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Original Article

Historical Study, literature review: World War II

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Abstract:

World War II (1939–1945) was one of the greatest conflicts in human history, transforming not only the global political landscape but also bringing about widespread social, economic, and cultural impacts. This study aims to analyze the background of the war, the involvement of major powers, its multidimensional impacts, and the legacies and lessons learned from the conflict. The methods used are literature study and comparative analysis, combining primary and secondary sources, including historical records, academic journals, and official documents. The results show that the war was triggered by the rise of totalitarian regimes, military aggression, and ambitions for territorial expansion, spearheaded by the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy, Japan) against the Allied Powers (Britain, France, the Soviet Union, the United States, and other allies). The resulting impacts were complex: in the political sphere, new ideological blocs and international organizations were formed; in the economic sphere, post-war reconstruction and cross-border aid emerged; in the social sphere, changes in family structure, the role of women, and awareness of human rights. The legacies of World War II include territorial division, advances in military and civilian technology, and international moral and diplomatic awareness. The conclusion of this study emphasizes the importance of global diplomacy, solidarity between nations, and vigilance against intolerance and extremism to prevent future global-scale conflicts. Recommendations include improving history education, strengthening international cooperation, and emphasizing humanitarian values and peace.

Keywords: World War II, Allied Powers, Axis Powers, Socioeconomic Impact, Global Diplomacy, Human Rights, Historical Heritage.

Introduction

World War II was one of the most defining events in 20th-century history, bringing about profound changes to the world's political, social, economic, and cultural order. This conflict lasted from 1939 to 1945 and involved nearly every nation in the world, thus categorizing it as a global war. World War II did not emerge suddenly, but rather was the result of dissatisfaction with the Treaty of Versailles (1919), the rise of totalitarian regimes, and the ambitions of territorial expansionism pursued by several nations, particularly Germany, Italy, and Japan. Germany's defeat in World War I gave rise to extreme nationalism and a desire to reverse the conditions perceived as detrimental to their nation. Adolf Hitler exploited this situation to strengthen his political position, build up his military, and prepare for invasions of other European countries.

In addition to political and military factors, World War II was also influenced by a global economic crisis, including the Great Depression of 1929, which exacerbated social instability in Europe. This economic crisis fueled public dissatisfaction with existing governments and facilitated the rise of fascist regimes that offered stability and national expansion. Italy, under Benito Mussolini, and Japan, with their military imperialism, contributed to international tensions through their invasions of Ethiopia, Manchuria, and countries in East Asia. These aggressive actions sparked global concern, but the League of Nations proved weak in maintaining peace, allowing the conflict to escalate.

The war officially began on September 1, 1939, when Germany invaded Poland using blitzkrieg tactics, emphasizing speed, coordination, and concentrated attack power. This attack forced Britain and France to declare war on Germany, marking the beginning of Allied involvement. The war then escalated when Germany attacked the Soviet Union in 1941, and the United States became involved after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The involvement of these major powers transformed a regional war into a global conflict involving Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Pacific region.

World War II was not only a military battle; it also had profound social, economic, and political consequences. Millions of civilians died, infrastructure was destroyed, and mass migrations destabilized communities. Women's roles increased significantly in the industrial and military sectors, paving the way for the modern emancipation movement. Economically, the breakdown of industry and infrastructure led to famine, unemployment, and difficulties in distributing basic necessities. World politics also underwent a transformation; the emergence of the United States and the

Soviet Union as global powers sparked the Cold War and prompted the formation of international organizations such as the United Nations (UN) to maintain peace and prevent similar conflicts in the future.

Furthermore, World War II left a multidimensional legacy, ranging from the division of Europe, advances in military and civilian technology, to moral awareness and international diplomacy. This conflict demonstrated that ideological extremism, aggressive nationalism, and racial intolerance can cause immense destruction. Therefore, understanding the history of World War II is important not only as a record of the past but also as a valuable lesson for present and future generations.

This research aims to analyze the background of World War II, the social, economic, and political conditions in Europe during the war, the involvement of major powers, and the impact, legacy, and lessons learned. With a comprehensive understanding of these dimensions, it is hoped that it will provide in-depth historical insight while emphasizing the importance of diplomacy, international cooperation, and the protection of human rights in maintaining world peace.

Research Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with literature review and comparative analysis methods. The qualitative approach was chosen because the focus of the research is to understand historical phenomena in depth, analyze state involvement, the social, economic, and political impacts, and the legacy of World War II, rather than simply calculating quantitative data. This method allows the research to explore the complex processes, interactions, and consequences of the conflict from various historical perspectives.

1. Type of Research

The type of research used is qualitative historical research. Historical research aims to trace, analyze, and reconstruct past events chronologically and contextually. In this research, the main focuses are:

- The background to World War II, including the political, economic, and ideological factors that triggered the conflict.
- The involvement of major powers, both the Allied and Axis Powers, including the military and diplomatic strategies used.
- The multidimensional impact of the war, encompassing social, economic, political, cultural, and technological aspects.
- Legacies and lessons learned, including the formation of international organizations and human rights awareness.

2. Data Sources

Research data was collected from primary and secondary sources:

a. Primary Sources

- Official government and military documents from World War II, including military strategy notes, operational maps, and diplomatic documents.
- Speeches and statements by important figures such as Adolf Hitler, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin, Benito Mussolini, and Emperor Hirohito.
- Official historical archives related to the invasion of Poland, Operation Overlord, and the Battle of the Pacific.

b. Secondary Sources

- Academic journals and scholarly publications that discuss the military, social, economic, and political aspects of World War II.
- Modern history books on Europe, Asia, and post-war global developments.
- Recent research articles and reports on the long-term impact of the war on geopolitics, the global economy, and social transformation.

3. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was carried out in several stages:

- Literature Study: Researchers read and collected information from books, journals, scholarly articles, and historical documents related to World War II.
- Cataloging and Classification: The data obtained is categorized based on key themes, namely the background of the war, socio-economic-political conditions, state involvement, impact, legacy, and lessons learned.
- Contextual Analysis: Each piece of data is analyzed within the context of the time and place in which the events occurred, to ensure an accurate understanding of the chronology, causes and effects, and impacts.

4. Data Analysis Techniques

The analysis is conducted using a thematic and comparative approach:

- Thematic: Data is analyzed based on predetermined themes or categories, such as social, economic, political, technological, and legacy conditions.

- Comparative: Researchers compare the conditions, strategies, and impacts between the Allied and Axis Powers to identify differences, similarities, and key factors that determined the outcome of the war.
- Historical Synthesis: After thematic and comparative analysis, the data is synthesized into a chronological and descriptive narrative that provides a comprehensive overview of World War II and its implications for the modern world.

5. Data Validity

To ensure the validity and accuracy of the data, this study employed several strategies:

- Source Triangulation: Data was obtained from various credible primary and secondary sources, allowing for mutual verification of information.
- Chronological Analysis: Each event was analyzed chronologically to ensure factual consistency and avoid temporal distortion.
- Historical Context Examination: The researcher considered the social, political, economic, and cultural context in which the events occurred to reduce interpretive bias.

6. Research Limitations

This study has several limitations:

- The focus of the study is limited to the period 1939–1945, with particular attention to Europe and Asia.
- The analysis of state involvement focuses on the Allied Powers and the Axis Powers, with mention of other countries for additional context.
- The impact of the war is analyzed at a macro level across social, economic, political, technological, and cultural domains, without detailing individual case studies..

Research Findings and Discussion

This research presents findings related to the background of World War II, the social, economic, and political conditions in Europe and the countries involved, the war's impact, its legacy, and lessons learned. The discussion is conducted thematically, drawing on historical data, official documents, and credible academic literature.

1. Background of World War II and the Emergence of Supporting Nations

World War II arose from a combination of political, economic, and ideological factors. One of the main triggers was the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, which limited Germany's political, military, and economic power after World War I. Public

dissatisfaction with this treaty led to the rise of extreme nationalism, which Adolf Hitler exploited to strengthen Nazi power. Hitler built national unity through propaganda and promises to reverse the losses caused by Versailles.

Italy under Benito Mussolini expanded with the invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 to demonstrate its imperialist ambitions in East Africa. Japan, lacking natural resources, invaded Manchuria in 1931 and expanded its influence in East Asia. These three countries formed the Axis Powers with the aim of strengthening their political and economic positions in the world. Chronologically, the war began with the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, using a blitzkrieg strategy combining high-speed air, ground, and artillery attacks. This event prompted Britain and France to declare war, and it then escalated into a global conflict with the involvement of the Soviet Union and the United States in 1941.

2. Socio-Economic and Political Conditions in Europe

Conditions Social

World War II caused significant social change. Millions of men died, leaving women and children facing psychological trauma, hardship, and uncertainty about the future. The German invasion, Allied bombardment, and mass migration created unstable societies, fluctuating social identities, and inter-community conflict. Shortages of food, medicine, and medical facilities led to the spread of disease, mass deaths, and poor nutritional conditions. Women were actively involved in the military industry and logistics, paving the way for the emancipation movement and raising social awareness for gender equality.

Economic Conditions

The economic impact of the war was extensive. The infrastructure and industry of major cities in Germany, France, the Netherlands, Poland, and the Soviet Union were devastated by bombing and fighting. The naval blockade destroyed agricultural fields and disrupted logistics distribution, exacerbating famine. Unemployment increased, gender-based wage inequality increased, and many veterans struggled to find post-war employment.

Political Conditions

World War II changed the global political landscape. The United States and the Soviet Union emerged as superpowers, sparking the Cold War and the formation of the NATO military alliance, the Western bloc, and the Warsaw Pact, the Eastern bloc. Countries such as Germany, Korea, and Vietnam were divided into regions with differing ideologies. A wave of decolonization intensified, leading to independence for countries in Asia and Africa, including Indonesia, the Philippines, India, and Pakistan. The United Nations was founded in 1945 to maintain global peace, replacing the League

of Nations which proved weak. New ideologies such as Zionism, communism and nationalism influenced the dynamics of global and regional politics.

3. The Involvement of Various Countries

Allied Bloc

The Allied Bloc consisted of Britain, France, Poland, the Soviet Union, the United States, China, and other countries opposing the Axis. Several key moments included Britain, France, and Poland declaring war on Germany after the invasion of Poland. The Soviet Union joined after Germany attacked in 1941. The United States entered the war after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, making US production capacity and troop numbers key factors in victory. The total number of Allied members reached 47 countries, including European, Asian, and American countries.

Axis Bloc

The Axis Bloc was led by Germany, Italy, and Japan. The initial coalition formed between Germany and Italy in 1936 was strengthened by the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan. Aggressive actions included the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, and the German annexation of Austria and the Sudetenland. The Axis Bloc emphasized extreme nationalism, militarism, and territorial expansion, triggering global-scale conflict.

4. Impact of World War II

Political Impact

The emergence of two major world powers: the United States, liberalism, and the Soviet Union, communism. Political and military blocs were formed: NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The independence of Asian and African countries increased due to the weakening of European colonial powers.

Economic Impact

Damage to industry and infrastructure demanded reconstruction aid, including the Marshall Plan in Europe. Germany and Japan developed into major post-war industrial powers.

Social and Cultural Impacts

Increased awareness of human rights led to the formation of the UN. Women's roles increased in the public sector and industry. Social trauma from displacement, mass deaths, and family loss led to long-term cultural changes.

5 Legacies and Lessons from World War II

Legacy

The world was divided into Western and Eastern blocs, forming a bipolar system during the Cold War. Technological advances such as nuclear weapons, radar, rockets,

and computers accelerated. Moral awareness and international diplomacy increased. The UN became the primary instrument for maintaining global peace.

Lessons Learned

Diplomacy and international cooperation are crucial for preventing global conflict. Intolerance and extremism can cause great destruction, so human rights must be protected. Social and economic justice prevent conflict. Post-war development emphasizes the distribution of wealth. Peace requires global solidarity, respect for the sovereignty of other nations, and arms control.

Conclusion

Based on the research and discussion, it can be concluded that World War II arose as a result of a combination of political, economic, and ideological factors. The 1919 Treaty of Versailles, which was detrimental to Germany, triggered a resurgence of extreme nationalism, which Adolf Hitler exploited to strengthen Nazi power. In addition to Germany, Italy and Japan also played strategic roles through aggressive territorial expansion and formed the Axis Powers. World War II brought major socio-economic and political changes to Europe and the world. The social structure of society was shaken by the loss of family members, psychological trauma, and mass migration. Women's roles increased in the military and logistics industries, forming the beginnings of the modern emancipation movement.

Economically, urban and industrial infrastructure was completely destroyed, leading to high unemployment and wage inequality. Based on global political conditions, the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as superpowers, sparking the Cold War and forming the NATO and Warsaw Pact military alliances. The wave of decolonization in Asia and Africa intensified. The United Nations was established to maintain global peace. New ideologies such as Zionism, communism, and nationalism became important factors in the dynamics of international politics. The involvement of major powers was divided into the Allied Powers, consisting of Britain, France, Poland, the Soviet Union, the United States, China, and other countries that opposed it. The Axis and the Axis Powers led by Germany, Italy, and Japan. Differences in strategy, production capacity, and human resources were key factors in the Allied victory.

The impact of the war encompassed political, economic, social, and cultural aspects. The world was divided into Western and Eastern blocs. Technological progress increased rapidly. Moral awareness and human rights developed. The role of women became more prominent, and social trauma led to long-term cultural changes. The main lessons from this war emphasize the importance of diplomacy, international cooperation, the need to respect human rights, socio-economic justice, and global solidarity in maintaining peace..

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that countries around the world maintain international cooperation through active diplomacy and global organizational mechanisms such as the UN, and strengthen international law to prevent large-scale conflict. Education about the history of war and its impact needs to be taught comprehensively to instill awareness among the younger generation about the dangers of intolerance, extremism, and human rights violations.

Governments and educational institutions are advised to integrate studies on economic development and social justice to prevent inequalities that can trigger national and international tensions. Furthermore, strengthening a culture of peace and respect for the sovereignty of other countries needs to be implemented through public awareness programs and multilateral cooperation. In the context of technology and innovation, it is recommended that technological advances be used ethically for human welfare and Not for mass destruction. The development of post-conflict reconstruction aid programs such as the Marshall Plan can serve as a model for the recovery of countries affected by disasters or conflict. Ultimately, world peace requires a shared commitment from all nations through global solidarity, arms control, and the enforcement of socio-economic justice so that the tragedy of World War II is not repeated and future generations can live in stability, security, and prosperity.

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