this period is known as ‘the period of Phony War’.



Map 24.4 The world at war



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On 9th April, 1940 the German forces launched an attack on Norway and Denmark and conquered them. Next to fall were the neutral countries of Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg. This was followed by the invasion of France. The German armies occupied the capital city of Paris, almost without a fight, on June 14, 1940. The French government surrendered and Germany occupied the northern half of France. The other half remained under the French and was called Vichy France. They collaborated with the Nazis. The swift takeover of European countries by Hitler is called 'lightning war'.

Meanwhile, about 350,000 British, French and Belgian troops, who did not surrender, reached Dunkirk on the Northern coast of France, from where they marched to Britain. Among them was Charles , a colonel in the French army, who started the 'Free France' movement in Britain to fight Nazi Germany.

The battle for Britain

With the conquest of west Europe almost complete, Hitler turned his attention to Britain. The invasion of Britain or 'Operation Sea-Lion' was only possible if the German army could cross the English Channel. This meant that the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy had to be put out of action.

During the development discussed above, there was a change of government in Britain. The British Prime Minister Chamberlain, who had signed the Munich pact had resigned and Winston Churchill took over as the new Prime Minister of a coalition government.

In August 1940, the German Air Force (Luftwaffe) began its campaign over British skies and carried out air raids on British ports and cities. The RAF in their Spitfires and Hurricanes carried out air raids on British ports and cities. The Germans began night raids on large cities, especially London. The aerial fights between the R.A.F and Luftwaffe came to be known as 'dogfights'. Churchill's powerful speeches kept the morale of the people high and the British Air force caused severe damage to the Luftwaffe.

By November 1940 Operation Sea-Lion was indefinitely put off

In praise of the role of R.A.F., Churchill said, 'Never have so many owed so much to so few'

The expansion of war

On September 27 1940, Germany, Italy and Japan signed a Tripartite Pact at Berlin, promising to give full support to each other in the event of an attack. The three Axis powers also agreed upon the leadership of Germany and Italy in the establishment of a new order in Europe and Japan's similar leadership in Asia. Some other countries like Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria also joined the pact.

Meanwhile, war had spread to other parts of Europe and Africa. Italy invaded Greece, but faced stiff resistance. However, German troops succeeded in capturing Greece, Yugoslavia and parts of North Africa. Italian and British forces clashed over several territories in Africa and this conflict was to continue for another two years.

Germany turns against Soviet Union

A new chapter opened in the war with Hitler's decision to invade Soviet Union. The Non-Aggression pact was forgotten and 'Operation Barbarossa' was launched on

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June 22 1941, without a formal declaration of war. The German army rapidly advanced on three fronts—Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev—and the Soviet army taken by Surprise, fell back. The soviet appeal for help had positive results at this times and Britain and U.S.A. gave support.

Hitler had hoped to end the war before the onset of winter. By early October, Moscow was besieged. But, by then, Russian Winters set in. Within a month, temperatures dropped to -40 degrees C. Neither the German soldiers nor their equipment could stand up to the extreme cold. By December, the Russian counter-attack started and the German forces were driven back. The threat to Moscow was over. Operation Barbarossa had failed, but the Germans would accept total defeat only after suffering another Russian winter, and a heroic resistance firm the Soviet Red Army.

A global war

Since the outbreak of war, U.S. had been sympathetic to Britain, allowing her to buy arms, first on a 'Cash and carry' basis and then on a 'Lend – lease' system. The latter deal was extended to the Soviet Union also in November 1941. However, U.S. was opposed to direct entry into the war.

However, on December 7, 1941, Japan launched a surprise attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. This resulted in the destruction of the American Pacific Fleet and the death of over 2000 soldiers. On December 8, US declared war on Japan and, a few days later on Germany and Italy. The war had become truly global.

After Pearl Harbor, the Japanese advanced rapidly in the Far East, capturing Thailand, Malaya, Singapore, Hong Kong, Philippines and Burma, by the middle of 1942. The fascist countries had reached the peak of their power.

The battle of Stalingrad

During the summer of 1942, Hitler's army continued its offensive in the Soviet Union. Hitler again hoped for victory but the advance of the German army was checked at Stalingrad. By November, the German armies were in an around Stalingrad, but they were encircled by the Soviet troops. All supplies to the German army cut off. The Russian winter again took its toll and by January 31, 1943, the German army had collapsed. Germany and their allies lost almost 250,000 men in the battle, which marked the turning point in the war. Soviet Union also suffered very heavy losses in terms of dead and wounded.

The beginning of the end

Meanwhile the war in North Africa had developed into a battle between the Western Eighth Army under General Montgomery and the German Afrika Korps under General Rommel, who had been sent by Hitler to help the Italian troops. In August 1942, Rommel began to move towards Egypt. The decisive battle was fought at El Alamein on the north coast of Egypt in October 1943, which led to Rommel's retreat.

By the summer of 1943, the Allies had taken over North Africa, In July, they invaded Sicily. Mussolini's government was overthrown and Italy surrendered unconditionally. The German troops immediately marched into northern Italy and rescued Mussolini, who set up his government under German protection.

On the Eastern front, the Soviet Red Army forced Hitler's army to retreat along the route on which they had set out so confidently two and a half years before.



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Most of the East European countries—Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary—were liberated. The fascists were also driven out of Greece, Yugoslavia and Albania.

In June 1944, the Allies opened the Second Front in Western Europe. On June 6—D- Day—the first of the Allied troops landed on the beaches of Normandy in the North coast of France. The landings had been planned in total secrecy and they took the Germans by surprise. Commanded by General Eisenhower, they broke through the German line of defence and liberated Brussels, Paris and Luxemburg by September.

Surrender By the fascist powers

By the spring of 1945, the end of war was in sight. The allied troops had taken over many cities in Italy. In April, there was an uprising in Fascist occupied areas. On April 28, Mussolini was captured and executed, thus putting an end to fascism in Italy.

The downfall of Germany was now certain. The Allied troop entered Germany from three directions – the south, the northwest and the east and as the Soviet army reached Berlin, Hitler committed suicide. On May 7, Germany surrendered unconditionally.

The fall of Japan

The war in Asia and the Pacific continued even after Germany’s surrender. Despite American and British victories in the Pacific and the Far East, Japan still held out. On August 6, 1945, U.S. dropped the first atom bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Fifty thousand people were killed and large parts of the city were leveled to the ground. Two days later, a second bomb destroyed the city of Nagasaki and forced Japan to surrender.

The Second world war came to an end. More than 50 countries had been involved in war. Another international organization – The United Nations Organizations – was set up to maintaining peace in the world. But the two super powers – U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. – would soon try to divide the world into two power blocs, creating a situation of Cold War. That is what we will study in the next chapter.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 24.5

A. Match the followings:

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Free France Movement | Operation Barbarossa |
| 2. Battle of Britain | Winston Churchill |
| 3. Invasion of U.S.S.R | Operation Sea-Lion |
| 4. British Prime Minister | Normandy |
| 5. Second Front | Spitfire and Hurricane |
| 6. British Aircrafts | Charles de Gaulle |

B Complete the following sentences:

1. The Second World War began with _____
2. Operation Sea-Lion was possible only if _____

**Notes**

3. The attack on Pearl Harbor led to _____
4. Operation Barbarossa failed because _____
5. The battle of Stalingrad marked the _____
6. The war in Asia and Pacific ended with _____

**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

1. The first world War came to an end with the signing of the peace treaties and the creation of the League of Nations, which would make the world safe from war.
2. The treaties also changed the map of Europe. Large empires like Russia, Prussia and Austria-Hungary broke up and several smaller nation-states emerged in their place.
3. The success of the Russian Revolution led to the spread of socialist ideas and the rise of socialist parties in almost all European countries.
4. The post-war period was full of economic hardships for most European countries and their governments took steps to prevent the occurrence of similar revolution in their countries.
5. In Italy and Germany, the ruling parties encouraged fascist movements, which resulted in the rise of strong dictators like Mussolini in Italy and Hitler in Germany. The fascist leaders ruthlessly suppressed socialists and communists. They believed expansionism and war. Japan allied with Germany and Italy and the three Axis powers signed the Anti-Comintern pact in 1937.
6. When the fascist aggression began, the western powers followed the policy of appeasement. They believed that the aggression would be directed against Soviet Russia. But Hitler had other plans and soon the war spread to Europe.
7. The Second World War (1939–1945) was much more destructive and it ended with the dropping of the atom bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan.

**TERMINAL QUESTIONS**

1. What were the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles? Did they contain the seeds of another war?
2. Describe the rise of Mussolini to power in Italy. How did he deal with the opposition?
3. What were the aims of the Nazi policies? How did Hitler try to achieve those aims? Were his methods justified?
4. Why did the western powers follow a policy of appeasement during the 1930s? What was its effect on the fascists?

**Notes****ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS****24.1**

- A.** 1. Dictated Peace
2. Allied intervention
3. Covenant
4. Mandates
5. Outlet to Baltic Sea
- B.** 1. promotion of international cooperation, peace and security.
2. an era of peace, freedom, democracy and self determination.
3. signing a treaty with Germany.
4. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.
5. Austria, Prussia and Russia.

24.2

- A.** 1. F
2. F
3. T
4. F
5. F
- B.** 1. Blackshirts
2. Mein Kampf (My Struggle)
3. Democracy, socialism
4. March, Rome
5. Manchuria, China

24.3

- A.** 1. USA
2. Kulaks
3. U.S.S.R.
4. Cooperative farms
5. Great depression
- B.** 1. T
2. T
3. F
4. T
5. T



Notes

24.4

1. Aggression
2. Manchuria
3. Ethiopia
4. Rhineland
5. Sudetenland
6. Austria, Germany
7. Socialists, communists and anti-fascists
8. Poland
9. Germany, Italy and Japan
10. The fascists.

24.5

- A.**
1. Charles de Gaulle
 2. Operation Sea-Lion
 3. Operation Barbarossa
 4. Winston Churchill
 5. Normandy
 6. Spitfires and Hurricanes
- B.**
1. the invasion of Poland.
 2. the German army could cross the English Channel.
 3. the U.S. entry into war.
 4. the Germans could not tolerate the Russian winters.
 5. the turning point of war.
 6. the dropping of the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

HINTS TO TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. 24.1, paras 2–3.
2. 24.2, paras 3–4.
3. 24.2, paras 7–9.
4. 24.4, paras 1.

GLOSSARY

- Annexed** - to add another's territory into one's own territory
- Comintern** - The Communist International set up by the Russian Communist party countries. With membership of all communists parties of the world with the purpose of bringing about revolutions all over the world.
- Eloquent Speech** - To speak in a fluent, forceful, effective and persuasive manner.
- Holocaust** - the systematic killing of over 6 million European Jews by the Nazis during and after Second World War.



Notes

THE INTER-WAR PERIOD AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

- Imperialism** - A policy of acquiring and administering colonies or dependent territories e.g. India was a colony of imperialist Britain.
- National Chauvinism-** Unreasonable or aggressive patriotism, excessive loyalty to one's nation.
- Socialism** - A political and economic system where the state controls the means of production and there is a fair distribution of wealth.
- Totalitarian regime** - A system of government, in which there is a single party dictatorship, the state is all powerful and the individual is subordinated to the state.

TIME LINE-1919–1945

- April 28, 1919 - League of Nations set up
- June 28, 1919 - Treaty of Versailles signed
- July 29, 1921 - Hitler becomes leader of Nazi party
- Oct. 28-29, 1922 - March on Rome, Mussolini forms government
- Oct. 29, 1929 - Stock market in U.S.A crashes
- Jan. 30, 1933 - Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany
- Aug. 2, 1934 - Hitler becomes President as well
- March 7, 1936 - German troops occupy Rhineland
- May 9, 1936 - Mussolini's Italian troops take Ethiopia
- July 18, 1936 - Civil war begins in Spain
- March 12, 1938 - Anschluss – Nazis take Austria
- Sep. 30, 1938 - Munich pact signed
- Aug. 23, 1939 - Nazi-Soviet pact signed
- Sep. 1, 1939 - Nazis invade Poland
- Sep. 3, 1939 - Britain and France declare war on Germany
- April – May, 1940 - Nazis invade Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg and France
- July 10, 1940 - Battle of Britain begins
- Sep. 13, 1940 - Italians invade Egypt
- Oct. 12, 1940 - Operation Sea-Lion put off
- June 22, 1941 - Operation Barbarossa begins
- Dec. 5, 1941 - German attack on Moscow abandoned
- Dec. 7-8, 1941 - Japan attacks Pearl harbor, U.S. enters war
- Feb. 2, 1943 - Battle of Stalingrad begins
- July 25, 1943 - German surrender at Stalingrad, Soviet troops push back German army
- July 25, 1943 - Mussolini arrested, fascist government falls in Italy
- June 6, 1944 - Second Front – Allied troops land in Normandy
- April 16, 1945 - Soviet final attack on Berlin
- April 28, 1945 - Hitler commits suicide
- May 7, 1945 - Germany surrenders
- Aug. 6, 9, 1945 - Atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki
- Sep. 2, 1945 - Japan signs the surrender agreement