

THE SECOND WORLD WAR (1939 – 1945)

Twenty years after World War I, the great industrial nations of the world found themselves into another war which came to be known as the Second World War. The outbreak of this war was a clear testimony of the collapse of world peace and the failure of collective security. The wars begun as a simple European affair but later become a world war bigger than the First World War.

The war was fought by the great nations of America, Britain, France, Russia, Canada and their allies against German, Japan Italy and their allies. This war was sparked off by German's invasion and occupation of Poland on 1st September 1939 and it took a prolonged fight up to August 1945 with the defeat of Japan after Hiroshima and Nagasaki incident which forced Japan to sign an armistice accepting unconditional surrender.

The war was very much witnessed in the in the areas of North Africa, Europe, Japan, Russia and Asia. The deserts of Africa, the jungles of Malaysia and Burma, the waters of the east, central Europe, Baltic and others. The war left behind tangled problems of reconstruction, rehabilitation, powers employed disastrous machines and weapons, it was characterized by massive killings, extermination of communities, its outbreak exposed the short sighted nature of the treaties signed after world war I and the end of the war witnessed the defeat of German and Italy, brought humiliation and collapse upon France, influenced a revolution in China and led to the emergence of USA and USSR as world's super powers.

CAUSES OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

1. **The unfairness of the Versailles settlement of 1919** played a bigger role for the outbreak of Second World War. This was through the following.
 - i. The settlement was vindictive on German and all the 440 articles of the treaty had a negative impact upon German. It was extremely unjust to German as a nation and it created fertile ground for the rise and success of Nazism and Hitler in German leading to his aggression in central Europe that undermined the concept of collective security and peace.
 - ii. The treaty of Versailles was not negotiated on by the concerned parties but rather dictated and this eventually bred hostility, mistrust and suspicion between German and the signatories/makers of the treaty. This created a revenge mood by the Germans and this later occasioned the occurrence of World War II.

- iii. The treaty enforced the war reparation on German which were so severe and unjust to the German economy and this generated a lot of sufferings in German leading to inflation, collapse of industries and commerce, occurrence of unemployment, social urban discontents which were all exploited by Hitler to overthrow peace loving democratic institutions and this led to the occurrence of Second World War.
- iv. The treaty forced German to accept the de-colonization clause which made German to lose her colonies, wealthy, resources and commerce. This in the end forced German nationals e.g. Hitler to undo what had been done by the Versailles settlement of 1919 thus leading to the outbreak of Second World War.
- v. The territorial clause had negative impact on German and therefore the Germans were bound not to accept it e.g. German lost her territories of Posen, Silesia, Saarland, the polish corridors etc and in process German lost wealth, resources, but most importantly her citizens to Czechoslovakia, Poland, Denmark and Austria and this influenced the rise of militant nationalism which manifested its self in Hitler's invasion of these states leading to the outbreak of Second World War.
- vi. The treaty imposed humiliating arrangements on German where the German army was reduced, her air and naval force was destroyed and this influenced the Germans in long run to establish a strong army through re-armament leading to the occurrence of the arms race which partly conditioned the occurrence of World War II.
- vii. The treaty ignored the causes of tension and rivalry that resulted into World War I. Since most of the (14) points program of Woodrow Wilson were neglected, it made the Germans to regard the treaty as unbalanced and a betrayal to German. This in long run influenced the German leaders to violate the treaty leading to the outbreak of the Second World War.
- viii. The treaty was dominated by the wishes of the German enemies mainly Lloyd George and Clemenceau. Thus it lacked sincerity, Justice, Frankness and diplomacy thus undermining the performance of LON.
- ix. The treaty failed to reward Italy and Japan as expected hence the two countries were dissatisfied leading to aggression that conditioned the occurrence of the war.
- x. It disarmed German as opposed to other power thus giving German an opportunity to rearm herself leading to the arms race that led to war.
- xi. The settlement wholesomely put the blame of causing World War I on German without considering the fact that other powers acted recklessly that resulted into war.
- xii. The reparation clause was too harsh as German was to pay heavily and this was bound to be opposed by the Germans.
- xiii. It created weaker states that were vulnerable to aggression from German e.g. Poland, Yugoslavia etc.
- xiv. Refused German to unite with Austria yet the two countries wished it this in the end led to Hitler's invasion of Austria in 1938 that revived militarism in Europe.
- xv. Because of its unrealistic terms, it forced Britain and France to pursue an appeasements policy that destroyed peace in Europe.

xvi. Led to the world economic depression as German lost many of her former colonies and territories where it lost a lot of revenue and could not effectively participate in international trade.

xvii. It created a weak league of nations which failed to maintain world peace.

2. **The policies of Britain and France** also made the occurrence of World War II inevitable. After 1919, Britain and France pursued policies which made the occurrence of World War II inevitable. The two powers were dominated by the desire to keep German weak or destroy it completely for their selfish interests, in their policies they were determined to prevent the re-armament of German while they pursued their individual secret state re-armament e.g. during the time of Charles De-Gaulle as a minister of war in France, various military programs were put in place and Britain also revived her navy which had been badly affected by world war I. This event caused mingled fear and hatred by German against Britain and France which eventually led to the Second World War.

i. France had aimed at building a strong frontier around German and thus signed military alliances with countries bordering German e.g. in 1921, she made a secret treaty with Poland and began to supply her with arms specifically in away against German.

ii. France also influenced the formation of the little entente of Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia which was greatly against the political and military revival of German. This fermented mistrust and hatred between German and the allies leading to the occurrence of the Second World War.

v. By 1937, Britain and France had been compelled to take German's threat to their security seriously especially after Hitler's conquest of the Rhineland's, Italian invasion of Abyssinia, Hitler's invasion of Austria and having taken Sudetenland. As a result, they adopted an appeasements policy which in the end become more disastrous as the dictators thought that the appeasers were cowards. This eventually conditioned the occurrence of the Second World War.

Britain and France failed to follow the fourteen (14) points program of Woodrow Wilson which were meant to preserve peace. This undermined peace efforts as German was not satisfied with the terms of the Versailles settlement of 1919.

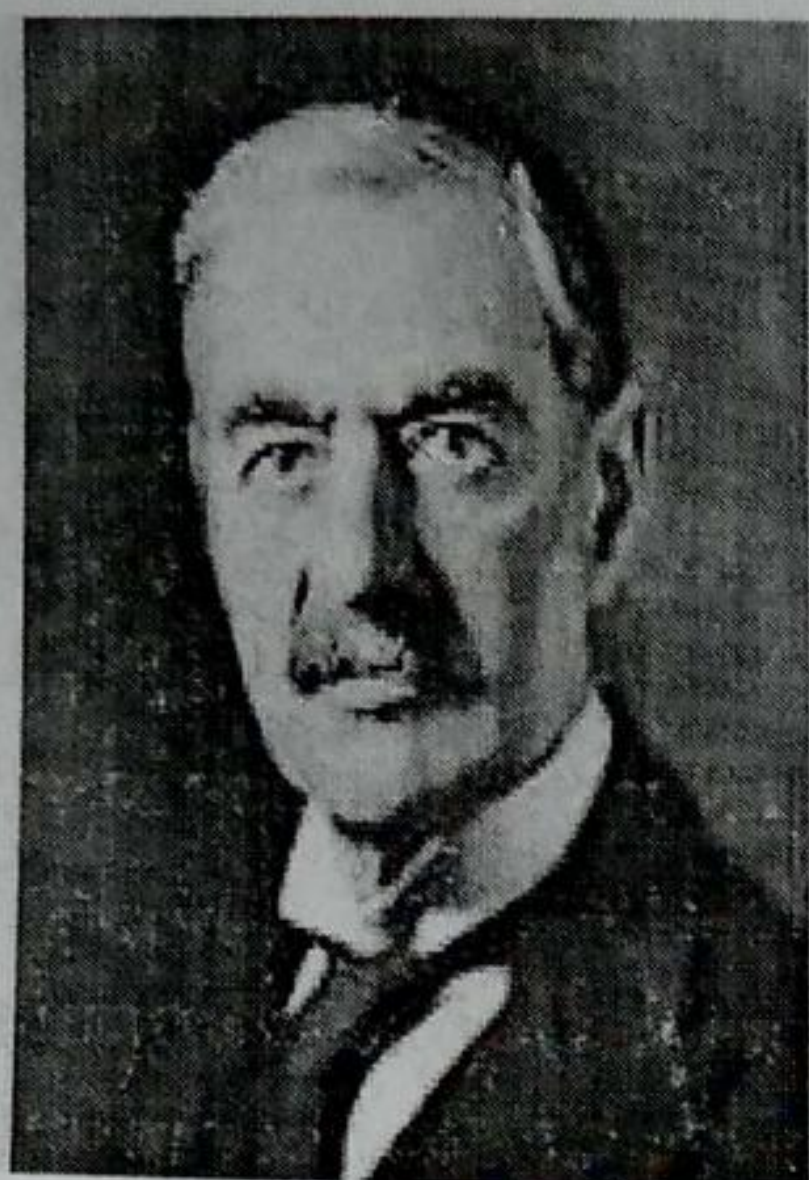
The two powers ignored the interests of Italy and Japan yet they fought on the side of the allied powers during World War I. This left the two powers dissatisfied leading to aggression against other powers which eventually resulted into World War II.

i. They over dominated the Versailles settlement of 1919 which was unfair to powers like German. This created a revenge mood in German hence creating an atmosphere for war.

ii. Countries like France had wanted to completely destroy German in order to keep their position safe. This in turn forced the Germans after the rise of Adolf Hitler to re-arm herself leading to the arms race that contributed to the outbreak of the Second World War.

viii. The policies of Britain and France conditioned the outbreak of the world economic depression of 1929- 1934 with its negative effects on Germany. This eventually led to the rise of Adolf Hitler and his aggression tendencies that gave way for the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

3. **The appeasement policy.** This was started by Neville Chamberlain the British prime minister and



Neville Chamberlain



Edward Daladier

the French prime minister, it was effected in 1938 when the two leaders met the German dictator Adolf Hitler and his counterpart, Mussolini in Munich and

signed *the notorious Munich agreement of 1938*. The leaders reasoned that in order to avoid war with aggressive powers, they would give in to the demands of these dictators as long as they were reasonable. In this agreement, Hitler was allowed to annex and create an independent state of Czechoslovakia which was taken over by Germany in 1938. However, the appeasement policy resulted into the outbreak of the Second World War through the following.

- i. Led to increased aggression by dictators against weaker states e.g. after Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia and nothing was done to him, it gave him morale to invade Poland that became a spark for the Second World War.
- ii. The appeasement policy undermined collective security and the League of Nations because Britain and France hijacked the League of Nations through the appeasement policy hence making the League fail to realize its principles.
- iii. The appeasement policy also gave false impression to the dictators that the appeasers were cowards e.g. when Hitler occupied Austria, Czechoslovakia and nothing was done to him, it boosted his morale to attack Poland leading to the outbreak of the Second World War.
- iv. The appeasement policy violated the nationality of small nations which was supposed to be guarded by the big powers as per the 1919 Versailles settlement as it gave dictators ample time to aggress as they wished.
- v. Led to increased armament and the arms race especially when Britain and France started re-arming themselves in preparation for war in case Germany violated the appeasement policy. It also gave dictators time to re-arm themselves leading to the arms race that drove the world into another catastrophe.

- vi. The policy made the western powers to look on when Hitler was rearming himself and this resulted into the arms race that took the world into another world catastrophe.
- vii. It availed Hitler with enough time to undermine the Versailles settlement of 1919.
- viii. The policy made aggressors to believe that their demands were justified hence leading to series of aggression that drove them into the Second World War.
- ix. After the notorious Munich agreement Hitler was meant to believe that Britain and France would never intervene in his aggression thus encouraging him to go on with his aggressive tendencies.
- x. It encouraged the rise, spread and strengthening of fascism and Nazism in Europe.

REASONS FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE APEASEMENTS POLICY

- i. The threat of communism and Russia forced Britain to pursue an appeasements policy. The rapid spread of communism in the middle east, China and Eastern Europe threatened the capitalist powers in the west thus Britain viewed communism as more dangerous than Mussolini and Adolph Hitler hence decided to compromise with the Nazis and the fascists through the appeasement policy.
- ii. The desire to maintain the balance of power in the interwar period. This is so because Britain thought that the dictators would destroy Russia and her communism and this explains why Britain supported Hitler's invasion of Austria and Czechoslovakia, Japanese invasion of Manchuria and Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia.
- iii. The unfairness of the Versailles settlement created public sympathy for German and her allies. It was argued that a weak German was a center of economic depression and an easy way to the spread of communism hence forcing Britain to relax on the terms of the Versailles peace treaty.
- iv. The economic weakness in Britain created imaginary fear for communism. It also made Britain to embark on German recovery since it was her best customer thus decided to embark on the appeasements policy.
- v. Besides economic weakness, it was also militarily weak and exhausted as a result of world war I. so it could not fight the dictatorial powers thus forcing Britain to pursue an appeasements policy.
- vi. The bad experience that Britain went through during World War I forced her to embark on the appeasements policy. The war had caused a lot of destructions in the whole world thus Britain embarked on appeasing so as to maintain peace.
- vii. The weaknesses of the League of Nations made Britain to embark on the appeasements policy. The league depended on sanctions which could not be enforced thus making Chamberlin hijack the roles of the League of Nations.
- viii. The failure of Britain to understand the intension and character of the dictators. Britain thought that the axis powers were fighting communism yet their ambition was to dominate Europe.

- ix. The withdraw of USA from the affairs of Europe left the league in hands of two countries who adopted the policy.
4. **The world economic depression of 1929- 1934** which was disastrous not only to European economies but also to the social and economic set up of many states. This depression facilitated the occurrence of the world war through the following.
- i. The depression gave way for the rise of Adolf Hitler in German after his over throw of the Weimar republic. The mere fact that Hitler was a contributing factor toward the outbreak of the Second World War then the depression facilitated the occurrence of the war.
 - ii. The depression damaged international relations and completely destroyed the political harmony in the way that it caused political mistrust, suspicion that undermined peace leading to the outbreak of the Second World War.
 - iii. The depression heightened imperialistic desires by nations to conquer other nations e.g. the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, Italian invasion of Ethiopia 1935, Hitler's invasion of Austria etc were meant to look for markets, areas of investments, raw materials etc. however, all these eventually resulted into the occurrence of the war.
 - iv. The depression undermined the performance of the league of nation as countries remained divided and suspicious of each other and this in many cases gave way for the occurrence of the Second World War.
 - v. The depression undermined collective security as countries were only concerned about internal recovery other than international peace. This eventually led to the rise of dictators that facilitated the occurrence of the Second World War.
 - vi. The depression influenced strong desires for communism as a solution for the effects of the depression which facilitated the rise of Adolf Hitler and his Nazi party. This eventually prepared the world for the second world catastrophe that occurred in 1939.
 - vii. The depression led to aggression against weaker states e.g. the Japanese invasion of China, Italian invasion of Ethiopia and Hitler's invasion of Austria were as a result of the need to avert the effects of the depression which led to more aggression and created tension among powers that drove the world into another war.
5. **The weakness and toothless nature of the League of Nations** as an international body which had been formed and entrusted with the responsibility of keeping and maintain world peace failed by 1930s thus conditioning the occurrence of World War II.
- i. The League of Nations failed to check on the resurrection of aggression by countries like Italy, German and Japan over other nations. This brought hatred and lack of compromise that led the Second World War.
 - ii. The league of nation failed to enforce disarmament program thus creating an opportunity which led to the resurrection of the arms race that created suspicion, mistrust, war hysteria which resulted into the Second World War.
 - iii. The League of Nations failed in its idea of concerted effort specifically for collective security. This failure gave the dictators a chance to aggress against others which caused suspicion, mistrust that ended up into the Second World War.

- iv. The League of Nations failed to re-establish peace in Europe e.g. the Kellogg Pact signed in 1928 in Paris died, the Locarno spirit of international goodness also collapsed and when Hitler realized that the League of Nations was weak, he became more and more aggressive which eventually resulted in the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.
- v. The League of Nations lacked a joint army to enforce its resolutions to maintain world peace. This encouraged aggressive states e.g. Germany, Japan and Ethiopia to go on with their aggression unchecked leading to World War II.
- vi. The League failed to promote economic cooperation which would have brought harmony in Europe thus the failure of the League of Nations led to the world economic depression.
- vii. Failed to promote and protect democratic governments in Europe thus making them a playground for dictators.
- viii. It failed to enforce the resolutions of the Versailles settlement of 1919 thus when Hitler came to power he occupied the Rhine lands, Sudetenland, embarked on the arms race when the League was looking on hence leading to a series of aggression.

6. **The re-appearance of the arms race** that involved the great powers of Europe in manufacturing of dangerous weapons not only for individual protection but also to



Charles Degalle

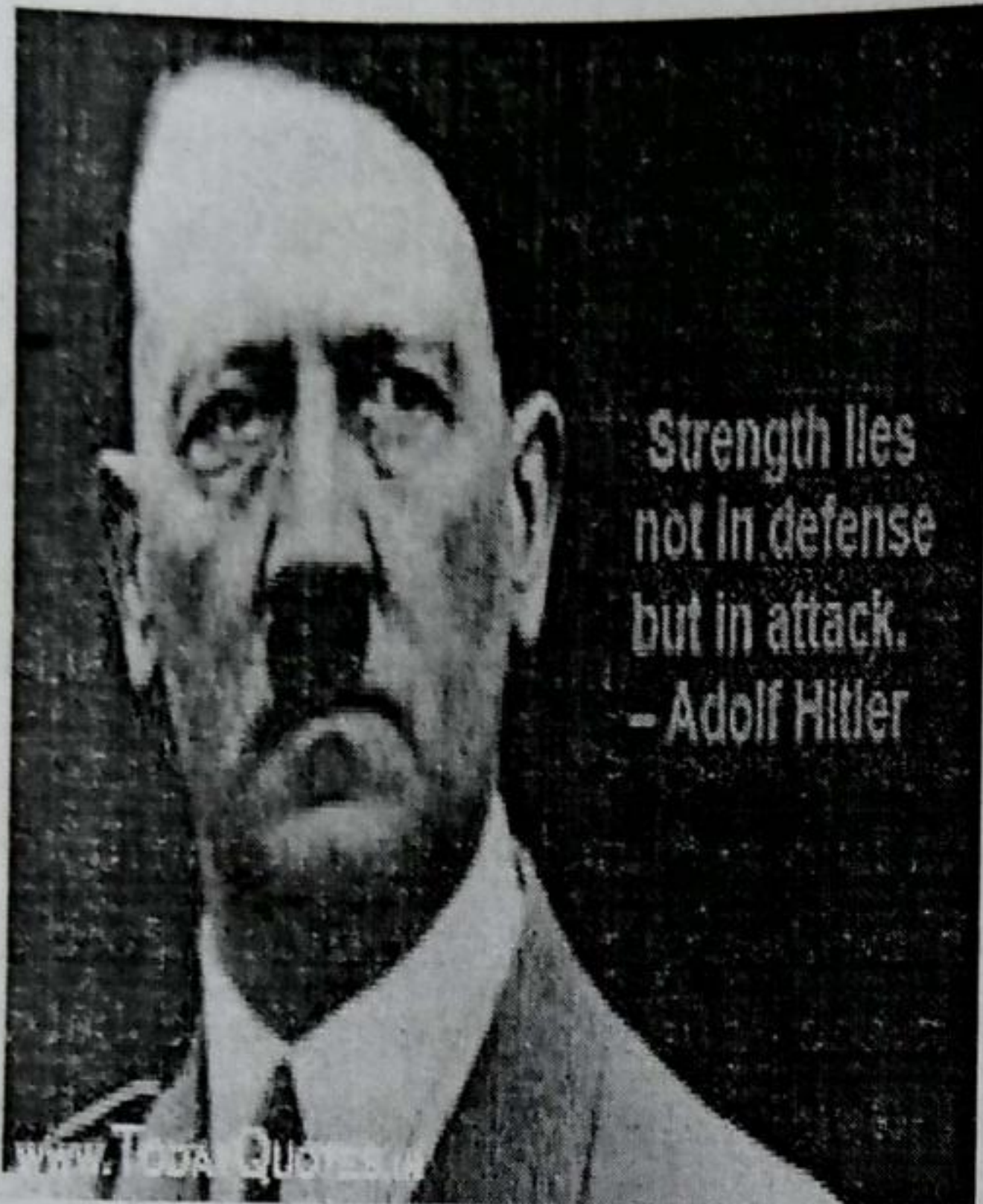
attack one another. During the time of Chamberlain, Daladier and Charles Degalle, Britain and France entered a new phase of re-armament e.g. the French air force was increased and the British navy was enlarged and strengthened. When Adolf Hitler took over power he began a serious re-armament program that increased the level of military weapons of Germany to those of the western powers and even beyond. This led to increased military weapons, led to suspicion, fear and generated arrogance among dictators as Hitler began plans to attack weaker neighboring states which eventually led

to war in that,

- i. The arms race threatened France forcing her to strengthen its air force in preparation of war especially during the time of Daladier and Charles Degalle.
- ii. Influenced Britain to strengthen its naval force which eventually led to naval competition.
- iii. Led to increased military weapons leading to tension and fear.
- iv. Led to fear, suspicion, mistrusts and war hysteria in Europe.
- v. It bred general arrogance in Europe especially from dictators hence increased aggression in Europe.
- vi. Led to increased aggression especially against weaker states.
- vii. It complicated the Spanish civil war as powers tried to out-compete the other.

viii. Influenced Britain and France to sign an alliance which forced Hitler to do the same with Mussolini and with General Tojjo of Japan.

7. The role and rise of Adolf Hitler a German dictator who was undoubtedly anti peace, anti civilization, despotic and aggressive in character. His Nazi principles as laid in the 25 points program meant that the world could not have peace in Hitler's presence. He pursued an aggressive and ambitious program, aimed at destroying the Versailles settlement of 1919, re-possessing of the German nationals and the territories lost during the Versailles settlement, he seriously engaged himself in the new wave of the arms race, tried to create a big living space for a superior German and above all he was ruthless and savagery. He tried to ensure that the German military and administrative hegemony take over Europe with uncompromising tendencies and out of such, he invaded Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland which led to war in 1939.



- i. His aggressive behaviours made him to attack Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland leading to war.
- ii. His denunciation of the naval agreement signed with Britain in 1935 increased misunderstanding between Hitler and Britain leading to war.
- iii. His signing of the non aggression pact with Russia made him more aggressive hence leading to war.
- iv. He misinterpreted the appeasements policy to mean cowardice and weakness on the side of the appeasers which lead to increased aggression.
- v. His declaration of war against Poland after the polish refusal to acknowledge Hitler's ultimatum created war situation.
- vi. His desire to destroy the Versailles settlement of 1919 made him to embark on unlimited aggression.
- vii. His desire to spread dictatorship in Europe conflicted with democratic powers leading to increased misunderstanding between him and other statesmen in Europe.
- viii. His involvement in the Spanish civil war led to increased hatred from the democratic powers of Europe.
- ix. His remilitarization of the Rhine lands led to tension and suspicion on the side of France that led to war atmosphere.
- x. He was the brain behind the formation of the dictatorial alliance (the axis powers) of German, Italy and Japan that conflicted with that of the democratic alliance.
- xi. His invasion of Poland in 1939 gave war the starting point hence leading to the Second World War.

- xii. He revived the arms race that violated the disarmament clause leading to suspicion, mistrust, tension that resulted into war.
- xiii. He withdrew German's membership from the League of Nations thus crippling the league's efforts to maintain peace.
- xiv. He revived militant nationalism in Europe.
- xv. He championed the anti-Semitism policy which was viewed with suspicion by the western powers.
- xvi. He signed the notorious Munich agreement of 1938 where Hitler was allowed to establish an independent state of Czechoslovakia, occupy Sudetenland which encouraged him to carry out more aggressions in Europe.

xvii. His invasion of Austria in 1938 was viewed by other powers with mixed reaction, it also resurrected the use of force to solve fundamental issues and it was also against the *treaty of St. Germain* of 1919 and the Versailles settlement of 1919.

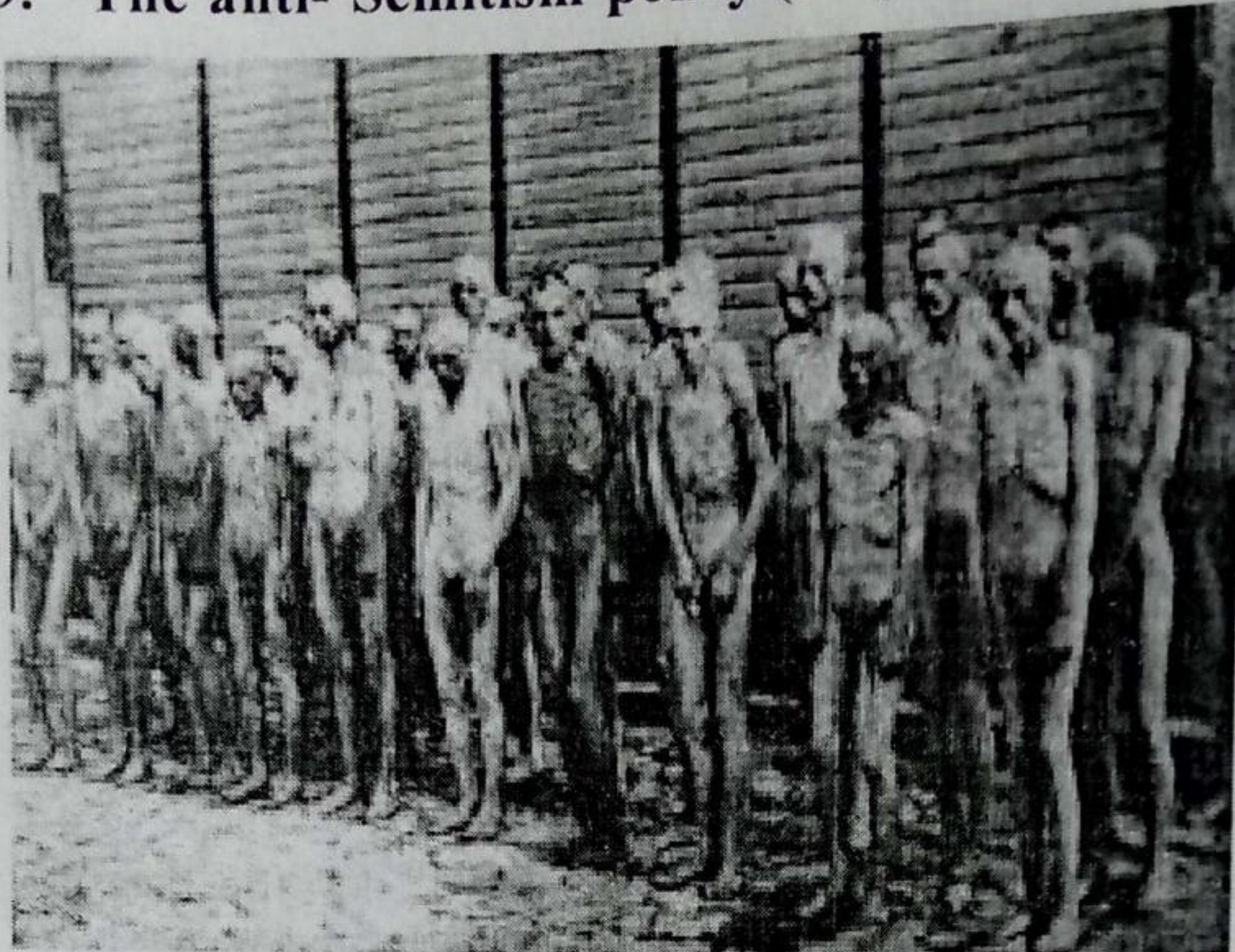
8. **The re- appearance of the alliance system** in Europe fundamentally contributed to the occurrence of the Second World War in that. As early as 1921, France signed military alliance with Poland, in the same year; she influenced an alliance between Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia. In 1924, France again signed an alliance with Czechoslovakia and Rumania and in 1926 with Yugoslavia. In 1935, signed an alliance with Russia. When Hitler came to power, he signed an alliance with Mussolini in 1936 where the two leaders agreed to work together in foreign policy. It was partly this alliance that took Mussolini to war in 1940. By 1938, Hitler and Mussolini had formalized the Berlin- Rome alliance which was extended to Japan forming the Berlin- Rome- Tokyo axis known also as the *anti Comintern pact* (name given to an international anti communist organization). This led to the British- France and Russian alliance where the powers agreed to protect Poland, Rumania and Greece. This alliance re- divided Europe, increased aggression by dictators, promoted mistrust and suspicion and fermented war hysteria which inevitably led to the Second World War in that,

- i. The alliance system divided Europe into two antagonistic camps leading to suspicion, fear and panic that magnified into World War II.
- ii. The alliance system led to struggles e.g. the axis powers struggled to promote dictatorship as opposed to the democratic alliance that struggled to promote democracy leading rivalry that ended up into war.
- iii. The system escalated the arms race thus the world was set for an inevitable catastrophe.
- iv. It partly inspired imperialism and aggression as axis power concentrated on creating allies that led to rivalry.
- v. The alliance system gave false assurance to Hitler of Russian neutrality as a result Hitler refused to adhere to the British and French demand after Hitler's invasion of Poland in 1939.
- vi. The Anglo- polish reciprocal treaty threatened Hitler thus forcing him to attack Poland before Poland become so strong.

vii. The alliance system made powers to have commitment over each other e.g. the German polish conflict was between two countries but because powers were tied together it ended up becoming a world war.

viii. The system resulted into suspicion and mistrusts that gave way for the World War II.

9. The anti- Semitism policy (the policy against the Jews)



of all Germans in the great German and expulsion of all foreign elements especially the Jews who had betrayed Germany during world war I. Thus the Jews experienced persecution, terror, discrimination and packed in concentration camps of *Buchenwald, Ravensbrück, Dachau, Auschwitz, Mauthausen*, where they faced torture, brutality and death. In 1935, Hitler passed the Nuremberg laws where the

Jews were forced to migrate from Germany, their businesses were boycotted and were not allowed to marry and mix freely with others. When such uncivilized act was exposed to the public, showed the inner nature of Nazism and Adolf Hitler hence forcing the allies to protect civilization e.g. president Roosevelt of USA wondered that *"I could scarcely believe that such a thing would happen in the 20th civilization"*. This strengthened the determination of western powers to fight against Adolf Hitler to defend mankind leading to war.

- i. The policy led to increased oppression of foreigners especially the Jews which were very much detested by other powers of Europe.
- ii. Gave the democratic powers of Europe determination to protect humanity that was bound to bring about rivalry between Germany and other powers of Europe.
- iii. Led to increased anti German sentiments in Europe which increased misunderstandings.

10. The allies' disunity which was majorly caused by the differences in ideology between Russia and the western powers. This even made Russia not to be admitted in the league in the early stages and was only admitted after the withdrawal of Germany, even then it pulled out of the League of Nations because it was always opposed by the British and the French. It was partly because of this that Russia signed a non aggression pact with Germany in August 1939 with the German dictator Adolf Hitler. As a result, they were assured of neutrality in case one was at war with another. It was because of this disunity that Hitler exploited to attack countries after the other leading to the occurrence of the Second World War. This was so because,

- i. It weakened the performance of the League of Nations thus making it fail to live to its expectations.

- iii. Influenced Russia to sign the non aggression pact with German in August 1939.
- iv. The divisions led to the rise and strengthening of Nazism and Fascism in German and Italy that made the occurrence of the Second World War inevitable.
- v. Led to increased aggression especially against the communist states.
- vi. The divisions were exploited by the dictators leading to series of aggression in Europe.
- vii. Undermine the principle of collective security in Europe.

11. **The impact of the Spanish civil war** which was described as addressing rehearsal for the Second World War. It occurred in 1934 when the fascist general Franco waged war against the liberal government in Spain. He was assisted by German and Italy while the liberal government was assisted by Britain and France. However, by 1939, Franco's forces had taken over Barcelona and Madrid and established a fascist regime in Spain. All this affected European peace and led to world war II in that:

- i. It gave confidence to dictators of success and triumph over the western democracies thus making them go on with their aggressions.
- ii. It enabled Adolf Hitler to test his air force which proved to him that it was effective to defeat the western powers.
- iii. It quickened Hitler's minds to open up the second world war thinking that he was going to succeed as the case was in Spain.
- iv. With the installation of General Franco in Spain, it threatened France's security in the west which bred suspicion, mistrust that gave way for the Second World War to occur.
- v. It strengthened the position of dictators in Europe after the installation of General Franco in Spain.

12. **The rise of totalitarian regimes in Europe after 1919.** This was evident in Italy, German and elsewhere, these dictators vowed to destroy peace in Europe and the world through aggression as an instrument of national policy. They failed all attempts to promote peace e.g. the disarmament programs, led to collapse of liberal democracies which were peace loving governments in Italy and German. Indeed the totalitarian regimes led the outbreak of the Second World War thus,

- i. The regimes were geared towards destroying the Versailles settlement of 1919 and this undermined peace in Europe.
- ii. The dictator's misinterpreted the appeasement's policy to mean cowardice and this forced them to embark on series of aggression leading to the Second World War.
- iii. Their desire to spread dictatorship in Europe was resented by other countries leading to suspicion that resulted into the Second World War.
- iv. Their involvement in the Spanish civil war increased hatred against the dictators thus conditioning the outbreak of the war.
- v. They undermined the working of the League of Nations making it incapable to maintain world peace.
- vi. The regimes led to the arms race which caused panic and war emotions.
- vii. The regimes led to the anti-Semitism policy which was viewed by the democratic powers with suspicion thus increasing mistrust that ended up into war.

- viii. Led to series of aggression e.g. Japanese invasion of China, German's invasion of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Italian invasion of Ethiopia etc created tension and misunderstandings.
- ix. They formed the dictatorial alliance (the axis powers) that conflicted with the democratic alliance which increased the misunderstanding that led to war.
- x. Hitler for example remilitarized the Rhineland as opposed to the settings of the Versailles settlement of 1919.
- xi. Through their aggressive tendencies, they undermined the principle on nationalism and independence which was supposed to be protected.
- xii. Led to the signing of anti comintern pact.
- xiii. Led to German's invasion of Poland in September 1939 that drove the world into another war.
- xiv. Led to the re -union of Austria and German as opposed to the settings of the Versailles settlement of 1919.
- xv. Led to Hitler's annexation of Sudeten land and Czechoslovakia between May and September 1938.

13. The American isolationist policy which began as early as 1920s with the collapse of Woodrow Wilson indeed resulted into war. This is partly because it weakened the League of Nations which was meant to preserve peace. Also the absence of America left German militarism and aggression unchecked which violated the principle of independence and sovereignty of other powers.

- i. The policy undermined the working of the league of nation thus making it fail to maintain world peace.
- ii. It was responsible for the occurrence of the world economic depression which influenced the outbreak of World War II.
- iii. The policy made Britain and France to embark on the appeasements policy that destroyed peace.
- iv. It left European affairs in hands of two countries of Britain and France who were only interested in preserving selfish interests.
- v. It failed the principle of collective security as demanded by the League of Nations.
- vi. It led to increased aggression as Britain and France could not intervene thus undermining the principle of sovereignty and independence.

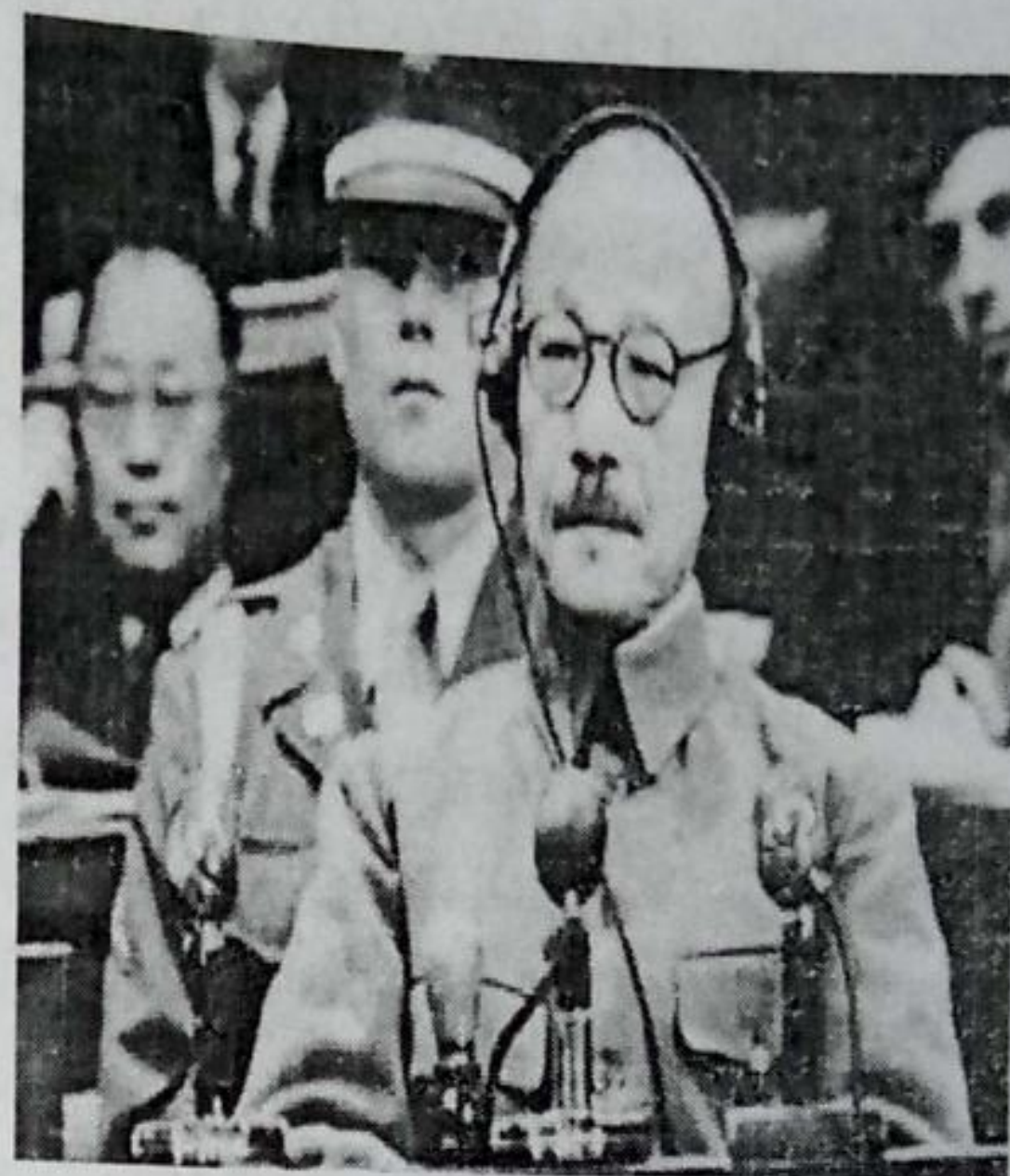
14. The role of the press and news papers worsened the situation e.g. the English times, the German press campaigned against the polish people, the press exposed the fragile and delicate relations among countries and even the level of militarism and military buildup which sowed seeds of hatred, fear and antagonism that gave way for the occurrence of the Second World War.

15. The 28th April 1939 German's denunciation of the naval agreement signed in 1935 between Hitler and the British in which Hitler agreed not engage in the manufacture of naval weapons, specifically to avoid naval rivalry with England.

However, by 1939 this understanding was denounced provoking British bitterness against Hitler thus accelerating the need for war between Britain and German

16. **Japanese imperialism in the Far East** against China leading to *Mukden* and *Manchuria* incidents. Together with the raw material and economic needs of powers, aggression was increased. Small nations were invaded creating tension that drove the world into another war.

17. **The 25th August reciprocal treaty of mutual assistance** between Britain and Poland which gave Poland an assurance of the British support in case of any attack and aggression mainly from German. Indeed it was because of this that the Polish government resisted Hitler's ultimatum that provoked Hitler to declare war against Poland an event that drove the world into another war.



General Tojo of Japan

18. **Economic imbalance and material needs** of some powers plus imperialistic interests also led to the outbreak of the Second World War. It should be noted that Japan, Italy and German were poor in resources i.e. a country like Japan was small with little coal, had little oil and inadequate mineral deposits. German had lost her colonies in Africa, the productive territory of Saarland, Alsace and Lorraine etc. Thus states such as German, Italy and Japan saw aggression as the only alternative to solve their economic needs which eventually led to the occurrence of the Second World War.

19. **The impact of militant nationalism** especially in German and Japan where the masses had great belief in nationalism and believed in the prestige of the countries glory and influence which made them carry out series of aggressions e.g. the Italian occupation of Ethiopia in 1935, Japan wanted to create an empire in Asia and beyond leading to series of aggressions that inevitably conditioned the occurrence of the second world in that,

- i. Destroyed the balance of power leading tension, mistrust, fear, panic and conflicts from the democratic powers of Europe.
- ii. Influenced the revival of the alliance system which divided the world into two camps i.e. the axis powers and the democratic alliance.
- iii. Led to massive aggression e.g. General Tojo of Japan aggressed into Manchuria, Italian invasion of Ethiopia and Hitler's invasion of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland.
- iv. Dictators withdraw from the League of Nations and thus by 1939 it had failed to live to its expectations.
- v. Led to resurrection of the arms race which led to antagonism in Europe.
- vi. They believed in the use of force which undermined the effort of collective security.

vii. The leaders were focused toward destroying the Versailles settlement of 1919 and winning foreign glory at all costs.

20. The question of the minority was also among reasons that resulted into the outbreak of the Second World War. It should be noted that after World War I some nationals were given away to other nations in abide to breakdown German e.g. there were Germans in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Poland since World War had displaced many Germans and the Italians. Many states had failed to accommodate them. Therefore, Hitler's invasion of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland were partly as a result of the need by Hitler to liberate the Germans who were put under foreign rule.

21. The impact of Hitler's invasion of Austria contributed to outbreak of the Second World War. In 1938, Hitler invaded Austria and made it part of the German Reich although it had been objected during the Versailles settlement of 1919 and during the treaty of St. Germain. He invaded Austria through the pretext of helping the Austria Nazis however this led to war in that,

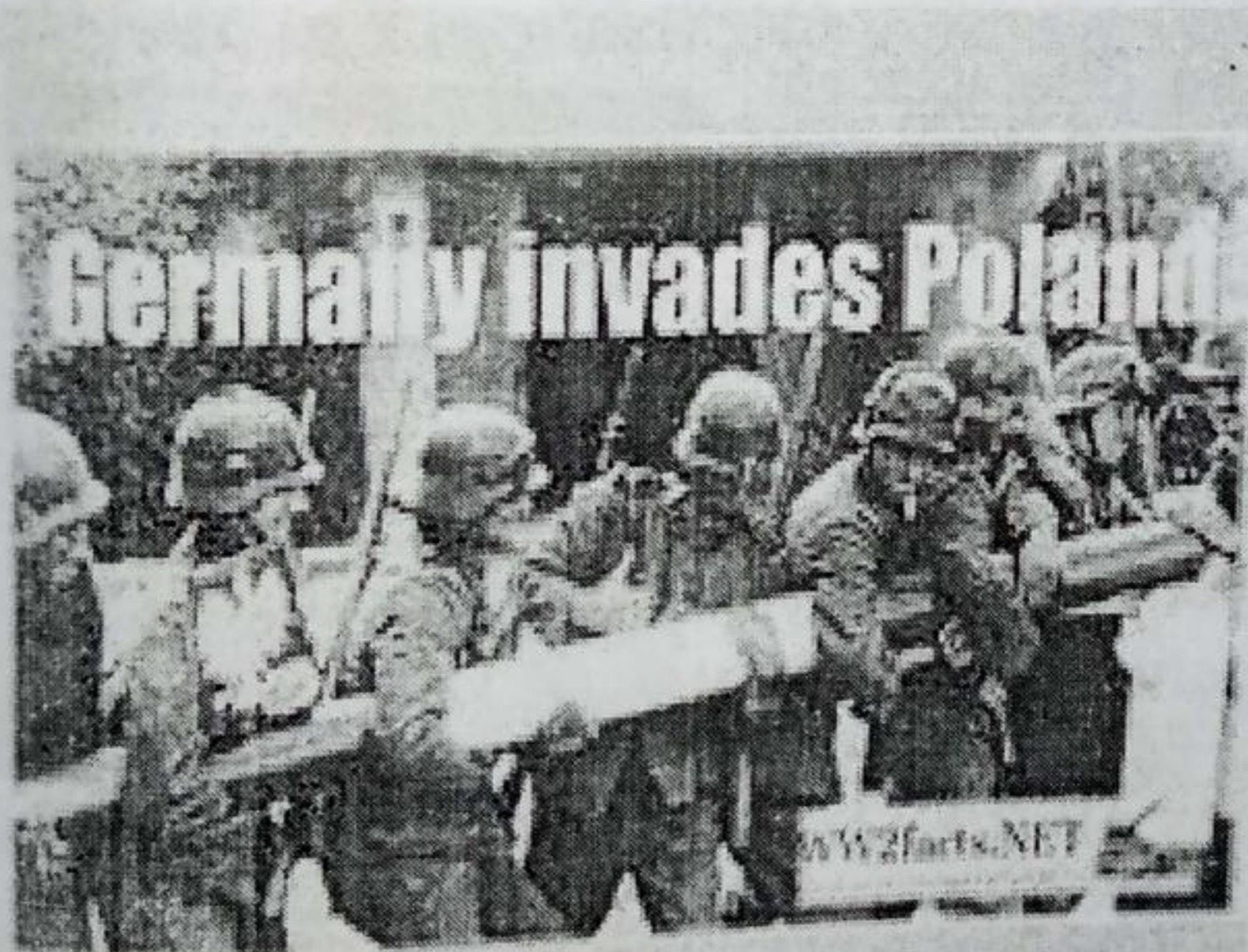
- i. It was an open violation of the treaty of Versailles and St. Germain of September 1919.
- ii. It revived militarism and the use of force in solving European issues.
- iii. Resurrected aggression in Europe which created a state of uncertainty.
- iv. It bred hostilities from other powers against Adolf Hitler.
- v. With the acquisition of the Austrian population and military, it strengthened German's economy and military leading to increased aggression.
- vi. It was a total violation of the independence and autonomy of Austria which led to anti German sentiments in Europe.
- vii. It violated the League of Nations principle of maintaining territorial integrity and independence of member states thus making it fail to achieve its aims.
- viii. The event influenced Britain and France to embark on the appeasements policy that eventually resulted into World War II.
- ix. It exposed the inner character of Hitler and thus making powers prepare for an inevitable catastrophe.
- x. As a result of this event, Hitler become more aggressive in Europe leading to his invasion of Czechoslovakia and Poland leading to World War II.
- xi. It was an open violation of international law that was to preserve the integrity of European powers.
- xii. His invasion of Austria destabilized the continent and peace.
- xiii. It gave Hitler a breathing space in central and Eastern Europe leading to more aggressions.

22. The communist threat in Europe contributed to the occurrence of the Second World War in 1939. After the Russian revolution of 1917, communism spread to many countries of Eastern and was threatening Western Europe. Thus dictators like Adolf Hitler, Mussolini and General Tojjo of Japan took the advantage of the fear of communism by western powers to launch series of aggression under the pretext of fighting communism. The western powers also took communism as more dangerous

and evil than dictators. This partly forced them to pursue an appeasements policy that drove the world into the Second World War.

- i. The threat of communism led to the rise of dictators and their militant ideologies in form of Nazism and fascism.
- ii. The threat of communism forced Britain and France to embark on the appeasements policy as they viewed communism as more evil than dictatorship leading to aggression.
- iii. Led to the revival of alliance system as German and Italy formed the anti-comitant pact which was an international organization against communism.
- iv. Forced Russia to take a desperate move and signed a non aggressive pact with Hitler leading to more aggression from the German dictator.
- v. Failed the League of Nations to deal with fundamental problems e.g. Russia was not admitted because of communism and this deprived the league of Russian position.
- vi. Russian support to the liberal government in Spain partly made Hitler and Mussolini to support General Franco which magnified divisionism.
- vii. Led to Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Poland that led to war.
- viii. Divided the world sharply into communist east and capitalist west which was exploited by dictators to enforce their aggression.

23. The impact of Hitler's invasion of Poland on 1st September 1939 which come



as a result of the failure of the appeasements policy. Hitler demanded from the polish government a return of the port of Danzig and the polish corridors and also demanded from the polish government to allow German construct a railway and a motor road through Poland to the Baltic Sea. Poland refused and eventually the great war was approached in suspicion hence on 1st September in 1939, the German infantry and air force invaded Poland and eventually on 3rd September 1939, Britain and France broadcasted to the British and

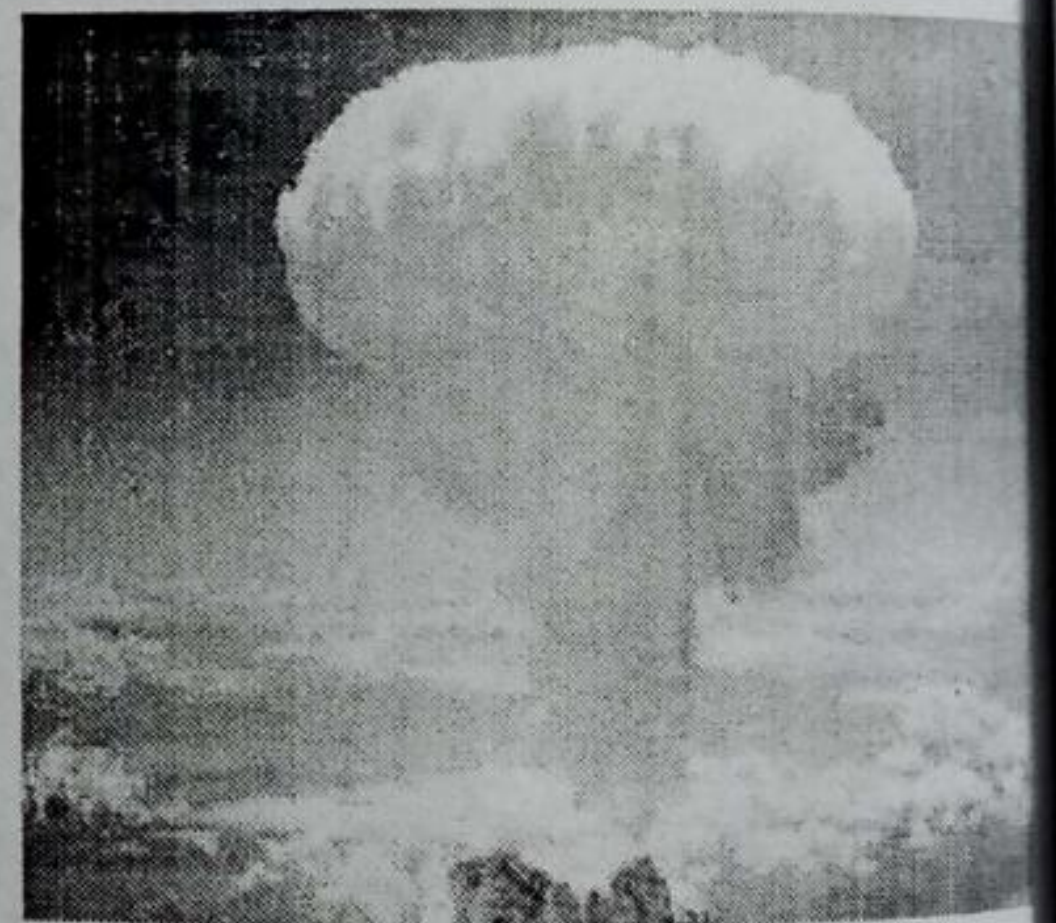
French people a decline of peace and they declared war against German making the beginning of another war that dislocated the world for many years Hitler's invasion was significant in that,

- i. Led to the end of the appeasements policy which inevitably resulted into war.
- ii. It was a clear violation of the independence of Poland which other powers could not accept.
- iii. It was a clear violation of the Versailles peace treaty of 1919 which had given the poles independence.
- iv. The event exposed the evil nature of Adolf Hitler and therefore powers were determined to do away with Hitler's night mere in Europe.
- v. The event influenced Britain and France to declare on German on 3rd September 1939.

- vi. It created a tense situation in Europe.
- vii. The event influenced Britain and France to reciprocate their commitment to protect Poland as had been agreed on 25th August reciprocal treaty of mutual cooperation.
- viii. The event was exaggerated by the press especially in Britain and France hence creating war situation in Europe.
- ix. It challenged the League of Nations thus facilitating its failure to maintain world peace which led to war.

EFFECTS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

1. The war led to disastrous defeat and humiliation of the axis powers and regimes mainly in Italy and Germany leading to the collapse of fascism and Nazism in Europe.
2. There were heavy death rates where over 50 million people lost lives as a result of fighting in the battle field and others died of severe injuries, diseases which inevitably affected the population setup in Europe.
3. The war led to destruction of property i.e. houses, factories, communication lines like bridges etc. nearly all German cities were crushed, agriculture was disrupted and there was no food hence leading to famine in some European countries.
4. There was population disorganization and displacement. The war had caused many people to be displaced and consequently become refugees. Others had been taken as prisoners of war i.e. many Jews fled to different countries to avoid persecution. Thus after the war the allies faced problem of transferring these people back to their home countries.
5. Japan a growing super power in the Far East was defeated by America after the notorious bombings of **Hiroshima and Nagasaki** in August 1945 which left Japan crumbled hence undermining its military might
6. The war led to the spread of communism in Europe. The communist ideology gained firm ground in countries like Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Poland, Lithuania and Finland also communism widely spread to the third world countries in Africa and Asia.
7. As a result of the Second World War led to rivalry between USA and USSR leading to cold war politics. The two superpowers had different political and economic ideologies and each wanted to spread and strengthen its ideology resulting into rivalry.
8. The Second World War led to the division of Germany into western and eastern Germany being divided by the Berlin wall. The eastern Germany was a communist under Russia and the West Germany under the capitalist states led by USA.
9. The war facilitated decolonization of Africa and Asia. It should be noted that after the war armed struggles started searching for political independence in countries like



Effects of the atomic bomb

- Indonesia, Burma, Vietnam, Malaysia, Pakistan, India, Srilanka etc. and in Africa, countries like Tunisia, Ghana, Egypt, Libya, Algeria started demanding for self rule.
10. The Second World War prompted progress in science and technology e.g. military weapons were produced in large numbers by USA and Russia, nuclear technology increased as powers started competing for the production of nuclear weapons which in the end resulted into cold war politics.
 11. The war resulted into economic integration and regional economic organization to improve the welfare of the people. This in the end gave birth to formation of the European economic cooperation and development, the coal and steel cooperation, European free trade association, the European Economic Community etc. In 1958, American companies that had made abnormal profits during the war started investing in Europe leading to multinational companies like Pepsi cola, shell etc.
 12. The war led to the decline of Britain and France as world's super powers and weakened their colonial possessions thus America and Russia intervened directly in the colonial question and began to help the colonized to acquire their independence hence leading to decolonization.
 13. The war marked the success of Russia in the Far East and Stalin's determination to spread Russian communist influence to countries like China leading to the Chinese civil war, in Yugoslavia, North Korea, Poland, Bulgaria etc this led to the rise of communist governments which were opposed to capitalism.
 14. After the war, it deemed necessary to have a strong international organization that would keep peace and security leading to the formation of the UNO on 26th June 1945 after the Yalta and San Francisco conferences.
 15. The second world war stimulated Jewish nationalism and pan- Zionism with the victorious powers supporting the establishment of an independent state of Israel which was formed in 1948 leading to serious clashes between the Arabs and the Jews. This escalated conflict between the Jews and the Arabs that persisted up to 1970 and even beyond.
 16. The war led to permanent ill health leading to shortening of lifespan especially in the east. This was as a result of the atomic bomb in Japan. In fact, in Japan the effects of the atomic bomb continued to cause terrible agony for decades.

FACTORS FOR THE DEFEAT OF THE AXIS POWERS

Question:

- i. *Why were the axis powers defeated by the allied powers during the Second World War?*
- ii. *Account for the triumph of the allied powers over the axis powers during the Second World War?*

- i. The weakness of the axis powers. The axis powers were weak and among them it was only German which was strong. Italy and Japan were still weak moreover; Italy had proved to be liability because at times, Hitler had to divert his forces to help the Italian army during war. Thus the above situation led to the defeat of the axis powers.
- ii. Britain and France used common wealthy forces i.e. forces from their colonies. Whereas Italy had few colonies, German had no colony at all as her colonies were taken away during the Versailles settlement of 1919. Therefore the axis powers could not match the allied powers leading to their defeat.
- iii. The allied powers enjoyed large sources of raw materials. It should be noted that the League of Nations had imposed economic embargo on Italy in 1935, Japan in 1931 and German in 1936. This made the axis powers unable to import necessary raw materials like rubber to re-enforce their armies. It also contributed to serious economic crisis that affected the morale, strength and the determination of the axis powers.
- iv. The axis powers were also faced with internal opposition that made them vulnerable to defeat by the allied powers. E.g. Italy, German and Japan had dictators who could not rally enough support during war. This partly explains why Mussolini was assassinated by his fellow fascist. It was partly because of internal pressure that Adolf Hitler committed suicide. Thus with the disappearance of the two, the axis powers had to be defeated.
- v. The vastness of Russia. Russia was a big country and this helped her to stage a prolonged resistance against Hitler. The axis powers had not expected the war to take a long time thus their military abilities were over stretched and their armies become exhausted leading to the defeat of the axis powers.
- vi. The impact of the atomic bomb of 6th and 9th August 1945 on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki greatly weakened and demoralized the axis powers. After the incident, Japan withdrew from the war. German had already surrendered on 8th May 1945 hence leading to the defeat of the axis powers.
- vii. The frequent mistakes made by the axis powers also account to their defeat. E.g. in 1942, the axis powers made a tactical mistake when Hitler attacked Russia and did not provide his soldiers with winter clothings, consequently about 300,000 perished due to coldness and around 100,000 soldiers surrendered. This undermined their strength and hence their defeat.
- viii. Japanese concentration on production of warships which could easily be destroyed through aerial bombings instead of producing air crafts was a big blunder on the side of axis powers. USA had already produced a number of aircraft and this was too much for the axis powers.
- ix. The international hatred against the axis powers also accounts for their defeat. This hatred generated poisonous, international and public resentments against the axis powers and created sympathy to the allies e.g. Italian occupation of Ethiopia created hatred against Italy from Africa, Japanese occupation of Manchuria created hatred against Japan in Asia, Germans occupation of Czechoslovakia, Austria and Poland

- generated hatred against Germany in east and central Europe. As a result the axis powers had no sympathizers leading to their defeat.
- x. The determination of the allies also explains their victory. It should be noted that leaders from Britain, Russia and USA were determined to defeat the axis powers following the defeat of France in 1940, Churchill, the British prime minister with determination said "*We shall fight in the Seas and Oceans, We shall defend our island whatever the cost may be and we shall defeat them with confidence, we shall fight in the beaches on the ground, in the valleys, hills, we shall never surrender*" Therefore with such determination they fought the axis powers and it was a question of the time and place before the axis were defeated.
- xi. The inconsistency of Adolph Hitler who always refused to take advice of his generals and at times, he could order for a strategic withdrawal, a chance that could be exploited by the allied powers.
- xii. The impact of the bombardment and destruction of pearl harbor in December 1941 by the Japanese on the coast of **Hawaii** leading to battle of **Coral Sea** about 500 miles northeast of Australia which provoked the entry of USA into the war against the axis powers, Japan was trying to control the coral sea with the invasion of **Moresby** in southeast **New Guinea** and this was the first air sea battle in the history. The entry of USA into the war strengthened the allied powers leading to the defeat of the axis powers.
- xiii. The popular resistances in many European countries which were overrun by the axis troops e.g. in Belgium, Bulgaria, Rumania where the population gave information to the allied soldiers concerning the presence and the movements of the axis powers.
- xiv. The impact of battle of **El-Almeín** in 1942 in which the whole of Italian North African Empire including her reserves in Libya were taken over by the allied soldiers and with an army of a quarter million soldiers surrendered to French troops.
- xv. The impact of the battle of Stalingrad which badly affected Germany due to Hitler's lack of calculative plans. In this, Hitler's soldiers suffered in the hands of Russia (red army) where 300,000 died, 100,000 surrendered thus undermining the strength of the axis.
- xvi. The allied powers enjoyed the advantage of navy superiority over the axis powers e.g. the glowing strength of the British navy which could not easily be matched by the navy from the axis powers.
- xvii. Hitler's failure to plan for an offensive against famine, the dangers of winter seasons which affected the morale of German soldiers in 1942 hence to their defeat.
- xviii. The death of Mussolini demoralized the camp of axis powers.
- xix. The allied powers used press propaganda especially on BBC and Voice of America that turned the world against the axis powers and therefore supported the allies.
- xx. The axis powers underestimated the strength of the allies and therefore thought that they were to be easily defeated. Thus they were overwhelmed by determination and strength of the allies.

- xxi. The death of Adolf Hitler was a blow to the axis powers as it undermined their resistance in Europe.
- xxii. The fall of Italy in 1943. Italy was used by the allies to bombard German targets in central Europe and in the Balkans, it also kept German occupied in Italy and therefore could not transfer her soldiers to resist Russian offensive thus leading to her defeat.
- xxiii. The superior technology of USA and Britain. The two had advanced technology compared to the axis powers e.g. they had produced long range missiles and Radars which were superior to the axis powers.
- xxiv. The superiority of the allied air force. The USA air force destroyed the axis lines of communication especially the railways and canals, destroyed German's major ports and cities especially the great industrial city of Ruhr and her oil reserves and all this paralyzed the axis powers.
- xxv. The influence of the war time conferences e.g. the Atlantic charter, the Casablanca, the Tehran and the Yalta conferences where allies re-affirmed their commitment to defeat the axis powers i.e. during the Tehran conference they agreed to open up a second front in western Europe which was codenamed "*D- Day*" which eventually led to operation "*overlord*" in June 6th / 1944.

THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE OUTBREAK OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The responsibility for the outbreak of the war can be apportioned to countries like German, Britain, France, USA, Russia, Japan, Italy, Spain and Poland although other countries also participated.

1. The role of German (Hitler)

- i. Hitler misinterpreted the appeasement policy to mean cowardice thus increased his aggressive tendencies.
- ii. Germans withdraw from the league of Nations undermined collective security.
- iii. German was behind the formation of the Rome – Berlin – Tokyo axis that conflicted with the democratic alliance.
- iv. The aggressive policies adopted by Hitler over Sudetenland, Rhine lands and Austria destabilized world peace.
- v. The rise of militant nationalism in German led to series of aggression in Europe.
- vi. Hitler's imperialistic desires to recover the former German colonies created war atmosphere in Europe.
- vii. Hitler's invasion of Poland on 1st sept 1939 influenced Britain and France to declare war against German.

- viii. German ignored and remained defiant to the ultimatum which demanded her withdraw from Poland made the war inevitable.
- ix. German instigated the occurrence of the arms race which created tension in Europe.
- x. He supported General Franco in Spain that widened the gap between the democratic powers and the dictatorial powers.

2. The role of Italy (Benito Mussolini)

- i. His aggressive foreign policy influenced Adolf Hitler to embark on aggressive tendencies which increased series of aggression in Europe.
- ii. She actively participated in the manufacture of dangerous weapons which influenced the revival of the arms race and militarism in Europe.
- iii. She was an active member of the Rome- Berlin- Tokyo that led to the division of Europe into camps.
- iv. Her withdraw from the League of Nations rendered it incapable of dealing with continental problem that resulted into the outbreak of the Second World War.
- v. Italy made German defiant of the British and French ultimatum that led to war.

3. The role of Britain (Neville chamberlain)

- i. She supported aggressive tendencies as a bulldog to the spread of communism e.g. Britain supported Japanese invasion of china, Hitler's invasion of Sudetenland etc that increased aggression in Europe.
- ii. Britain supported the liberal government in Spain which increased the hostility against dictatorial powers.
- iii. The appeasements policy adopted by the British prime minister was a blander because it led to series of aggression that drove the world into another war.
- iv. She championed the alliance of democratic powers with a view of challenging dictators. This created antagonism that led to war atmosphere in Europe.
- v. She was the brain behind the Versailles settlement of 1919 that ill treated German, Italy and Japan which made these powers desire to avenge against the treaty.
- vi. Britain gave an ultimatum to German after German's invasion of Poland in 1939 that become a spark for war.
- vii. She was involved in the arms race and naval competition which created hostility in Europe.

4. The role of France (Edward Daladier)

- i. She supported the appeasements policy which led to a vicious cycle of aggression.
- ii. France was the brain behind the unfair Versailles settlement of 1919 which left powers angry.
- iii. France started the alliance system e.g. as early as 1920 she started signing alliances with countries bordering German that forced the dictators to form alliances.

- iv. France participated in the manufacture of weapons which led to the arms race.
- v. She supported the republican government in Spain leading to antagonism with the dictators.
- vi. France collaborated with Britain on 3rd September 1939 to declare war on German.

5. The role of Russia (Stalin)

- i. She signed the non aggression pact with German making her to defy the British ultimatum.
- ii. The Russian revolution of 1917 spread panic and fear forcing countries of Europe to embark on the appeasement's policy.
- iii. She isolated herself from the League of Nations thus making it an able to preserve peace in Europe.
- iv. She joined Britain and France to declare war against German.
- v. She participated in the arms race that influenced the occurrence of the war.

6. The role of USA. (Roosevelt)

- i. USA is blamed for her isolationist policy thus undermining the performance of the League of Nations.
- ii. America's policy of economic nationalism paralyzed international trade and international relations and diplomacy which gave way for the outbreak of World War II.
- iii. America was a member of the democratic alliance which led to tension among powers.
- iv. America joined Britain and France to fight against German.

7. The role of Spain (General Franco)

- i. He instigated a civil war in Spain which increased hostility between the allied powers and the axis powers.
- ii. She adopter a fascist political system which was vehemently opposed by the democratic powers.

8. The role of Poland

- i. She occupied German territories of port Danzig, Posen, Upper Silesia and a corridor of land that passed through German to the Baltic Sea.
- ii. Poland signed a military pact with Britain and France which was against the interests of German.
- iii. She ignored diplomacy and resorted to war after Germans invasion of Poland.