Developments in West Asia and North Africa

Syria and Lebanon Become Independent: As in other parts of Asia, there was an upsurge for freedom in West Asia also immediately after the Second World War. You have read in the previous chapter about the movement of the people of Syria against the French rule. After the war, the French tried to restore their authority over Syria and Lebanon but, in the face of opposition from the people of these countries and the world opinion, they were forced to withdraw. Both Syria and Lebanon became independent by the end of 1946. There was an upsurge in all the Arab countries at this time and tile 1950s saw their emergence as independent nations. Some countries which had been nominally free asserted their independence. There were also movements to overthrow the outdated political systems which existed in some countries. All these led to conflicts and, in some cases, prolonged wars between the Arab countries and the imperialist powers. The period saw the growing, power of Arab nationalism which led to efforts by the Arab people and governments to come together to face and solve common problems. The Arab League was formed comprising all the Arab states.

However, before many of the Arab countries could gain their independence, a development took place in West Asia which was to become a source of tension and lead to many wars in the years to come. This was the creation of the state of Israel.

The State of Israel : Palestine, as has been mentioned before, had become a British mandate in 1919. The British troops again occupied the country in 1945. Palestine was inhabited by Arabs and Jews. A movement called the Zionist movement claimed that Palestine was the homeland of all the Jews, wherever they may be living, and should be restored to them. The persecution which the Jews in Europe had suffered for centuries had culminated in the Nazi Germany's policy of exterminating them. Millions of Jews were killed in Germany and in those countries of Europe which had been occupied by Germany. The terrible tragedy had won them the sympathy and support of the world.

The British in Palestine had permitted some Jews from outside Palestine to settle there. The Zionists had, meanwhile, been campaigning for a Jewish state there. This had complicated the freedom movement in Palestine the majority of whose inhabitants were Arabs. In 1947 the United Nations n passed a resolution according to which Palestine was to be divided into an Arab u state and a Jewish state. However, in 1948, the British withdrew their troops from Palestine and soon after the state of Israel was A proclaimed. This led to a war between the Arab states and Israel. The Arab states were defeated in the war. The creation of Israel became a source of tension in West Asia. The Arab states refused to recognize her as a legitimate state. The policies pursued by the government of Israel further added to the bitterness. About 900;000 Arabs were forced to leave their homes and lands in Palestine and were rendered homeless. They found shelter in various refugee camps in Arab states. Most countries of Asia and Africa condemned the Israeli government's treatment of the Arabs of Palestine and for following racist policies. In 1956 Israel joined Britain and France in invading Egypt. Later there were other wars between Israel and the Arab states as a result of which Israel occupied large parts of the territories of other Arab states.

These territories include the Gaza Strip, the Golan Hights and the West Bank. More than a million Palestinians live in the occupied territories. In spite of the resolutions of the United Nations, Israel refuse to vacate Arab territories and restore the rights of the Palestinian Arabs many of whom live as refugees in various Arab states. In 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was formed to fight for the establishment of a Palestinian

state. It enjoys the status of a member-state of the Non-Aligned Movement. Recently an agreement was signed between the government of Israel and the PLO. Under this agreement, the PLO recognized the state of Israel and the government of Israel agreed to give the Palestinians autonomy in some areas presently under Israeli occupation.

The Revolution in Egypt : After the First World War, Egypt had become a British 'mandate'. However, under the pressure of the nationalist movement, Egypt had been declared independent in 1922 though British troop continued to remain there. After the Second World War, the demand for the withdrawal of British troops gained strength. There were serious clashes between the Egyptians and the British soldiers in which hundreds of Egyptians were killed. The discontent was also directed against the king of Egypt who had been installed by the British. The discontent against the British and the king led to a revolution in 1952 when the Egyptian army under the leadership of Lt Colonel Gamal Abdal Nasser and General Muhammad Naguib overthrew the monarchy and declared Egypt a republic. The new Egyptian government demanded the withdrawal of British troops and they were withdrawn in June 1956.

The government of Egypt under the leadership of Col Nasser began the economic reconstruction of the country. Egypt refused to be aligned with the United States and the latter stopped the sale of arms to Egypt. Egypt, however, began to receive military and economic aid from the Soviet Union. In 1956, Egypt announced the nationalization to the Suez Canal which been under the control of Britain and Fran Three months later, Israel, Britain a France, according to a plan, invaded Egypt The aggression committed against led to world-wide protests. The countries of Asia voiced their vehement condemnation of the invasion. There were massive protest demonstrations against the British government inside Britain also. The Soviet Union warned the aggressor countries unless they withdrew from Egypt she would send her forces to crush the aggressors. Almost every country in the world including the United States, denounced Britain, France and Israel in the Unit Nations. The universal condemnation aggression led to the withdrawal of British and French forces from Egypt. The ending of aggression strengthened further the unity of Asian and African countries in genet and of Arab countries in particular. It also showed the growing strength of the countries which had won their independence only a few years ago. The Suez War also added to the prestige and influence of the Soviet Union as a friend of the peoples who were trying to assert their independence.

Libya Gains Independence : You have read before that Libya had come under Italian rule in 1911. During the Second World War, some of the most ferocious battles between German and British troops were fought in Libya. At the end of the war, the country was occupied by Britain and France. In 1951, Libya became independent with a monarchical form of government. From 1960 she became one of the largest petroleum producing countries in the world and as a result some sections of Libyan society grew very rich while the majority of the population remained extremely backward. The king did not permit any opposition to his rule. The United States built one of its strongest air bases on Libyan territory. In 1969, a group of army officers captured power and soon after abolished the monarchy. The new government proclaimed that it would give primacy to the unity and solidarity of the Arab people. Freedom Struggle in Algeria: The 1950s saw the emergence of a number of independent nations in North Africa. However, the independence was preceded by years of struggle against the imperialist countries which wanted to retain their colonial possessions. As in Indo-China, the French returned to Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria. However, in 1956 Tunisia and Morocco won their independence. The North African country which, had to wage the longest and the hardest battle for freedom was Algeria. She had been conquered by France as early as 1830 though it had taken France another four decades to fully establish her rule there. As in Indo- China, the struggle against French rule in Algeria had a long history behind it. In 1954 the nationalist organization of the people of Algeria called the

FLN (National Liberation Front) gave a call for an armed struggle against the French rule. Armed clashes resulted in thousands of casualties on both sides. By 1958, the Algerian nationalists had organized a large army of their own and proclaimed the formation of a government of the republic of Algeria. The war in Algeria had serious consequences inside France. It created political instability in France. The Communist Party of France along with many other French leaders had been supporting the cause of Algerian independence. However, many sections in the French army were under the influence of the French settlers in Algeria who where opposed to any negotiations with the Algerian leaders over the question of independence. In 1958, General de Gaulle became the President of France. He conceded the right of the Algerian people to self-determination and opened negotiation with the leaders of the FLN. This policy was opposed by some sections of the French army in Algeria who revolted against de Gaulle and even made attempts; to assassinate him. However, the revolt was suppressed. On 1 July 1962 a referendum was held in Algeria and the people of Algeria voted almost unanimously for in. dependence. On 4 July 1962 Algeria became an independent republic. The independence of Algeria had been won at the cost of over 140,000 Algerian lives.

Achievement of Freedom by African Nations : As we know with the exception of Ethiopia and Liberia, almost every part of Africa had been conquered by European imperialist power by the end of the nineteenth century. After the First World War, the only change that took place there was the transfer of the former German colonies in Africa to the victorious Allied powers. However, the period after the First World War saw, as in Asia, a resurgence of nationalist movements in Africa. After the Second World War, the disintegration of the colonial rule in Africa began. The achievement of independence by North African countries has been mentioned already. The countries of southern Africa began to gain their independence after the mid-1950s. Within two decades, almost every country in

Africa, with the exception of South Africa and South-West Africa (Namibia), became independent. The freedom movements in Africa, as in other parts of the world, were the consequence of the growth of nationalism and the increasing resentment against the exploitation and oppression by the colonial countries. The international situation further strengthened these movements. The Second World War had resulted in the general weakening of imperialism. It had also shattered the myth of the invincibility of some maj or colonial powers in Africa such as France and Belgium which had suffered defeat in Europe during the war. The collapse of colonialism in Asia within a few years after the war also had a tremendous impact on freedom movements in Africa. The question of Africa's freedom gradually became one of the major issues in the world.

The first country in southern Africa to gain independence was Ghana, the powerful kingdom of Ghana in West Africa during the eighth to the twelfth centuries. The British had conquered a part of this region to which they gave the name Gold Coast. The most prominent leader of the people of the Gold Coast colony was Kwame Nkrumah who in 1949 had organized the Convention People's Party. A strong trade union movement had also emerged in Gold Coast. The Convention People's Party and the trade unions joined together to demand independence from Britain. However, most of their leaders were arrested and attempts were made to suppress the demand for freedom. After 1950, the British government started introducing certain constitutional reforms. Under pressure from the People's Party which had won a resounding victory in elections, the British government agreed to the independence of Gold Coast. The new independent state which came into being on 6 March 1957 called itself Ghana, after the name of the old West African kingdom. The part of Togoland which had been under British control also joined Ghana.

The next country to achieve her independence was the French colony of Guinea in West Africa. In 1958, while embroiled in the war in Algeria, France held a referendum in her colonies which

had been grouped together as French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa. The people of Guinea voted for complete independence and Guinea was proclaimed a republic on 2 October 1958.

The achievement of independence by Ghana and Guinea gave additional confidence to the freedom movements in other parts of Africa and accelerated the pace of achievement of independence by other nations. The promotion of the cause of African freedom was a major objective of India's foreign policy from the time India won her independence. India's struggle c for freedom had also been a source of inspiration to African nationalists.

The year 1960 is generally regarded as the Africa Year. In that year, seventeen countries in Africa gained their independence. These included all the French colonies in French West Africa and Equatorial Africa, Nigeria and Congo (formerly Belgian Congo, now called Zaire).

Between 1961 and 1964, a number of countries in East and Central Africa also became independent. These were Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia, Rwanda and Burundi. Sierra Leone, Gambia, Lesotho (formerly Basutoland) and Botswana (formerly Bechuanaland) also gained their independence. The freedom movement in Kenya was led by Jomo Kenyatta, leader of the Kenya African Union. In 1952, a revolt by peasants had broken out. This is known as the Mau Mau rebellion. It was directed against the seizure of land by the British colonial authorities. To suppress the rebellion, 15,000 Kenyan were killed and about 80,000 sent to concentration camps. Jomo Kenyatta was imprisoned in 1953 on the charge supporting the Mau Mau rebellion. Having failed to suppresslhe freedom movement, Britain had to give in and Kenya became independent in 1963.

Many of the newly independent countries of Africa faced serious problems during the years following their independence. The imperialist powers tried their best to maintain their hold over their former colonies by direct intervention and by creating dissension. In Congo, for instance,

Belgium, with the help of some other countries and the mercenaries from various countrie, brought about the secession of the rich province of Katanga. On the appeal of Patrice Lumumba, Prime Minister of Congo, United Nations troops were sent to bring about the withdrawal of foreign troops and mercenaries. However, Patrice Lumumba was assassinated and the country thrown into chaos for a number of years.

Before the end of the 1960s, almost entire Africa, with the exception of Portuguese colonies of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde Islands, and South Africa, South-West Africa and Rhodesia, had become free. Powerful freedom movements had started in the Portuguese colonies. They had organized their liberation forces and had secured the help of many countries in their struggle for freedom. In April 1974, the Portuguese army, which had been mainly used to suppress the freedom struggles in the colonies, overthrew the 50-year old dictatorship in Portugal with the support of the people. The communists, socialists and other radical elements in the armed forces and the new government of Portugal were opposed to the continuation of the Portuguese rule in Africa. They entered into negotiations with the freedom movements in the Portuguese colonies and by 1975 all the former Portuguese colonies in Africa became independent. Zimbabwe (formerly Southern Rhodesia) became independent in April 1980.

The last country in Africa to become independent was Namibia, formerly South-West Africa. It was a German colony before the First World War and was handed over to South Africa as a 'mandate' after the defeat of Germany in that war. South Africa treated South-West Africa as her colony and refused to withdraw from there is spite of the resolutions of the United Nations. The freedom movement there was led by tile South-West Africa People's Organization (SW APC) which was formed in 1960. It gained momentum when SW APC started a war with the help of its guerilla forces to liberate the country. It was made a member of the Non-Aligned Movement. The Non-Aligned Movement, the African governments

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and the United Nations played an important role in the success of the freedom movement in Namibia. The war in Namibia came to an end in 1989 when South Africa agreed to a plan for the independence of the country. SW APC won a majority of seats in the elections which were held in November 1989 and on 21 March 1990 Namibia became independent.

South Africa-Union of South Africa since 1910 and Republic of South Africa since 1961 -has been an independent country in the sense that she was not ruled from another country. The government of South Africa was, however, among the most oppressive regimes in the world in the twentieth century. It was under the exclusive control of the white minority practising the worst form of racism. Under the system of apartheid established in South Africa, all people were classified and separated on the basis of race. Each group had to live in a separate area. There were separate schools and universities, separate theatres, separate shopping centres, separate coaches in trains for whites and blacks and others. The teams for sports also were formed on the basis of race. Marriage between persons belonging to different races was a criminal offence. There were restrictions on movement from one place to another. The best lands in the country were under the control of the whites who had all the economic and political power. The non-whites had no vote and no say in the governance of the country. The system of apartheid was used maintain the rule of the white minority over about 80 per cent of the population which comprised black and coloured people; well as people of Indian origin. This system, in the name of separation of the Ices, denied human rights to the majority f the population. It may be recalled that Mahatma Gandhi had started the fight against racial discrimination in South Africa long before he became a leader of the freedom movement in India.

The main organization of the South African people which led the movement for ending the rule of the white minority and establishing a non-racist democratic South Africa was the African National Congress (ANC). It was set up in 1910. The movement against the obnoxious system of apartheid was intensified in the 1950s. The government depended on the use of terror to maintain its rule. There were incidents of massacres of peaceful protestors. In 1960, the African National Congress was banned and most of its leaders were arrested. The ANC then organized its own army to fight against the racist regime.

South Africa was increasingly isolated from the rest of the world. India had been from the beginning in the forefront in support of the struggle to dismantle the apartheid regime. She was the first country in the world to sever relations with South Africa and to extend her full support to the people of South Africa. Many other countries followed suit. The United Nations also condemned the policies of South Africa. In the 1980s some Western countries which had maintained military and economic relations With South Africa also imposed sanctions against her. By the end of the 1980s, the international isolation of the South 'African regime was complete.

From the end of the 1980s the process of ending the system of apartheid began. The ban on the African National Congress was lifted and its leaders released. Among them was Nelson Mandela who had been in prison for 26 years and had became a symbol of the struggle against apartheid. Many apartheid laws were abolished and negotiations were started between the ANC and the South African government for framing a new constitution which would give all South Africans the right to vote. Elections in which all South Africans for the first time were given the right to vote were held in April 1994. After these elections, a new non-racist and democratic government came to power in South-Africa. Nelson Mandela was elected president of the country.

Thus within the last three decades, most of Africa has become independent and the independence of the remaining parts cannot be deferred for long. Many African countries have changed their names. The colonial powers had given them names which had little to do with their past history and culture. Some countries and cities had been named after colonial adventurers, for

example, Rhodesia, Leopoldville, Stanleyville, etc. The African peoples are trying to overcome the damage caused to them during the colonial rule. Renaming their countries and cities after their original names is a part of their effort to reestablish and assert their independence and national identity. The need to unite in the face of common tasks and for achieving common aims led to the emergence of the unity of all African states. These aims included the safeguarding of their independence and to help the liberation movements in those countries in Africa which were still fighting for their independence. The most significant step taken in this direction was the formation of the organization of African Unity (OA1) in 1963.

Non-Aligned Movement : The emergence of the countries of Asia and Africa as independent nations marked a new phase in the history of the world. These countries which had been suppressed and kept under subjugation for a long time came to their own and began to play an important role in the world. Similar developments have also taken place in Central and South America and the Caribbean. The countries which were under European colonial rule in this part of the world have become independent. The United States frequently interfered in the internal affairs of these countries, particularly when radical governments came to power and tried to assert their political and economic independence. One of the significant developments in this region was the Cuban revolution which overthrew the corrupt and dictatorial government headed by Batista on 31 December 1958. In 1961, the United States sent mercenaries to Cuba but the invasion ended in a fiasco and was crushed in less than three days.

Having common problems and sharing common aspirations, the peoples of these countries began to act together although there was no organization binding them. However, they began to develop some common understan-ding on world affairs, particularly on the question of the independence of nations which were still under foreign rule. In 1955, an importllnt event took place which helped to strengthen the unity of African and Asian countries. This was the Afro-Asian conference which was held at Bandung in Indonesia. The conference was attended by 23 Asian and 6 African countries. The leaders of three Asian nations, India, China and Indonesia played an important .role in the deliberations of this conference. The growing importance of the Afro-Asian countries was reflected in the United Nations where on a number of issues the countries of Asia and Africa functioned as a group.

Another significant development in the world after the independence of Asian and African countries was the emergence of Non-Aligned Movement. You have read before about the Cold War and the formation of military blocs and the growth of tension in many parts of the world. Most of the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa refused to join the Cold War. They considered the formation of military blocs as a serious danger to peace and to their independence, These countries were faced with the enormous task of social and economic reconstruction which could be done only in a world free from war and tension. Some countries in Asia had joined the military alliances and had allowed foreign bases to be set up on their Soil. The extension of military alliances and the setting up of foreign bases were considered by most Asian countries as a threat to their independence and a source of tension. Hence, they opposed these alliances. They were also aware of the danger which the continuance of imperialism in some parts of Asia and Africa posed to them and to world peace. The non-aligned nations of Asia and Africa, therefore, were in the forefront of the struggle for the liquidation of colonialism. Non-alignment has primarily been a policy aiming at the strengthening of independence, ending of colonialism and promoting world peace. It was not merely a policy of non-involvement with military blocs but a policy for creating a better world.

India under the Prime Ministership of Jawaharlal Nehru played a pioneering role in making non-alignment a major force in the world. Then other leaders who played an' important role in the non-aligned movement were President Sukarno of Indonesia, President Nasser of Egypt and President Tito of Yugoslavia. The first summit

conference of non-aligned nations was held at Belgrade in Yugoslavia in September 1961. It was attended by heads of state or government of 25 countries. Besides Yugoslavia and Cuba, from Europe and the Americas, respectively, the other participating countries were from Asia and Africa. Three other countries attended as observers. The statement issued at the end of this conference affirmed the basic principles of non alignment such as the stabilization of peace, liquidation of colonialism and imperialism in all their forms, peaceful coexistence between nations, condemnation of racial discrimination, opposition tonlilitary alliances, disarmament, respect for human rights, establishment of economic relations between nations based on equality and free from exploitation, etc.

The popularity of the policy of non-alignment was reflected by the number of countries which joined the group of non-aligned nations. Beginning with 25 countries which attended the Belgrade conference in 1961, there are today 109 countries which, are following the policy of non- alignment. They are drawn from Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. The Tenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement was held at Jakarta, in Indonesia in September 1992. The Seventh Summit had been held at New Delhi with India's Prime. Minister Indira Gandhi as the Chairperson and the Sixth Summit at Havana in Cuba in, 1979 under the Chairmanship of President Fidel Castro. Two movements of national liberation -the Palestine Liberation Organization and South- West Africa People's Organization -were made fullfledged member-states of the Non- Aligned Movement. (As mentioned earlier, Namibia, whose struggle for independence was led by SW APO, has already become independent.) AU countries of Africa, including South Africa, are members of the Non- Aligned Movement. The Non-Aligned

Movement has played a very important role in world affairs, particularly in ending colonialism and in promoting peace. The non-aligned countries are also working for the creation of a new international economic order in which the economic relations between nations would be based on equality, non exploitation of one nation by another and the narrowing down of economic disparities between nations.

Recent Developments: Some of the changes that have taken place, in recent years such as those in Cambodia, Israel (Palestine), Namibia and South Africa have been mentioned in this chapter. Many other changes which have taken place in the world, along with these, are so far-reaching that they can be said to mark the beginning of a new phase in the history of the world after the Second World War. Some of them have been so sudden that it would take some time to fully comprehend their significance.

A major feature of the history of the world for almost four decades after the end of the Second World War was the antagonism between the United States and the Soviet Union and the armed confrontation between the military blocs headed by them. This was the period of the Cold War and the race in the designing and production of ever new weapons of mass destruction. It posed a danger to the very survival of humankind. In the 1970s and early 1980s, some beginnings were made to end the 'Cold War: Agreements were reached between the United States and, the Soviet Union to eliminate some categories of carriers of nuclear weapons and to reduce the number of certain types of weapons installed in certain areas. The process of ending the Cold War, however, suffered many setbacks. In 1979, Soviet troops entered Afghanistan. This development in. creased the tension between the United States and the Soviet Union. The United States launched a programme of developing new and even more deadly weapons, popularly known as the Star Wars. These weapons would have meant taking the conflict into outer space and launching attacks from there. However, the world situation began to improve after the mid. 1980s and by theendofthe 1980s it could be said with much certainty that the era of Cold War had came to an end. By early 1989, Soviet troops were withdrawn from Afghanistan. Many other changes took pi ace from the late 1980s and it is generally agreed that we are now living in a post Cold War world. This can

be considered a the most significant and positive development that has taken place in recent years.

Many changes of great historical importance have taken place in the Soviet Union and in countries of Eastern and Central Europe. The most significant of these has been the collapse of the Soviet Union and the ending of the communist regimes there and in other countries of Europe. In 1956, three years after the death of Stalin the Communist Party of Soviet Union had denounced the excesses and crimes committed by Stalin. From 1985, many important reforms began to be introduced in the political system of the Soviet Union with a view to promoting political democracy There was free and open discussion on every issue and curbs on the freedom of thought and expression were lifted.

Reforms in economy were also initiated to end the stagnation that had set in and to improve the living conditions of people. The importance of these reforms was recognized the world over. Two Russian words -perestroika, meaning 'restructuring', and glasnost, meaning 'openness' which were used to describe these reforms gained international currency. The hold of the Communist Party over the political life of the country was loosened and other political parties were allowed to function. In the meantime, there was a demand for greater autonomy by the republics which constituted the Soviet Union. Some republics wanted to become independent. Attempts were made to frame a new treaty which would provide greater autonomy to, the republics and at the same time preserve of the Union. However, in August 1991, there was an attempt to stage a coup by some leaders of the Communist Party. Though the coup collapsed, the Soviet Union began to break up. Many republics declared their independence. On 25 December 1991, Mikhail Gorbachev, who was the President of the Soviet Union during this period and had initiated the reforms mentioned earlier, resigned and the Soviet Union formally ceased to exist. In place of the Soviet Union which had been a major influence on world historical development for about seven decades, there emerged 15 independent republics. Though the rule of the communist parties has ended in all these republics, many of them are faced with serious political and economic problems. There are also many problems between the republics although 12 of them have formed a loose federation called the Commonwealth of Independent States. The new names are Russian Federation (formerly RSFSR), Kazakhastan (formally Kazakh SSR), Estonia (formerly Estonian SSR), Latvia (formerly Latvian SSR), Lithuania (formerly Lithuanian SSR), Ukraine (formerly Ukrainian SSR), Moldova (formerly Moldavian SSR), Armenia (formerly Armenian SSR), Georgia (formerly Georgian SSR), Azerbaijan (formerly Azerbaijan SSR), Turkmenistan (formerly Turkmen SSR), Uzbekistan (formerly Uzbek SSR), Tajikistan (formerly Tajik SSR), Belarus (formerly Byelorussian SSR) and Kyrgystan (formerly Krighiz SSR)]

Equally important changes have taken place in those countries of Europe which were ruled by communist parties. There had been outbursts of resentment in some of these countries against Soviet control and against the Soviet supported communist governments since the 1950s. There were occasions when Soviet troops were used to suppress the unrest in these countries. The changes in the Soviet Union affected these countries directly. There were mass upheavals in all these countries in the late 1980s. By 1989, Soviet control over them came to an end. The monopoly of political power enjoyed by the communist parties in these countries was ended. There were free elections and new governments were formed. It is notable that these far reaching changes took place in most countries without the use of violence. In some countries, leaders who had misused their position for personal gain and power were tried and jailed. Many communist parties no longer ruling parties in their countries expelled some of their former leaders who had committed excesses when they were in power. In one country, Rumania, the Communist Party leader who for about, 15 years had been the virtual dictator was executed. The Warsaw Pact, the military alliance which was headed by the Soviet " Union and of which the

communist-ruled states of Europe were members; was dissolved in 1991.

The changes which took place in Germany were even more far-reaching. The division of Germany into two independent states a few years after the end of the Second World War has been mentioned in this chapter. The division of Germany had been a source of tension in Europe and a maj or factor in the Cold War. East Berlin was the capital of East Germany (German Democratic Republic or GDR) while West Berlin which was located within the GDR territory was treated as a part of West Germany (Federal Republic of Germany or FRG). In 1961, the GDR authorities built a wall between East and West Berlin to prevent East Germans from going away to West Berlin. The building of the wall became a further source of tension in Europe. The process of ending communist rule in GDR and of the reunification of Germany began in 1989 when the Berlin Wall was opened and political parties which were outside the control of the communist party (called the Socialist Unity Party) were allowed to function. In early 1990 elections were held and a new government came to power. On 3 October 1990, the division of Germany was ended and a unified Germany again emerged.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and of communist governments in Europe has been a major factor in ending the Cold War. It has also been seen as marking the retreat of socialism. It can, however, be said that the system which was built in these countries was only a distorted version of the socialist ideal and that social justice which was fundamental to that ideal has become a part of the consciousness of the people the world over.

The changes in Eastern and Central Europe, as in the former Soviet Union, have not been without problems, both economic and political. Czechoslovakia which emerged as a new state after the First World .War has broken up into two independent states -the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. In unified Germany, there have been many instances of violence by neo Nazis against immigrants.

Developments of a tragic nature have taken place in Yugoslavia in recent Yugoslavia which had emerged as a state after the First World War was ruled by communist party since the end of the Second World War. The communist government of Yugoslavia had kept itself from the Soviet Union almost from beginning. Yugoslavia was one of founders of the Non-Aligned Movement. She was a federation of six republics. In four of these republics, the rule of communist parties came to an end in 19 by 1992, Yugoslavia broke up into five independent states-the new state of Yugoslavia comprising Serbia and Montenegro Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia and Bosnia. Herzegovina. However, the problems Yugoslavia did not end with its break-up. A large party of Bosnia-Herzegovina under the control of Serbians and Croats. A bloody war has been going on between Bosnian Croats, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Muslims, particularly between the latter two, causing terrible sufferings to the people.

While these developments have take place in one part of Europe, in another, Western, part (including Germany), there had been a move towards European unity It consists in creating a Europe without borders, with a common currency and unrestricted movement of goods and people and ultimately a political union with a common parliament. Some steps have already been taken in this direction. It may, ever, be remembered that the concept European unity at present excludes all European countries and some others. Significant changes have also taken place other parts of the world. There were many turmoils in the political and economic life of China after the establishment communist rule there. After the death of Mao Zedong in 1975, many changes have en place in the economic policies of the country. These are aimed at modernizing economy. For this, foreign companies d foreign capital have been invited and playing an important role. Many practice which were at one time considered basic to the concept of socialism have been 'yen up. There have also been changes in China's foreign policy. There has been an improvement in China's relations with India, In the political life of China, however, ere

has been little change and it continues be under the exclusive control of the Communist Party. The demand for democracy voiced by students and others some years ago was suppressed.

In spite of the many positive changes have taken place in recent years, the world in the 1990s is not without tensions d conflicts. While the danger of war involving the use of nuclear weapons has ended, or at least receded, there has been no reduction in the arsenals of weapons of mass annihilation. Their very existence is a source of threat to the survival of human- kind. Similarly, with the end of the Cold War, whether the world has moved, irreversibly, to a period of detente and, much more importantly, cooperation is still to be seen. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States became the only super power in the world. While the Warsaw Pact has been dissolved, NATO, the military bloc headed by the United States, has continued to exist. There have been misgivings that the present situation would make it possible for the United States, the only super power now, to dictate to others.

The world in the 1990s, with all its problems, is a very different place to live in compared with any preceding age. People the world over have a much greater say in shaping their destiny than ever before. For the first time inhuman history, the creation of One World has become a possibility in which all peoples would cooperate with one another and would contribute their best to enrich their own lives and of the entire humankind.