

## Effects of World War II

### *WHAT WERE THE EFFECTS OF WORLD WAR II UPON THE MAJOR WORLD POWERS - GERMANY, JAPAN, ENGLAND, FRANCE, THE SOVIET UNION, AND THE UNITED STATES?*

*Germany:*

- totally defeated and the Nazi regime brought down
- leaders were tried for crimes against humanity at Nuremberg
- Hitler escaped trial and execution by committing suicide in his Berlin bunker
- German cities were in ruins from a massive bombing campaign
- was divided into 4 zones of occupation by the victorious powers, pending a more permanent political settlement

*Japan:*

- also was in ruins from extensive bombing
- Prominent military leaders were tried and convicted of war crimes, but the emperor was allowed to retain his position
- Japan was temporarily placed under U.S. military rule

*England:*

- devastated by the war, having experienced extensive bombing during the 1940 blitz by the Germans
- economy depended for recovery upon aid from the United States
- England rapidly phased out most of its remaining imperial holdings in the years immediately following the war

*France:*

- had not experienced the enormous human losses sustained in WW I but would have to recover from the effects of Nazi occupation. Retribution was taken upon collaborators.
- Like England, France would be compelled to dismantle its colonial empire in the years following the war. This was a particularly traumatic and drawn out process for the French, in Algeria and in Vietnam where they fought prolonged and bitter wars in an attempt to maintain their colonial control.

*England and France no longer held a status of power comparable either to the United States or the Soviet Union.*

*Russia:*

- western Russia was devastated by the land warfare which was primarily on Russian territory
- in the process of defeating the Germans, the Russians had built a large and powerful army, which occupied most of Eastern Europe at the end of the war
- The great resources and population of Russia assured that the Soviet Union would be, along with the United States, one of two super-powers.

*U. S.:*

- economy was greatly stimulated by the war, even more so than in World War I. The depression was brought decisively to an end, and new industrial complexes were built all over the United States. Spared the physical destruction of war, the U.S. economy dominated the world economy

- After 4 years of military buildup, the U.S. had also become the leading military power. The position of the United States as world leader was now more obvious than ever.

#### ***WHAT WERE THE EFFECTS OF THE WAR UPON THE NON-EUROPEAN WORLD?***

- The struggle for national independence of non-European peoples was greatly enhanced and stimulated by the war. The weakness of England and France, the two major European imperial powers, provided opportunities. The stage was set for the collapse of European empires in the 3 decades following the war.
- New technology, developed during the war to fight disease, would, when applied to the non-European world, result in sharply lower mortality rates and soaring population growth.

#### ***WHAT EFFECTS DID THE WAR HAVE UPON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY?***

- Enormous technological progress was made during the war. The English developed radar which would be the forerunner of television. Progress in electronics and computers, made during the war, provided a foundation for further development which fundamentally transformed the postwar world.
- The development of the atomic bomb by European and American scientists during the war, not only transformed the nature of potential future wars, it marked the beginning of the nuclear power industry.

#### ***WHAT POLITICAL CHANGES OCCURRED IN REGARD TO THE PROSPECT OF FUTURE WARS?***

- World War II had appeared to pose an unprecedented threat to human civilization and gave impetus to the renewal of Wilson's vision of an international organization to keep the peace. Organizing efforts were begun even while the war was on. In June 1945, 51 nations were represented at the founding conference in San Francisco. In October 1945, the United Nations was officially established. Unlike the League of Nations, the UN had the full support and leadership of the United States. The Soviet Union and all the most significant nations of the world were members.
- In 1944, representatives of the major economic powers met to create an International Monetary Fund and to agree upon a regime of international tariff regulation known as GATT. There was a determination to avoid the mistakes of the interwar years which had exacerbated the Great Depression.
- The world community was thought to be entering a new era of international cooperation.