

HISTORY OF THE WORLD 1919-2020

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Unit I

Impact of First World War - League of Nations - International Relations in Inter - War Years - Russian Revolution of 1917- Great Depression and its impact- Fascism and Nazism .

Objectives

- ❖ To understand the political, economic, and social consequences of the First World War.
- ❖ To analyse the redrawing of national boundaries and the collapse of empires after the war.
- ❖ To evaluate how the First World War laid the foundation for future international conflicts.

Impact of First World War

Most of you are probably aware of how appalling the First World War was and the toll it took, not just in terms of lives but many other things. It is generally believed that the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand by a member of the Black Hand, an underground terror society, was the chief cause of the War. However, as you read this unit, you will realize that this was not so. The reasons for the First World War can cause confusion in the minds of those attempting to study it since they are not as clear and straightforward as the Second World War. The turn of the twentieth century marked a new beginning in the annals of world history. It altered and redefined the history of the world in more ways than one and the transition was far from smooth. The developments of the nineteenth century had already prepared the ground for such an upheaval. The Industrial Revolution in Europe led to: Search for newer markets, search for better sources of raw material, rise of nationalism, and fierce competition due to the spread of trade and commerce. Europe was the epicentre of these happenings, and the

major European powers started viewing each other as competitors for the same set of resources and markets. They adopted confrontationist policies to establish their supremacy and retain control over large parts of Asia and Africa. The competing nations soon started building alliances to serve their common interests and protect their territories from rival powers. What started as discrete events aimed at furthering economic interests soon extended to the raising of strong armies and huge military build-ups to safeguard the newly acquired territories and markets. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the stage was set for a see-saw battle between the major Western powers, which were divided into two distinct blocks by now and a war looked imminent. As the ground was getting prepared for a large-scale confrontation between the major European nations, certain immediate events of provocation worked as the flashpoint and what ensued was a full-fledged war. The First World War, as it came to be called, turned out to be one of the deadliest wars ever fought and on a scale never witnessed before.

One of the important causes of the February Revolution was the heavy military setback suffered by the Russian army during the First World War. The losses suffered by Russia in the First World War played a definite role in the mutinies and revolts that began to occur. Russian soldiers, with lowered morale, began to fraternize with the enemy. However, Tsar Nicholas II, the last Emperor of Russia, insisted on ruling as an autocrat. He had comprehensively failed to deal adequately with the problems facing the country. Social unrest and public discontent against the government reached a climax, leading to the Russian Revolution in 1917. The Revolution in February destroyed the Tsarist autocracy and resulted in the creation of the Soviet Union under a provisional government. However, soon Russia witnessed a period of dual power. In the dual power system, the provisional government held state power, whereas the national network of Soviets, led by socialists, had the allegiance of the lower classes and the political left. During this disordered phase, mutinies, protests and strikes became the

order of the day. Finally, in the October Revolution, the Bolshevik party, under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin, deposed the provisional government. Besides the developments during the First World War, there were many other causes of the Russian Revolution. This unit discusses the various causes of the Russian Revolution in detail. In this unit, you will also identify and recognize the causes that led to dictatorship in countries like Germany and Italy. History is replete with examples where dictators have left nations exhausted, overturned and on the verge of social, cultural, economic and especially political breakdown. Dictatorship is a concept that has its origins in the mind of a person, who solely wants to achieve a state of total control over all the intricacies of a nation, and visualizes himself to be the only source of political, social and economic emancipation. The history of the world very conspicuously reflects the above stated scenario. The world has been a witness to the nature, scope and effects of dictatorship in almost every century. However, the most prominent of all the dictatorships have been seen in the post-World War I era.

After the First World War, nations of the world geared towards creating amnesty between the nations, especially Europe. The first decade post-World War I saw rampant changes in the cultural, social and political ideologies of various nations. This period saw the breakdown of old nations, old ways of thinking, and the formation of new nations with new identities, territories including various political and social changes. Various international organizations too were set up which helped in establishing global peace and the phenomenon of democracy especially in Europe was received with open arms. The European nations saw the fall of most of the monarchies and the consequent establishment of a system where people elected their own representatives, had rights to vote along with a governmental system which catered to the newly established social and cultural set up.

However, this reform was short-lived. There was a persistent conservative authoritarianism in smaller nations of Central and Eastern Europe, and nations like Germany, Soviet Union and Italy were dominated by radical dictatorship. Dictatorship in these countries led to an unprecedented control over the masses by the dictator, who vehemently rejected all forms of parliamentary rule. Europe, in particular, witnessed totalitarian dictatorship in various forms. Apart from affecting the political nature of the nations, these states also affected the overall workings of other sovereign states and openly flouted the norms established by the League of Nations which was primarily formed to maintain international peace. Dictatorship, totalitarianism or fascism—all have common elements and characteristics, however all these ideologies have a common result—defeat, in all parameters and aspects. However, if the dictators see the people as important catalysts for reforms, dictatorship can be perceived to be good in many ways. The present unit details the various causes and implications of dictatorship in countries like Germany and Italy.

FIRST WORLD WAR

The First World War, which was fought on a global scale, was a major war centered in Europe. The War began in 1914 and lasted until 1918, for a period of four years and three months, and had its impact practically on all the countries and regions of the world. It was predominantly called the World War or the Great War till the Second World War started in 1939. Thereafter, it was known as the First World War or World War I. The War involved all the great powers of the world, which were divided into two opposing alliances that were the Allies and the Central Powers. However, the First World War was not an instant development and it was the ultimate result of various developments in the economic and political sphere which were going on for about a century in Europe. The nature of the War, both in terms of intensity and scale, was completely different from the known wars fought earlier in history. The world saw, for the first time, such a large

number of countries taking part in a single act of war and the loss of life and property that it caused was unprecedented. The War also saw for the first time the extensive use of modern technology in warfare and new methods of destruction and defence through the deployment of armies, navies and air forces by the respective countries. Ultimately, more than 70 million military personnel, including 60 million Europeans, were mobilized in this War and more than 9 million combatants were killed. This was largely due to the enormous increase in the lethality of weapons, without corresponding improvements in protection or mobility. This deadliest of conflicts not only shifted the global balance of power but paved the way for various political changes such as domestic tension and revolutions in the nations involved. David Thomson has observed, 'The greatest novelty of this war was, remarkable disparity between the ends sought, the prices paid and the results obtained.' The uneasy relations between the major European powers escalated into a transnational conflict in 1914 on account of some instant acts of provocation. On the fateful night of 5 August 1914, five columns of German troops had converged in the town of Liege in Belgium expecting little resistance. To their surprise, they were halted by determined fire from the Liege town's forts. This was a big setback for Germany because control of Liege was essential before they could proceed with their main operation against France. They were forced to resort to siege tactics using heavy military equipment. Finally, the German troops fired from the air and Belgian forces, though strong, were not equipped to withstand such a heavy firing for long. On 13 August, the first fort of the town of Liege surrendered and three days later the entire town came under German control. This surprising turn of events eventually escalated into a horrifying war of frightening proportions and marked the beginning of an era of prolonged conflict in the history of the world. Commenting on the German aggression, German historian, I. Geiss observed, 'The determination of German empire "the most powerful conservative force in the world after the Tsarist Russia"

to uphold the conservative and monarchic principles in any means against the rising fold of democracy, plus its Weltpolitik, made War inevitable.

Causes of the First World War

Though the immediate cause of the First World War was the murder of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the heir to the Austrian throne, by a Yugoslav nationalist in Sarajevo, the real causes of the War lay much deeper. The fundamental causes for the outbreak of the First World War were many like the imperialistic foreign policies of the great powers of Europe, including Germany, Austro-Hungary, Turkey, Russia, Great Britain, France and Italy. The growth of narrow nationalism, militarism and economic imperialism were also responsible for creating an enabling atmosphere for the War. Finally, the system of secret military alliances, race for armaments, the international negotiations and the occurrence of a series of international crises made the World War inevitable. Professor S. B. Fay, author of *The Origins of the World War Volume II: After Sarajevo*, commenting on this observes that, 'These developments so offered a fertile soil in which the seeds of real war might easily be germinated.' Immediately on the eve of the War several alliances formed over the previous decades were invoked. Within weeks the major powers were at War; via their colonies and the conflict soon spread around the world. The principal causes responsible for the outbreak of the First World War were as follows:

Formation of secret alliances

Historians believe that the system of secret alliances which developed after the FrancoPrussian War of 1870-71 was the greatest cause for the outbreak of the First World War. On the eve of the War, entire Europe was divided into two alliances or armed camps, namely, Triple Alliance and Triple Entente. The former consisted of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy, while Turkey joined the alliance soon after. The latter was composed of Great Britain, France and Russia. In addition, Great Britain and Japan

had signed an alliance in 1902 and Japan became a part of the Triple Entente after that. The first step towards the formation of the Triple Alliance was taken when Germany entered into an alliance with Austria-Hungary. In 1882, Italy joined in this alliance. The beginning of the Triple Entente was made in 1894 when France concluded an alliance with Russia. With the dawn of 20th century, Great Britain which was following a policy of splendid isolation, also started looking for allies. Splendid isolation is a policy followed by Britain through the late 19th century, characterizing a non-participation in European matters. Historians are divided over the view as to whether Britain was following the policy of its own will or was forced by circumstances to follow it. Britain entered into a treaty with Japan in 1902 and with France in 1904. When Great Britain concluded a treaty with Russia in 1907, the Triple Entente came into existence. Thus, on the eve of the War, the whole of Europe was virtually split into two camps bound by various secret alliances. Sporadic friction between the two main groups had brought Europe to the verge of war several times since the dawn of the 20th century. There were many causes of friction which threatened to offset the peace of Europe like the naval rivalry between Great Britain and Germany; French resentment at the loss of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany at the end of the Franco-Prussian War of 1871; the Germans fearing the containment of Germany by Great Britain, Russia and France; and the Russian suspicion of Austrian ambitions in the Balkans and the Serbian nationalism. Serbia had ambitions of uniting all Serbs and Croats, many of whom lived inside the Habsburg Empire in the south Slav Kingdom (Yugoslavia). This made it necessary to take certain areas from Austria-Hungary by threatening to cause the collapse of the ramshackle Habsburg Empire which consisted of many different nationalities and races. There were Slovaks, Italians, Germans, Hungarians, Czechs, Poles, Romanians and Slovenes as well as Serbs and Croats. Had the Serbs and Croats left the fold, many of the others would have demanded their independence as well, and the Habsburg Empire would have broken

up. Consequently, many Austrians were keen on what they called a 'preventive war' to destroy Serbia before she became strong enough to destroy AustriaHungary. From all these resentments and tensions, there arose a series of events which culminated in the outbreak of the war in 1914. According to historian, S. B. Fay, 'The system of secret alliances made it inevitable that if war did come, it would involve all the great powers of Europe. The members of each group felt bound to support each other in order to strengthen the solidarity of the group.'

2. Economic rivalries and imperialism

Economic rivalry and imperialism was another important cause of the First World War. By the end of the 19th century, Great Britain, France and Russia, each had built up huge colonial empires. Germany was left with the smallest share of wealth acquired from colonies. Germany believed itself to be the greatest nation in the world and was not willing to accept the subordinate place in the imperial sphere. It was keen to acquire a world empire worthy of its position. Consequently, when Germany tried to capture the market which was already in the hands of Great Britain, it led to bitterness between the two powers. Great Britain was not prepared to give up her own colonies, spheres of influence and markets, and Germany was bent on getting them at any cost. Meanwhile, the Industrial Revolution increased the rate of production in the European countries. Therefore, the demand for market outside the European continent increased and in the years after 1880s, the race for imperialistic expansion also increased in intensity. The economic rivalry took the form of a struggle mainly between Great Britain and Germany At that time, Britain was apprehending that it may be outdistanced by Germany in the race for colonies. This competition led to resistance between the two European nations. Britain and Germany struggled for markets in Argentina; Russia and England indulged in a similar struggle for oil in Persia. These economic rivalries led to the partition of Africa. Most of the African continent was taken over by the European States in what became

known as the 'Scramble for Africa'. The idea behind it was the control of new markets and new sources of raw materials. The European powers thus established their hegemony in the Far-East and the Near-East. There were also interventions in the crumbling Chinese empire. The European powers, the United States of America and Japan, all at different times, forced the helpless Chinese to grant trading concessions. The condition was such that by 1914, the habitable portions of the world were divided among the European nations, and European powers like Germany sought a 'place in the sun'. Some of the historians argue that the desire for the economic control of the world caused German businessmen and capitalists to wage a war with Great Britain, who still owned about half of the world's merchant ships in 1914. Some of the Marxist historians support this theory because it puts the blame for the War on the capitalist system. Opponents of this theory, point out that Germany was already well on the way to economic victory. So, some of the leading German industrialists remarked in 1913 that, 'Give us three or four more years of peace and Germany will be unchallenged economic master of Europe'. This ambitious imperialistic objective was the principal factor leading to frictions and the subsequent international crisis.

3. Germany's desire to be world power

Germany's ambitions to build a world empire also added to the turbulence of the world. As long as Herr Otto Von Bismarck was at the helm of affairs of Germany, it was on the whole a satiated power and was interested in maintaining its status-quo based upon its supremacy in Europe. Bismarck was a conservative German political leader who had a considerable role in the unification of Germany. He was devoted to Prussia, and after Germany was unified, the mighty German Empire was established under Prussian leadership. When Bismarck became the President of Prussia, he tried to fume wars against Austria and France so as to establish German supremacy in Europe. He later became the First Chancellor of the German Empire.

Bismarck was keen on uniting the German states to form a German Empire that had Prussia at its centre. He knew that this could be achieved only with the empowerment of the German military. A unified Germany had tilted the scales of power in Europe. Bismarck's foreign policies were such that Germany had formed alliances with most nations and could not engage in wars with many nations. These alliances created a feeling of insecurity in the continent later and became one of the reasons for the First World War. After Bismarck's fall in 1890, Germany's ambitions began to climb high and was set at world dominance. This ambitious sentiment is evident from the eminent German historian Preitschke's statements, 'Just as the greatness of Germany is to be found in the governance of Germany by Prussia so the greatness and good of the world is to be found in the predominance of all German culture, of the German mind in a world, of the German character.'

4. French desire to recover Alsace-Lorraine

The snatching away of Alsace and Lorraine from France by Germany in 1871 and the consequent determination of the French people to get them back was another cause of the First World War. The government of the Third Republic in France left no stone unturned to keep the spirit of revenge and the hope for the restoration of the two provinces alive. France was keen to get back these two areas because these areas were rich in minerals, particularly in iron ore. The French felt that the Germans owed their industrial prosperity to these areas. In certain quarters of France, it was felt that if Germany had not interfered in Morocco, the French might have found some compensation for the loss of Alsace-Lorraine and forgotten their vengeance against Germany. But the constant German interference in the affairs of Morocco further added to the bitterness between these two European powers.

5. Italy's ambitious desires

Another cause of the War was the desire of the people of Italy to recover Trentino and the areas around the port of Trieste which were

inhabited by the Italians but were still under the control of Austria-Hungary. As these areas once formed part of the Roman Empire, the Italians raised slogans of Italia Irredenta or 'unredeemed Italy'. Further, the economic bankruptcy and rapidly growing population of Italy also compelled her to look around for more land and economic resources. This brought Italy closer to Germany which was equally keen to challenge the status-quo in the European continent and establish a huge empire abroad.

Effects of the First World War

The First World War left a manifold impact on the contemporary society, polity and economy of the world. 1. Political Impact The First World War had a serious consequence on the polity of the then contemporary world which was highly influenced by this event.

- (i) In the first place, the War gave a shattering blow to some of the autocratic monarchies functioning in various countries of Europe of the time. It paved the way for the development of democratic system in Europe. As an upshot of the War three autocratic dynasties, namely, the Hohenzollernian in Germany, the Hapsburg in Austria-Hungary, and the Romanov in Russia were destroyed. In a number of states, monarchical system was replaced by republican system. These countries were Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Czechoslovakia. The emergence of democratic system led to recognition of people's democratic rights.
- (ii) (ii) The War encouraged the principles of nationalism and self-determination. After the War empires having people with different culture were dissociated and independent states with distinct cultures came up to the fore. Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, Alsace-Lorraine, etc., which had distinct cultures of their own made their appearance and were given to France. Similarly,

SchleswigHolstein was restored to Denmark. China, Turkey, Egypt and Ireland were also influenced with the impact of nationalism.

- (iii) (iii) The weakening position of the colonial powers in Europe provided an opportunity to freedom movements in Asia and Africa. Colonized countries like India began to feel that in view of the weakened position of the colonial powers they could hope to gain freedom. Therefore, they intensified the campaign of freedom struggle. The prolonged freedom struggle in Asian and African countries led to a change in the policy of colonial powers towards their colonies. During the prewar period, the colonial powers treated their colonial possessions as per their wish without taking into account the wishes of the people. In contrast to their earlier practice, in the post-World War period the colonized territories were granted certain rights and some restrictions were imposed on them under the mandate system. Overall, greater importance began to be attached to the interests of the colonial people after the War.
- (iv) The First World War promoted the spirit of 'internationalism'. During the War various nations came in close contact with each other through various alliances, pacts and agreements. These relationships continued further even after the War ended, which greatly contributed to the development of the spirit of internationalism. Self-Instructional Material 125 Imperialism, Revolution and Totalitarian States NOTES (v) The most important contribution of the First World War was the creation of an international organization, The League of Nations, to monitor the international relations of various countries and

to encourage peace, harmony and international cooperation. It was the horror of the War which convinced the world leaders of the need for an institution to prevent the recurrence of such war and promote international understanding. This culminated in the establishment of the League of Nations. However, unfortunately various powers did not fully cooperate with the League of Nations and tried to promote their selfish national interests and thus contributed to the failure of the League.

2. Economic Impact

The First World War which was a terrible catastrophe on humanity and caused massive loss of life and property also destroyed the economy of several countries who participated in the War. In this War, around 30 countries participated including all the major colonial powers of Europe and suffered huge losses in terms of men and material. Of the 65 million people who took part in the War more than 9 million people were killed, 29 million people were either wounded or reported missing. On this, C.J. E. Hayes has observed, 'Every family in Eastern and Central Europe, every family in Italy, France and the huge British empire and many families in America suffered loss of near relatives and close friends.'

- (i) In terms of money the War was estimated to cost around 400 billion dollars. (
- (ii) ii) Second, as a result of the War, the prices of all commodities registered a steep rise, which caused much hardship and suffering for the general public. It forced various governments to take concrete measures to regulate prices and control the distribution system. Thus, the post-war situation created an environment favourable for the rise of state socialism.

- (iii) (iii) The War also led to the rise of trade-union activities. During the War, the demand for labour increased manifold. The industrialists and the industrialized states provided all sorts of facilities to the labourers to run their factories on full capacity. The labourers tried to make their condition better by demanding much deserved concessions and benefits from the state and factory owners. To safeguard their interests, they also established trade unions. Undoubtedly, the War enhanced the importance of workers and labourers and gave them a mechanism to protect their interests.
- (iv) (iv) Fourth, scholars believe that the increasing use of paper currency was largely the outcome of the First World War. The shortage of metals after the First World War forced countries to print paper money for smaller denominations.
- (v) The War also led to devaluation of currency and economic depression in the world. In order to meet the huge expenses of the War, different countries imposed heavy taxes on the people, which caused much difficulty for the people. However, these extra taxes proved to be insufficient to fulfill the enormous expenses. Hence, the governments resorted to printing of currency notes without taking into account the reserve bullion stocks. This later became the cause for economic depression and currency devaluation. During the First World War, for the maintenance of their armies, ships and for the procurement of arms and armaments, different countries raised loans from various possible quarters because the War expenses were beyond their expectation and paying capacity. As a result, in the wake of the War most of the great powers were forced to devalue.

3. Social Impact

In the social sphere, the World War also had far-reaching consequences. The huge loss of life and material during the course of War caused untold sufferings to countless families in various countries. It compelled the contemporary world leaders to think of some mechanism for avoiding reoccurrence of war of this magnitude in the future, and to maintain peace and tranquility in the globe. This led to the establishment of the League of Nations to resolve international disputes amicably on the basis of reason and justice. This was the biggest achievement of the post-World War period. Secondly, the cut-throat competition between the rival powers to surpass one another during the War, gave a boost to the rapid scientific progress in various parts of the world. On the eve and during the course of War, various European powers tried to improve their merchant ships, war ships, submarines, aeroplanes, and other war equipment, and invented various lethal gases to gain an edge over their opponents. These modern techniques used in the War cut short the duration of the War. Further, the scientific inventions throughout the War period also contributed to industrialization of the world and rapid agricultural progress. The War promoted the feeling of goodwill and fraternity among the people. Before the War, the Europeans and particularly the colonial powers regarded themselves, their culture, traditions, religion and literature superior and refused to even mix up with the black Asians and Africans. The Whites, denounced the literature written by the black Asians and Africans, their conventional knowledge system and denied the very basic democratic rights of these people. However, during the War the Europeans and the colonial powers in particular, were forced to shun this feeling of racial superiority and differences, and the European soldiers fought shoulder to shoulder with the Asian and African soldiers. The gallantry displayed by the Asian and African soldiers greatly impressed the Europeans and their hatred towards these races changed to some extent. As a result, the feeling of racism slowly subsided and it was taken over by a newfound goodwill among the people.

The First World War posed a serious threat to the educational system of that time. Education suffered a setback because during the War many educational institutions were forcibly closed down and students were encouraged to undergo military training to provide the necessary fighting force as per the requirement of the War. In most of the countries military training was made compulsory for the students and conventional education was discouraged. All this greatly hampered the progress of education. The War also contributed to the progress of women. Participating in the War millions of men lost their lives. Therefore, a scarcity of labourers was felt. Factory owners and the governments of industrialized states were, therefore, compelled to engage women as factory workers. Rising to the need of the hour women workers entered the hitherto male bastions and helped in maintaining the production of their industries. Therefore, immediately after the post-war period, they came to be recognized as regular labour force. All this greatly contributed to the elevation of their status and led to their empowerment.

Treaty of Versailles

The First World War which continued for four years and three months, i.e., 1,566 days, involved mobilization of 65 million men of whom 7 million died and 13 million were wounded and which cost around 400 billion dollars. This was brought to an end by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 and four other treaties concluded at various places by the Allies. In this landmark treaty of the world, the terms of peace with Germany were embodied in the Treaty of Versailles, which is the longest document of its kind. This peace treaty was a dictated one because the German diplomats were not at all consulted before its preparation, and it was finally imposed on them. The path of conclusion of the peace treaties was not at all smooth. There were many difficulties encountered by the peace conference mainly owing to the uncompromising nature of the delegates. The 1,037 delegates

who attended the Paris Peace Conference, and almost all of them, as Langsam has said, 'came to attend the Paris Peace Conference well equipped with records and memoranda'. The opinions and counter opinions of these experts further added to the difficulties of reaching an agreed decision. The lack of well-defined principles regarding the solution of the post-war problems and the future reconstruction of the world also stood in the way of leaders in finding any formula and a definite plan. The four leading figures; Woodrow Wilson of the US, Lloyd George of UK, Clemenceau of France, and Orlando of Italy, entrusted with the responsibility of taking a decision had no similarity of interests. While Wilson wanted to establish long and durable peace based on justice and neutrality instead of taking revenge on the enemy country, Clemenceau and Orlando were more keen to protect the territorial interests of France and Italy, respectively. They were not much bothered about the problem of world peace. Lloyd George of UK was no doubt eager to establish international peace based on truth and justice, but he was willing to do all this only if the interests of the United Kingdom were protected. Hence, the proceedings of the Conference were hindered by the two conflicting approaches adopted by the leaders. Although Wilson was not in favour of secret diplomacy, in view of the eagerness of the powers like Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan to observe the terms of these secret treaties, he was ultimately forced to compromise. Commenting on this, historians like Walter Consuelo Langsam in *World Since 1919*, has said, 'Wilson's idealism came into sharp conflict with materialism at the conference and in most cases materialism triumphed'.

The Treaty of Versailles of 28 June 1919 concluded with Germany

(ii) The Treaty of St. Germain of 10 September 1919 with Austria

(iii) The Treaty of Neuilly of 27 November 1919 concluded with Bulgaria

(iv) The Treaty of Trianon of 4 July 1920 concluded with Hungary

The Treaty of Sevres of 10 August 1920 concluded with Turkey (the Treaty

of Sevres was revised in the Conference at Lausanne in 1923) and peace was formally established only on 6 August 1924 when the Treaty came into force.

The Treaty of Versailles was signed between the Allies and Germany on 28 June 1919. The draft of the Treaty was presented to the German Foreign Minister on 7 May 1919 and Germany was given three weeks time to file written objections if any. On 29 May objections to the Treaty were received from Germany. After the stiff attitude of Clemenceau, a revised Treaty with five days time to accept the Treaty was issued. The Allies warned that if Germany failed to do so their country would be invaded. As Germany was under the grip of famine, the German Assembly decided to accept the terms of the Treaty, and they appended their signatures to the Treaty on June 28. Historians like Norman Lowe have commented that, 'The Treaty of Versailles in particular was one of the most controversial settlements ever signed, and it was criticised even in the Allied countries on the grounds that it was too hard on the Germans who were bound to object so violently that another war was inevitable, sooner or later.' In addition, many of the terms such as reparations and disarmament proved impossible to carry out.

Military Provisions

The Treaty of Versailles considerably reduced the military might of Germany. It was compelled to abolish the German general staff and forced to reduce its army to 1 lakh with a small navy and merchant marine, without modern equipment, to be exclusively used only for police administration. The German navy was limited to 6 battleships, 6 light cruisers, 12 destroyers and 12 torpedo boats. As regards the air clauses, the Treaty absolutely forbade naval or military air forces for Germany. The Treaty also imposed restrictions on the manufacture of arms and ammunition. It was also forbidden to manufacture or purchase tanks, armoured cars, poisonous gases and submarines. The Rhineland was permanently demilitarized and Germany was not allowed to maintain or construct any fortifications either on the left bank of the Rhineland or on the right bank to the west of a line

drawn 50 kilometers to the east of the Rhine. This meant German troops were not allowed or maintained in the area and the existing fortifications had to be destroyed. The harbours of the Islands of Heligoland, Dune and Kiel Canal were also to be demilitarized and all fortifications demolished. It was even prevented from exporting and importing war materials. The military services were made voluntary and for 12 years for soldiers and 25 years for officers. The War Guilt clause fixed the blame for the outbreak of the War solely on Germany and its allies.

Economic Provisions and Reparations

The Treaty also aimed at keeping Germany economically weak. The League, therefore, held Germany responsible for the loss and damage caused during the War and asked to pay compensation to the Allied and associated governments. The provisions of reparations were the final humiliation for the Germans. Though there could be little valid objections to the general principle of reparations, many historians now agree that the actual amount decided by the Reparation Commission was far too high. Germany was to pay reparations for the damage done to the allies and the actual amount was not decided at Versailles. However, after much argument and haggling it was announced later in 1921. The problem of payment of reparation proved complicated as it was very difficult to arrive at an amount which Germany would pay to the Allies. For that a Reparation Commission was set up and the representatives of Great Britain, the US, Italy, France and Japan were to decide the compensation amount. On 28 April 1921, the Commission assessed the debt of Germany at 6,600 million pounds. This amount led the Germans to protest that it was impossible to pay and they soon began to default their annual installments. The international tension resurfaced when France tried to force the Germans to pay. Eventually, the Allies admitted their mistake and reduced the amount to 2,000 million pounds as per the Young Plan of 1929. But, not before reparations had proved disastrous both economically and politically. This amount was

successively scaled down and finally abolished in 1932. The Treaty also recognized the rights of the Allies to the replacement of all merchant ships and fishing boats lost or damaged in the War (tonne for tonne and class for class). As per the Reparation Commission, Germany had to deliver large quantities of coal for 10 years to France, Belgium and Italy. It was also to deliver a large number of horses, cattle, sheep, etc., to France and Belgium. All German properties in the former German colonies and in the Allied countries were to be confiscated and its pre-war trading concessions with the signatories like Morocco, Egypt and China were to be abolished. The Rivers Elbe and Oder of Germany were internationalized with a view to provide Switzerland and Czechoslovakia an access to the sea. The Kiel Canal was internationalized and thrown open for all ships of all nations. The Allies also demanded that Germany should allow free passage to merchant and war vessels of all countries.

Legal Provisions

The Allies also demanded that King Kaiser William II, the emperor of Germany should be tried as a war criminal for committing 'the supreme offence against international morality and the sanctity of treaties'. He was to be tried for these offences by a special tribunal. These provisions however, could not be implemented because the government of Netherlands refused to surrender the German King Kaiser William II, where he had taken shelter. However, as per the legal provisions within 6 months of the implementation of the Treaty Germany was to restore all the trophies, archives, historical souvenirs or works of art carried away by her forces from France during the Franco-German War and the World War. Germany was also to compensate the University of Louvain for the destruction of her manuscripts and documents and hand over two paintings to Belgium which were at that time in Germany. The Treaty of Versailles was one of the most controversial documents signed by the nations in modern times. So, the Germans described it as a dictated peace, a Treaty forced upon by the

vanquished. Throughout the Conference the representatives did not consult the Germans even once and their objections were completely overruled. Germany was forced to sign the treaty under threat of another invasion of their country. Lloyd George, who consistently advocated a lenient peace with Germany said, 'These terms are written in the blood of fallen heroes. We must carry out the edict of Providence and see that the people who inflicted this war shall never be in a position to do so again. The Germans say that they will not sign. Their newspapers say they will not sign. The politicians say the same thing. We say, Gentlemen, you must sign. If you do not do so in Versailles you shall do so in Berlin'. Even historian E. H. Carr in *International Relations between two World Wars*, has said, 'Nearly every treaty which brings a war to an end, is in one sense a dictated peace, for a defeated power seldom accepts willingly the consequences of its defeat. But in the Treaty of Versailles the element of dictation was more apparent than in any previous peace treaty of modern times.' It was, thus, evident that the element of dictation was very much present in the Treaty of Versailles. But this was not something peculiarly confined to this Treaty alone. The revengeful attitude of Germany as manifested in the Treaty of Brest Litovsk and the Treaty of Bucharest concluded with Russia and Romania respectively. This further hardened the attitude of the Allies because 'the minds of the German rulers were too clearly revealed by these treaties to permit any illusion'. Undoubtedly, the peace settlement did not exactly succeed in maintaining peace. The leaders of the Peace Conference wanted Germany to pay heavily so that an event of this magnitude was not repeated. Even Lloyd George, who stood for the lenient treatment of Germany, won the famous Khaki election with the slogan, 'We shall hang Kaiser and make Germany pay to the last penny'. The element of reciprocity was also missing from the and Treaty with regard to disarmament, transportation, colonies, abolition of capitulations, punishment of officers. All these provisions were unilaterally applied to Germany alone and the Allies were completely

exempted from them. If disarmament was reasonable for Germany, it was obviously reasonable for the Allies. However, except Great Britain, no other Allied power agreed to disarm. If the principles of reciprocity and natural justice had been followed, the Treaty of Versailles would have been a peace of justice. Without reciprocity, it was a Treaty of force and its terms could be executed only so long as the force continued to be applied to make them execute it. It has been said by the critics of the Treaty that the seeds of the Second World War lay in the Treaty of Versailles. However, no great diplomatic instrument like the Treaty has been modified, revised and infringed in the same way as the Treaty of Versailles. In 1926, Part I of the Treaty was amended to enable Germany to get the membership of the League of Nations. Part V dealing with military, navy and air force was violated by Germany in 1935. Part VII dealing with the War criminals was allowed to go by default. Part VIII, dealing with reparation, was modified by the Reparation Commission and other committees in 1931 before it was given a decent burial by the World Economic Conference. Part II and III dealing with the western, northern, and eastern boundary of Germany were violated by Germany. The other steps which infringed the Treaty of Versailles again and again, including promulgation of new military laws by Germany, conclusion of Naval Treaty with Britain in 1935, occupation of Austria by Germany in 1938, and the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia by Germany in 1939. Thus, the Treaty of Versailles proved ineffective in its purpose due to the fact that the Treaty failed to satisfy neither the victors nor the vanquished. The Treaty failed to establish permanent peace, not because of its inherent faults in the Treaty, but it was mainly due to the subsequent policies pursued by the Allied Powers and Germany.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

The First World War placed an unbearable strain on Russia's weak government and economy, resulting in mass shortages and hunger. In the meantime, the mismanagement and failures of the war turned the people,

and particularly the soldiers, against the Tsar. The soldiers felt that Tsar's decision to take personal command of the army was responsible for their defeats. The revolution against the Tsars began in Petrograd by the workers in response to bread shortages. People believed that the government was hoarding the bread in order to increase the prices. However, a revolt by the workers', by itself, was very unlikely to result in the Tsars' abdication. An important phase of the revolution was the mutiny of the Petrograd garrison and the loss of control over Petrograd by the Tsar. In March 1917, the Tsar first lost control of the streets, then of the soldiers, and finally of the Duma, which resulted in his forced abdication. The Marxist historians have grossly exaggerated the extent of political involvement in the Revolution, and it would be fair to say that only at a very late stage of the Revolution the socialist political parties became involved. When it became clear that the Duma was also ineffective, the unrest for bread shortages increased and culminated in two revolutions in 1917. The first revolution in February overthrew the Tsar on 15 March 1917, and set up a moderate provisional government. Nicholas II, his wife, Tsarina Alexandra, and his children were killed by the Bolsheviks in July 1918. Meanwhile, when the provisional government also failed to live up to the expectations and proved no better than the rule of Tsars, it was overthrown by the Bolshevik Revolution in October 1917.

The new Bolshevik government was fragile at first and its opponent Whites tried to destroy it, causing a bitter civil war in 1918–20. But, due to the effective leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, the Bolsheviks or Reds won the civil war and called themselves the Communists. Later, they consolidated their power and Lenin was able to begin the task of leading Russia to recovery until his premature death in 1924. The Russian Revolution of 1917, which is popularly known as the Bolshevik Revolution, is one of the most significant events in the history of the twentieth century world. It is considered as significant as the French Revolution. In fact, some Marxian historians rank the Russian Revolution even higher than the French Revolution. They

contend that while the French Revolution put an end to the autocratic rule and paved the way for the growth of democratic sentiments and ideals of political equality, the Russian Revolution apart from bringing about political equality also sought to bring about social and economic equality. It gave a new current to the thoughts of Communism and Socialism which sought to create a new society, culture and civilization. It asserted that the real power of the society must rest in the workers because they alone produce national wealth. The Russian Revolution was also important because it was the first attempt to give practical shape to the doctrines and theories of Marx, and it was the most important effect of the First World War. The Russian Revolution was the result of a series of events that occurred during 1917, which caused two separate revolutions in February and October, with a great deal of political wranglings in-between and which eventually plunged the country into civil war before leading to the formation of the Communist State.

Causes for the Outbreak of the Revolution

In February 1917, the Russian Revolution was an important event in the course of Russian history. It has complex causes, nature, and effect and is critical in the twentieth century international history analysis. Even the major causes of this unrest of the common people towards Tsar Nicholas II and aristocratic landowners are numerous and complicated to neatly summarize. However, there were various factors and forces which were responsible for the Russian Revolution in 1917. The main factors were the series of bad judgements by the Tsar, the resentment at the treatment of peasants cruelly by the landowners, experience of poor working conditions by labourers and workers in the industries, and an increasing sense of political and social awareness of the people in general because of democratic ideas that reached Russia from the West. Proletarian dissatisfaction was further combined by some immediate events of the time like shortages of food and successive military failures.

Series of bad judgments by the Tsar:

The system of Tsar fell for a series of bad judgements by the Tsar. In the First World War, the war against Germany meant that troops could not be deployed in force against the Russian revolutionaries, the underestimation of the extent of the revolts in Petrograd by Tsar until it was too late, and the Tsar generals convinced him that only the Duma could deal with the situation. The imposition of strict censorship laws and suppression of any and all forms of political dissidence were some another factors that became responsible for the Revolution. All of these events led to the fall of autocratic system which was centuries old and that had generated lot of anguish and discontentment among the people of Russia. The Revolution started as a peaceful bread protest on International Women's Day. Bread shortage was there not because of low harvest, but because the 'railway system had become overloaded due to the war, and was unable to supply the northern cities with grain'. In mid-February, it was realised that the supply of flour in Petrograd was left for only 10 days. Skilled labourers were recruited by the army, while the rail network had been divided into sections, which was controlled by civil government and by the military. This, along with the general belief that the government was hoarding bread so as to drive up prices, meant that the demonstration of anger was aimed against the regime of Tsarist because of its inability to distribute the food stocks. The aggrieved people transformed into an unruly mob because their protest was supported by demonstrations by the more militant Petrograd factory workers. Along with this, the textile labourers and Putilov steel workers went on strike and the crowds swelled from 1,00,000 to over 2,00,000 within three days. However, it would be untrue to describe the protests as purely a revolt by the workers, as it bore the character of a general uprising of the people. But it would be right to state that the 'workers played a leading role in the demonstrations and were especially active in the violent aspects of the

uprising'. However, in general the protest took the form of a peasant riot, as the frenzied mob frequently indulged in violent acts.

Tsar Nicholas II himself believed in autocratic principles. His ministers like Pleve had dictatorial powers who continued the old policy of Russification, persecution and reaction. The wife of Pleve and the Queen who was under the influence of Rasputin, a reactionary, interfered in the affairs of administration in 1902. A group of intellectuals who were influenced by the Western ideas published a paper called 'Liberation and in 1904'. These intellectuals also formed a party known as Union Liberator. In the same year, the autocratic minister Pleve was assassinated. For all these reasons, Tsar Nicholas II thought of changing his policy and appointed Mirski, a man of liberal ideas, as the Home Minister. The press was given greater freedom. In November 1904, the representatives of Zemstvos or provincial assemblies met at St. Petersburg. They demanded freedom of conscience, speech, publication, public meeting and associations. They also demanded for a Parliament for the whole country empowered to pass all the laws and control the government. The Tsar did not concede the demands of common people and the discontentment continued to grow among the people. The students of the University of Moscow paraded the streets and shouted the slogans of 'down with autocracy' and 'stop the war'. On 22 January 1905, a large number of workers under the leadership of Gapon marched towards the imperial palace to present a petition to the Tsar containing their grievances. The royal troops did not allow them to proceed and fired at them. There was loss of life and strikes were observed in various parts of the country. The incident was known as 'Slaughter of Bloody Sunday'. Subsequently there were rebellion within the army and the general Duke Sergus, the uncle of the Tsar was assassinated. At last, the Tsar Nicholas II was forced to issue a Manifesto in October 1905.

The emergence of revolutionary parties:

After 1912, various revolutionary parties', especially the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, fortune revived. Both these groups developed from an earlier Marxist movement, the Social Democrat Labour Party, and Karl Marx's ideas influenced them. Karl Marx was a German Jew (1818–83) and his political ideas were mentioned in the Communist Manifesto in 1848, and Das Kapital in 1867. According to Karl Marx economic factors are the main reason for the historical change and that the capitalists bourgeoisie exploited proletariat (workers) everywhere. It contended that in a fully industrialized society, the workers will 'inevitably rise up against their exploiters and take control themselves, running the country in their interests'. According to Marx, this was 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'. Vladimir Lenin was one of the social democrats, who helped edit the revolutionary newspaper Iskra (The Spark). In 1903 over an election to the editorial board of Iskra the party had split into Lenin supporters, the Bolsheviks, the Russian word for the majority and the rest, the Mensheviks means the minority. The Bolsheviks wanted a small-disciplined party of professional revolutionaries who would work full time to bring about revolution, because the industrial workers were in a minority in the country. Therefore, Lenin believed that they must work with the peasants as well, and get them involved in revolutionary activity. The Mensheviks, on the other hand, were happy to have party membership open to anybody who cared to join. They believed that a revolution could not take place in Russia until the country was fully industrialised, and industrial workers were in a big majority over peasants. They had very little faith in co-operation from peasants who were actually one of the most conservative groups in society. The Mensheviks were the strict Marxists, believing in a proletarian revolution, whereas Lenin was the one moving away from the Marxism. The Social Revolutionaries were another revolutionary party. They were not Marxists and they did not approve of increasing industrialization, and did not think in terms of a proletarian revolution. After

the overthrow of the Tsarist regime, they wanted a mainly agrarian society based on peasant communities operating collectively.

Military debacle in the First World War:

The military debacle suffered by Russia during the First World War also provided a great impetus to the revolutionary movement in Russia. Historians also agree that Russian failures in the War made the revolution certain and caused the troops and the police to mutiny, as there were nobody left to defend the autocracy. The common people held the Tsar responsible for the reverses suffered by Russia. The sufferings caused to the people due to shortage of food and heavy losses of men and money in the War further agitated their minds. They appealed to the Tsar to bring necessary improvement in the condition by assuming personal responsibility for the affairs of the government. However, the Tsar did not bother about the demand and indulged in fanciful luxuries. His officials also ignored the wishes and interests of the people. All this forced the people to think in terms of getting rid of the Tsar and this made the Revolution inevitable. The War also exposed the incompetence of the government, corrupt organization, shortage of equipment and poor transportation and distribution system in the country. Although there was plenty of food in the country during the War, it did not reach the big cities in sufficient quantities, because most of the trains were being monopolised by the military. Bread was scarce and very expensive. By January 1917, most groups in the society were disillusioned with the incompetent way the Tsar was running the War. Sensing the outcome of the War, the aristocracy, the Duma, industrialists, and the army began to turn against the Tsar Nicholas II, realising that it would be better to sacrifice the Tsar to avoid a much worse revolution that might damage the entire social structure.

Course of the Russian Revolution

The first important event of the Revolution in Russia was the March Revolution or the February Revolution in Russia. It was a chaotic

affair and it marked the termination of over a century of civil and military unrest. It is important to mention that the March and the November revolutions are till date known as the February and October revolutions in Russia. This is so as the Julian calendar was being used by the Russians, which was 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar which was used by the rest of Europe, and in 1918 Russia adopted the Gregorian calendar. In 1905, Russia suffered humiliating losses in the Russo-Japanese War and, during a demonstration against the War in the same year, firing was opened by the Tsarist troops on an unarmed crowd and this further isolated Nicholas II from his people. There were widespread strikes, riots, and the famous mutiny on the Battleship Potemkin. Such was the atmosphere in 1905 that Tsar Nicholas saw fit, 'against his will, to cede the people their wishes'. Nicholas created Russia's first constitution and the State Duma, an elected parliamentary body in Tsar's October Manifesto. However, the belief of Nicholas's in his divine right to rule Russia meant that 'he spent much of the following years fighting to undermine or strip the Duma of its powers and to retain as much autocracy as possible'. In 1914, when Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated by political activists in Serbia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire declared war on its neighbours. Serbia talked to Russia for help. Tsar Nicholas II 'saw a chance to galvanize his people against a common enemy, and to atone for the humiliations suffered in the Russo-Japanese War'.

World War I Russia's disastrous participation in World War I was the final blow in many ways to the rule of Tsar. In the very first rendezvous with the Germans (who had sided with the Austro-Hungarian Empire), the Battle of Tannenberg, the Russian army lost and there were 1,20,000 casualties to Germany's 20,000. Nicholas left St. Petersburg in the autumn of 1915 to take personal charge of the army due to continuing series of losses and setbacks. Around this time conscripts and untrained troops to the front were being sent by Russia, with 'little or no equipment and fighting in an

almost continual retreat'. In 1916, morale was lowered as the pressure of waging the war was the hardest on proletarian families, 'whose sons were being slaughtered at the front, and who suffered severe food shortages at home'. The regime of Tsar and the Imperial took the blame as civil unrest heated up.

The February-March Revolution (1917)

According to the Russian calendar, the March Revolution started on 23 February 1917. However, the first revolution actually started on 8 March. On that day, there were bread riots in St. Petersburg. Soon it became a city-wide demonstration as furious industrial workers left factories and protested against shortage of food. They were soon joined by the rioters, and on the next day—encouraged by political and social activists—the crowd had enlarged and virtually every industry, shop and enterprise ceased to function as the entire populace went on strike. Tsar Nicholas wanted the police and military to intervene, but the military was no longer faithful to the Tsar and many mutinied or joined the people in demonstrations. There were fights all over the place and the whole city was in chaos. After five days over 80,000 troops from the army mutinied and looting and rioting spread extensively. The Duma and the generals were convinced, and further, that the Tsar who was on his way back to Petrograd, would have to leave. Nicholas senior generals suggested that he could save the monarchy by renouncing the throne. Faced with this weak situation Tsar Nicholas abdicated his throne on 15 March, and handed over the power to his brother Michael. But, Michael refused to acknowledge leadership unless he was elected by the Duma. He resigned the next day, leaving Russia without any head of state.

The Provisional Government

A Provisional Government was quickly formed by leading members of the Duma after Romanovs abdicated and it was internationally recognised as the legal government of Russia. It was to rule Russia until elections were held. However it did not have any absolute or stable power. A trade union of

workers and soldiers—the more radical Petrograd Soviet organization—wielded enormous influence. It supported full-scale socialism over more moderate democratic reforms which were favoured by the Provisional Government members. Russia was consumed with political fervour after centuries of imperial rule, but ‘the many different factions, all touting different ideas, meant that political stability was still a long way after the February Revolution’.

Emergence of Lenin

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov—also known as Lenin—was one person who was eager to take advantage of the chaotic state of affairs in St. Petersburg. Most of the time of Lenin was spent travelling, working, and campaigning in Europe—partly because of fear for his own safety, as he was known Socialist and was considered as an enemy of the Tsarist rule. However, when the Tsar was arrested, and Russian politics was in chaos, Lenin found the opportunity to lead his party, the Bolsheviks, to power. He negotiated a return to Russia from Switzerland, his home, with the help of German authorities. As a supporter of withdrawing Russia from the Great War, the Germans were willing to help Lenin’s passage back through a ‘sealed train’. The Russian people as well as many leading political figures welcomed Lenin’s return to Russia in April 1917. Lenin immediately condemned the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet policies and ideologies instead of uniting the fractious parties. In his April Theses, published in the Bolshevik newspaper Pravda, he believed in non-cooperation with the liberals (i.e., non-hardline Communists) and an immediate end to the War. Initially, his uncompromising stance isolated both Lenin and the Bolsheviks, but with powerful slogans like ‘Peace, land and bread’, Lenin won the hearts of the Russian people—who were increasingly unable to ‘stomach war and poverty’. During the summer of 1917, Lenin attempted to invoke another revolution, the likes of which had taken place in February, with the motive of overthrowing the Provisional Government. Lenin sought to maneuver the

Machine Gun Regiment which refused to leave Petrograd (as St. Petersburg was then known) for the frontline. However, the coup was thwarted by Kerensky, who was the most important figure of the time and a member of both the Provisional Government and Petrograd Soviet. Experienced troops entered the city to suppress any dissidence and the Bolsheviks were accused of being involved with the Germans. Whilst Lenin escaped to Finland, many were arrested. Despite all this Lenin continued plotting and scheming. Meanwhile Kerensky suffered his own setbacks in politics and even had to appeal to the Bolsheviks for military aid when he feared his War Minister, Kornilov, was aiming for a military dictatorship. 'By autumn the Bolsheviks were climbing into the ascendancy, winning majority votes within the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets. Leon Trotsky was elected as president of the former'.

The October-November Revolution

By the Julian calendar used in Russia at the time, the Revolution took place in November 1917, and the October Revolution is therefore often referred to as the November Revolution. While Russian politics was still in a state of constant flux, Lenin realized that it was the time to capitalize on his party's popularity. He planned a coup that would overthrow the Provisional Government which was increasingly ineffective and replaced them with the Bolsheviks. On 10 October, he held a famous meeting with 12 party leaders, and tried to persuade them that there was need for a revolution. Despite the fact that he received the backing of only 10 of them plotting went ahead.

FASCISM IN ITALY

Various factors were responsible for the rise of dictatorship or totalitarianism in Europe. In the first place, the democratic governments established after the First World War proved to be disappointing as they failed to resolve the social, economic and political problems facing their countries in the post-war period. Their failure was fully exploited to establish dictatorial regimes. Also, the worldwide Economic Depression of 1929

caused enormous hardships and sufferings to people and gave rise to the feelings of frustration, despondency and despair. Similarly, the failure of the League of Nations to check aggression and preserve world peace also greatly contributed to the rise of totalitarian regimes. Japan, Italy, Germany, etc., committed aggression with impunity and the League of Nations was incompetent in taking any action against them. In addition to the general causes which contributed to the growth of totalitarian regimes in various countries, there were also some specific causes, which augmented dictatorship in Europe. First, the humiliating treatment meted out to Germany by the Treaty of Versailles immediately after the First World War, created a sense of hatred and revenge amongst the Germans. The Treaty had mutilated Germany physically, humiliated her emotionally, suffocated her economically, and encircled her territorially. This greatly offended the popular sentiments of Germany and Hitler fully exploited these sentiments to establish his dictatorship in Germany. Second, in Italy, the Treaty of Versailles was also seen in a negative light. Though Italy fought on the side of the bigger nations, it could not gain whatever had been promised to her during the War. On the other hand, Italy had to face poverty, discontentment and disorder. The Italian leaders felt that though they had won the War, they had lost peace. Naturally, the people of Italy sought help from someone who could alleviate them to achieve national ambitions. And they found such attributes in Benito Mussolini, who established his totalitarian rule in Italy. Third, the successful bid by America and other European powers to curb the growing power of Japan by imposing restrictions on its navy and other ambitions in China, through the Washington Conference of 1921-22 was exploited by the military leaders in the name of ultra-nationalism in Japan to bring discredit to the democratic government and establish a totalitarian rule in Japan. Fourth, Communism came to Russia during the First World War period. After the War, the Communist leaders were determined to spread Communism all over the world. They crushed all the anti-revolutionary

forces within the country with firm hands, tried to promote Communism in other countries of world by resorting to all types of methods.

Rise of Fascism in Italy

During the First World War, though Italy fought on the side of the victorious Allies, it emerged from the War as a defeated nation. Italy was not happy by the Paris Peace Settlement (1919) because it was not given what had been promised by the Allies to it in the Treaty of London (1915). When the interests of Italy and Yugoslavia conflicted, the Allied powers decided in favour of Yugoslavia. This was the main reason of Italy's discontent in the post-First World War period. Italy comprehensively failed to secure anything tangible at the Paris Peace Conference and was left humiliated, disappointed and wounded. Elaborating the situation of Italy, historian J. H. Jackson summarized that, 'Italians felt themselves disgraced in the eyes of the world, swindled by their own politicians. War had cost Italy dear, draining her of money, saddling her with a budget deficit of over twelve thousand million Lire, facing up the cost of living. The political party in power in 1919 was pacifist, its leaders old and cynical. It is little wonder that the Italians turned to violence. A crop of secret societies, blood brotherhoods, terrorist gangs of every sort, sprang up all over the country in soil traditionally fertile for such growths.' The people of Italy felt that the country had failed to secure anything favourable for itself due to the incapability of its leadership and thus, they supported Fascism. Totalitarianism emerged in Italy in the shape of Fascism under the leadership of Benito Mussolini. The word Fascism had its origin from the Roman word Fascio which means a bundle of rods which was once the emblem of the Roman authority. In the post-First World War period, the Italian government was faced with a plethora of problems, which were beyond its capacity to solve. Demobilization after the War increased unemployment and the country faced economic bankruptcy, starvation and inflation. Strikes, lockouts and riots by people became the order of the day.

The value of national currency fell steadily and the cost of living rose very high. The uneasiness of the government to tackle these mounting problems was quite evident. Between 1919 and 1922, six-coalition governments mostly of heterogeneous character were formed in Italy. This situation prepared the ground for Fascism and the resulting autocracy was the product of the prevailing situation where democratic sentiments proved incompatible with effective parliamentary government. The Russian Revolution also inspired the authoritarian leadership of Italy. The socialist leaders of the country tried to use the fragile economic condition to their advantage and tried to imbibe the Soviet system of Communism in Italy. Daily strikes and lockout of these socialist leaders further created a chaotic condition, which the Fascist fully exploited. The faulty system of franchise prevailing in the country and the programme of the Fascists that promised the people 'order and glory' also greatly attracted the people and they extended their wholehearted support to its leaders. Some of the main principles emphasised by the Fascists were:

- (i) Democracy was not suitable for the country because it widens the gap between the rich and the poor, therefore the country could make progress only under one leader
- (ii) The interests of the country must get precedence over individual interests
- (iii) Quality was more important than quantity
- (iv) The Fascist leaders who embodied the will, sentiments and emotions of the people were symbols of nation's pride
- (v) It favoured equal control over all sections of society.

Role of Benito Mussolini

Mussolini and the fascist party were attractive to many sections of society because Mussolini himself said that he aimed to rescue Italy from the existing feeble government. He played an important role in establishing a fascist rule in Italy. Mussolini was born in 1883 as the son of a blacksmith in

Romagna. Politically, he was a socialist but began to make a name for himself as a journalist, and became the editor of the socialist newspaper *Avanti*. He separated from the socialists because they were against Italian intervention in the war, and finally started his own newspaper, *Popolo d'Italia*. Before the formation of the fascist party, he was not well known in Italy and outside. Commenting on Mussolini J. H. Jackson said, 'Who was this Mussolini? He was totally unknown outside Italy, and not well known within. The outside world was not much reassured when they heard his record. Son of a village blacksmith, christened Benito after Benito Juarez, the Mexican revolutionary; a firebrand Socialist in his young days; eleven times imprisoned; leader of an abortive coup in June, 1914, during which "red days" twenty men were killed; editor of the Socialist paper *Avanti* until November, 1914, when he was expelled from the party for advocating war against Austria; then editor of the *Popolo d'Italia*, a paper directed by himself and founded, it has been said, with French funds; creator of the Fascist groups; leader of riots against the Socialists who had once been his colleagues it was not a comforting record.'

During the First World War, Mussolini joined the army. The War greatly aroused his patriotic feelings and after the War in 1919, he founded the fascist party with a Socialist and Republican programme and showed sympathy with the factory occupations of 1919-20. The local party units were known as the *fasci di combattimento* or fighting groups. The word *fascies* meant the bundle of rods with protruding axe which used to symbolize the authority and power of the ancient Roman consuls. He tried to arouse national sentiments of the Italian people and inspired them to work for a progressive and powerful Italy. Taking full advantage of the prevailing discontent in the country, Mussolini organised a march to Rome, where the King, Victor Emmanuel III, terrified by this action, dismissed his Prime Minister Luigi Facta and invited Benito Mussolini to form the government. On 30 October 1922 Mussolini came to power in a constitutional manner.

Having won over big business houses, Mussolini began to make conciliatory speeches about the Roman Catholic Church which he had earlier criticized. Seeing him as a good anti-communist weapon even the Pope Pius XI swung the Church into line behind Mussolini. When Mussolini announced that he had dropped the Republican part of his programme in 1922, even the king began to look more favourably on the fascists. The anti-fascist forces on the other hand failed to cooperate with each other and made no determined effort to drive the fascists out from Italy. After assuming power, Mussolini devoted himself to make Italy a powerful nation. During that time, the economic condition of the country was awful. Describing the condition of Italy, historian J. H. Jackson observed. To change the fate of Italy, Mussolini carried out administrative reforms and balanced the national budget. He took measures to stall further devaluation of Italian currency. He tried to eradicate illiteracy by making elaborate provisions for education. He introduced compulsory military training and tried to enhance the naval power of Italy to match it with the naval powers of other European countries, particularly Germany and France. He tried to improve the lot of workers by nationalising all factories and mills and set up syndicates to improve relations between the capitalists and workers. He brought more lands under cultivation and tried to improve and expand transport system and railways. Apart from these, he took several other steps to make Italy economically selfsufficient. In 1929, Mussolini concluded the Lateran Treaty with the Pope by which the Pope agreed to accept a subordinate position to Mussolini. The Pope was compensated for giving up his political rights. He was permitted to keep in his possession the Vatican and the Cathedral of St. Peters. He was authorised to appoint bishops and teachers to teach religion. Under the pact, the fascist government recognised the Roman Catholic religion as the state religion and religious instructions were made compulsory in all schools. Some historians see the ending of the long breach between the church and the state as Mussolini's most lasting and worthwhile achievement.

The Benefits of Fascist Rule

Much of the Fascist policy was concerned with improving the economy, though Mussolini knew very little about economics. The big drive was for self-sufficiency which was essential for a warrior nation. The early years of Mussolini's rule were successful. Industry was encouraged with government subsidies so that the iron and steel production doubled by 1930, and during this period other industrial productions had also gone up. The 'Battle for Grain' in 1920s encouraged farmers to concentrate on wheat production and by 1935 wheat imports had been cut by 75 per cent. A programme of land reclamation was launched involving irrigation and planting trees in mountainous areas, as part of the drive to improve the agricultural yield. An impressive public works programme was designed to reduce unemployment. It included the construction of roads, bridges, railway lines, flats, sports complex, schools and new townships on reclaimed land. Due to these infrastructural advantages, education and sporting activities grew manifold and the country performed exceedingly well in sports during the fascist rule as the Italian Soccer Team won the World Cup twice in 1934 and 1938. The 'after-work' organization or Topolaboro provided the Italian people many options like cheap holiday packages, cruises for tours, theatres, dramatic societies, libraries, orchestra and sporting organizations to do in their leisure time. To promote the image of the country as a great power, a pragmatic foreign policy was carried out. However, the promise of the early years of the Mussolini's rule was in many ways never fulfilled. Little was done to remedy its basic shortage of raw materials like coal and oil. Therefore as an iron and steel producer, Italy could not match even a small state like Belgium. Though the 'Battle for Grain' was a successful endeavour, it was achieved only at the expense of dairy and arable farming. During that period, the wages of farm labourers fell by 20 to 40 per cent. As a result agriculture remained inefficient and farm labourers became the poorest class in Italy. In order to show that Italy had a strong economy Mussolini revalued

the currency of Italy, Lira, far too high at 90 to the pound instead of 150 in 1926. Unfortunately, this made Italian exports more expensive in the world market and led to reduced orders. The Great Depression which occurred during the rule of Mussolini in 1929 made matters worse. Exports fell further, unemployment rose to 1.1 million and yet the government refused to devalue the Lira. The regime of Mussolini was inefficient and corrupt, so many of its policies were not carried out properly. Part of the problem was Mussolini himself because he tried to do everything himself and refused to delegate power to others because he wanted total control. On this, D. M. Smith has observed that, 'By trying to control everything, he ended by controlling very little'.

Mussolini's Foreign Policy

The failure of Italy to secure the land promised to it at the Paris Peace Conference had caused much bitterness and dissatisfaction in Italy. Mussolini was determined to revive the past glory of Italy and to make it a great nation by addressing the concerns of injustice meted out to it after the War and he followed an aggressive foreign policy. He himself asserted, 'The main duty of fascist Italy is to keep her army, navy and air forces ready. We shall have to be alert so that we can rearm the five million people at a moment and only then our rights and demands will gain recognition.' In fact, Mussolini wanted to demonstrate to the world that Italy had enough strength not only to protect herself but also to attain the lands she had been promised. An aggressive foreign policy was also helpful in diverting the attention of people from domestic politics. Italy was also keen to regain her Roman inheritance by establishing a Mediterranean and African empire. Mussolini openly declared, 'We are hungry for land, because we are prolific and intend to remain so'. The objectives of Italy's foreign policy during the fascist regime were summarized by Katharine Duff, 'As things were, the Mediterranean far from being her empire was her prisons; Corsica, Malta, Tunis and Cyprus formed that prison's bars while Gibraltar and Suez guarded its gates and

Greece, Turkey and Egypt were ready to complete the chain encircling her. Determined first to break her prison bars and then to march to the ocean without access to which she must be considered only half independent. Italy might push towards the Indian Ocean by linking Libya with Ethiopia through the Sudan towards the Atlantic through French North Africa'. Thus, Italy was keen to have control over the South Eastern Europe, Africa and even further ahead.

Italy and South-Eastern Europe

Mussolini first concentrated his attention on the South-Eastern Europe and took various aggressive steps to strengthen Italy's position in this area. By the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, Italy got back the Dodecanese Islands, which it had surrendered to Greece in 1920. In the same year the Italian army bombed the Corfu Island and occupied it. After the League's intervention and receipt of compensation from Greece, Italy left Corfu. This gave a fillip to the prestige of Mussolini. Italy concluded the Treaty of Rome with Yugoslavia in 1924 by which the free state of Fiume was divided between the two. The city of Fiume went to Italy and neighbouring Porto Baros went to Yugoslavia. Likewise, in 1926 the Treaty of Tirana with Albania was signed by which Albania became a dependency of Italy and in 1939 it was annexed to Italy. At the London Naval Conference in 1930, Mussolini demanded naval parity with France, and in 1931 he advocated the revision of the peace treaties. By these aggressive foreign policy measures Mussolini was able to strengthen Italy's control on the Adriatic, increase her prestige in the Mediterranean, and extended its diplomatic and commercial influence in the South-Eastern Europe.

Italy Until the Second World War

During the inter-war period, Mussolini opposed the Union of Germany with Austria, because such a union was likely to restrict the Italian influence in Europe. In 1931, he opposed the tariff union between these two countries, and in 1934 Nazis revolted and wounded the Chancellor of

Austria. Mussolini immediately ordered the Italian army to help Austria. Thus, Austria was saved from the German annexation.

In South Eastern Europe, Italy tried to steal a march over France by impressing on the states of the region to form alliances with Italy rather than France. Initially Italy was able to outwit France by forming alliances with both Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. However, later France was able to increase its political influence over small states in Europe. Italy made efforts to destroy political influence of France by the dissolution of the little Entente and substituting it with a combination directed from Italy. When Italy was unable to have a monopoly of these alliances, it encouraged Germany against France's plans of reconstruction. Even in the matter of disarmament, Italy also supported Germany's stand of parity between Germany and French strength. Italy was convinced that it would give the Italian army balance of power in the European continent. Though Italy was keen to secure German cooperation, Italy's stand on Austria against Germany made it practically impossible for the two to come closer. Consequently, on 7 January 1935, Italy signed a pact with France in Rome. By this Agreement, France met the main demands of Italy in Africa in return for concession by Italy in Central and Eastern Europe. The two parties also undertook to respect their mutual frontiers and abstain from meddling in the internal affairs of each other. Both Italy and France also agreed to oppose any unilateral revision of the Treaty of Versailles particularly with respect to German rearmament. However, after France participated in the economic sanctions enforced against Italy on account of her intervention in Abyssinia, the friendly relations suffered a setback. After the emergence of Hitler, and rise of Germany under his leadership, Italy started improving its relations with Great Britain. At the Stresa Conference (1935), Italy had aligned itself with France and Great Britain. In January 1937, Great Britain and Italy issued a declaration that they had agreed to preserve status quo in the Mediterranean region. Another agreement was concluded by the two countries in April 1938 by which they

regulated a number of issues in the Mediterranean and the Near-East area arising out of Italy's conquest of Abyssinia. Mussolini by philosophy and attitude was closer to Germany. Therefore, in 1937, Italy joined the Anti-Comintern Pact, concluded by Germany and Japan in 1936, as a result of which the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis came into existence. Hitler referred to this Axis as 'a great world political triangle and determined to protect decisively their right and vital interests'. In March 1938, Hitler occupied Austria. Mussolini had assumed the self-imposed role of protector of Austria. He informed Hitler that 'Austria did not interest him at all'. By this act, Mussolini was able to earn the gratitude of Hitler but lost his cherished dream of following an independent policy and establishing protectorate over Austria. Though the Second World War started in September 1939, Italy remained neutral in the initial phase. Its plan was to attack when the Allies were almost exhausted, because that would save Italy from the destruction of the War and would entitle it to share in the spoils of the victory. In 1940, when France was on the verge of collapse, Italy declared war against Britain and France. It formally joined the Triple Alliance with Germany and Japan on 27 September 1940. Italy declared war against Russia in June 1941 and against the US in December 1941. However, after 1942 the course of war changed and the defeat of Mussolini and Italy became imminent, due to continuous defeats and internal economic crisis. In 1943, Mussolini was arrested but later Germany army freed Mussolini and put him back into power. But, when the Allies attacked North Italy in 1945, Italy unconditionally surrendered to Allies. This marked the fall of Fascist Italy.

NAZISM IN GERMANY

The First World War ended disastrously for Germany. The collapse of Germany led to political turmoil in the country. Kaiser William II, the last German Emperor, was held responsible for the debacle of the German army and the miseries of the people. A countrywide anti-monarchist revolution compelled Kaiser to abdicate his throne. To take shelter, he fled with his

family to Holland. With his abdication, a Provisional Democratic Government was established under the socialist leadership of Ebert and Scheidemann to manage the affairs of the state simultaneously. The Provisional Democratic Government conducted elections on the basis of adult franchise to elect members to the Democratic National Assembly. The Assembly was entrusted with the responsibility of drafting a Democratic Constitution for the German Republic. The Constituent Assembly met at Weimer on 6 February 1919 because Berlin was still torn by political unrest and drafted a new Constitution. This Constitution came into effect on 11 August 1919 and was known as 'Weimer Constitution'. The Weimer Republic, which bridged the years between the Hohenzollerns and the Nazis, had a number of outstanding achievements to its credit. Due to the introduction of the Dawes Plan in 1924, Germany witnessed unprecedented prosperity in all sectors. Industrial production recorded an enormous increase. Huge foreign contribution and aid enabled Germany to re-establish the currency and rationalisation of its industrial and business life. The establishment of branches of the foreign firms in Germany not only led to the utilisation of the German raw materials but also provided employment to the huge unemployed German labourers. In the sphere of foreign policy, Germany, during this period pursued three aims: (i) to induce the Allies to evacuate areas of Germany, which they had occupied; (ii) to restore the sovereignty of the Reich, and recovery of Danzig and the frontier in Upper Silesia; and (iii) settlement of the reparation problems to strengthen Germany's capacity. Through these aims, Germany wanted to make her own decisions. For the achievement of the above objectives, Germany signed the Locarno treaties, by which her frontiers with France were settled. Germany concluded the Treaty of Rapallo with Soviet Union in 1922, by which both the states renounced their respective demand against each other and agreed to cooperate in the commercial sphere. In 1926, Germany was admitted to the League of Nations council with a semi-permanent seat. She succeeded in

getting a promise of withdrawal of foreign troops from the Ruhr in 1924 and the valley was freed in 1930. Germany convinced Great Britain, France and Belgium to withdraw their troops from the Rhineland region. The problem of reparation was also largely settled by the Young Plan. In 1932, the Lausanne Conference further cut down Germany's obligations of reparation to \$750 million. During the Weimer rule Germany began to rearm itself after the economic and diplomatic revival. Till the first part of 1930 the economic revival of Germany was started and in 1931, when economic depression was at its worst phase, Germany was spending \$700 million on its arms. Despite all these achievements, the German people, especially the younger generation was not happy with the Republican government and continued to nourish ambitions for a powerful Germany. The attempt on the part of the officials to drag down the ideals and heroes of imperial Germany also greatly irritated the young students, above all the people were not happy with the way the democratic parliamentary system was functioning in the country. The people still remembered the days when order and discipline prevailed in the Reichstag which was in quite contrast to the bickering and quarrel going on in the lower house of the Republic, and they felt that only a strong man could restore prosperity and prestige to Germany.

Formation of the Nazi Party

Hitler and his associates formed the Nazi party in 1920 after the end of the First World War. In the same year, the party announced the Twenty-five Point Programme, which emphasised the need of scraping the Treaty of Versailles which had been imposed on Germany, establishment of vast German empire after bringing back the lost colonies of Germany, increase in the military power of the country, non-recognition of Jews as the German citizens and their removal from all important positions, ban on the entry of foreigners into Germany, imposition of ban on parties which propagated against nationalism, opposition to communism and opposition to Parliamentary system of government which was detrimental to the interest of

the country, etc. In the economic sphere, the party stood for increasing incomes, limitation of profits from wholesale enterprise, land reform, nationalisation of all trusts, departmental stores and ban on land speculation. Similarly, in the social sphere, the party favoured increased old age and maternity benefits, reorganisation of higher education and government control of press, etc. It may be noted, that apart from the so-called Twenty-five Point Programme, the Nazis did not possess any positive philosophy. However, by demagogic appeals to latent emotions, fear of communism and resentment against the Treaty of Versailles, the party soon gained considerable following among the lower-middle classes who as a result of the widespread unemployment and extreme frustration were suffering untold agony. The Nazi party was to have its own army. The army constituted two types of members; one who wore the brown shirt and the other wore the black shirt. The members of the army were recruited from ex-soldiers, veterans and hoodlums, and took part in all types of demonstrations. They were expected to disturb the meetings of other parties and ensure that their party meetings were not disturbed. The Nazi party also started its own paper entitled *Radical Observer*, which awakened the emotions of common people against Communism and the Treaty of Versailles. The extreme nationalists, who could never reconcile themselves to Germany's defeat, firmly supported the ideology of Nazi party.

Rise of Adolf Hitler

The leader of the Nazi party and the Nazi movement in Germany, Adolf Hitler was an Austrian citizen. He began his career as a political agitator after the First World War. Before embarking on a political career in September 1919 at the age of thirty, Adolf Hitler had been an insignificant person in Germany. Hitler had no formal qualifications, and he was an aimless drifter and failed artist before joining the army on the outbreak of war in August 1914. In the army he was not considered worthy of promotion as there was 'a lack of leadership qualities', although his award of the Iron

Cross First Class proved that he was very courageous. He succeeded in gaining and exercising supreme power in Germany during the next 26 years and, in the process, arguably left more impact on world's history in the twentieth century than any other political figure. 'The explanation for this remarkable transformation rested partly on Hitler himself, in his particular personal qualities and gifts, and partly in the situation in which he found himself, with a nation in deep crisis.'

In 1920, Hitler joined the German workers party, the National Socialist German Worker's Party, popularly known as the Nazi Party. Hitler's skills for publicity and as a speaker gradually popularised the Nazi Party. Soon Hitler succeeded in ousting the leader of the party Drexler and assumed supreme power in the party. In 1923, he attempted to overthrow the Bavarian government at a coup but this attempt was unsuccessful. During his trial he made the remark, 'There is no such thing as high treason against the traitors of 1918', which attracted much attention. He was sentenced to five years imprisonment, but was actually released after nine months in prison. During his imprisonment, Hitler wrote the *Mein Kampf* or 'My Struggle' in which he repudiated the parliamentary practice of majority rule and foreshadowed the future programme of Germany's territorial ambitions. According to Hitler there were easy solutions to the complex problems which the people of Germany faced in the 1920s. He blamed Germany's weak government and stated that Germany lost the war because of 'a stab in the back'. He further argued that if pure Germans who were also known as Aryans controlled Germany's destiny, it would return to greatness. Hitler blamed Jews for many of Germany's problems. During the imprisonment of Hitler, the Nazi party was proscribed and its disintegration was set in. The party participated in the elections of 1924, but the number of its supporters fell considerably. In 1925, Hitler rebuilt the Nazi Party, and decided that he had to obtain power by democratic means rather than by force. The Wall Street crashed in 1929 because of the Great Economic

Depression and the subsequent worldwide depression also hit Germany hard. Hitler used this situation and blamed Jews and Communists, using them as scapegoats to gain support for himself. Hitler spoke in a charismatic style that impressed the people of Germany. He blamed outsiders for causing troubles in the nation. Due to his charisma, the popularity of Nazi party started increasing. In the election of 1932, the Nazi Party captured 230 of 608 seats in the Reichstag. However, Hitler was restless to capture power. In 1932, he contested the presidential elections but lost to Hindenburg by a narrow margin. Therefore, during the primary part of the 1930s, the Nazi movement had grown quite powerful in Germany. In early 1933, Hindenburg dismissed his Chancellor Schleicher and he was succeeded by Hitler as the chancellor by forming a coalition with the Nationalists and others. Hitler dissolved the Reichstag and ordered for a fresh election on 5 March 1933. The Nazis, now in power, were able to use all the apparatus/devices of the state, including the press and radio to try to whip up a majority. Senior police officials were replaced with reliable Nazis and the second private army got instructions to show no mercy to the Communists and other enemies of the state. Six days before the ballot, the Reichstag building was burnt, Hitler accused the Communists of arson and bloody revolution. He ordered the arrest of thousands of Communists and Social Democrats and suppressed the campaign activities of the anti-Nazi parties. The Nazi party was able to secure 44 per cent of the votes polled. The Nazis won 288 out of the 647 seats, 36 short of the magic figure for majority. The Nationalists again won 52 seats. This turned out to be the best performance of Nazis in a free election, and they never won an overall majority. However, Hitler managed majority in the Reichstag by putting all the Communist deputies behind the prison. Within hundred days, all opposition was suppressed. In August 1934, Hindenburg died and Hitler himself became the president of Germany and by the Enabling Act of 1933, he also got dictatorial powers.

Factors for the Rise of Nazism in Germany

Adolf Hitler, who was almost unknown until 1929 in or outside Germany, emerged as the unchallenged leader of Germany in 1934. Several factors contributed to the rise of Nazism and Hitler to power in Germany and these were as follows:

Treaty of Versailles: After the First World War, Germany was filled with a sense of discontent, hatred and revenge, as the Treaty of Versailles crippled her physically, exhausted her economically and weakened her emotionally. The humiliating treatment meted out to Germany under the Treaty of Versailles was greatly resented by the German people and army, and they wanted to see Germany rise to the glory which it once enjoyed. No doubt, during the Republican rule, Germany's terrible amount of war indemnity was reduced, reparation was divided into 58 installments and the allies withdrew their armies from the Rhine land, yet the Germans nourished a feeling of resentment against the humiliating and insulting behaviour meted out to them by the Allied power and eagerly looked for an opportunity to avenge the same. These sentiments were fully exploited by Hitler, who in the words of Benms, 'was an adept psychologist, a clever demagogue and a master showman, he was a resourceful agitator, a tireless worker and an able organizer'. He openly encouraged the Germans 'to consign the Treaty of Versailles into the waste-paper basket'. The humiliating treatment was also the major factor, which Hitler exploited to win the popular support. As Langsam said, 'The continuing hostile attitude of France, the quarrel over the Ruhr, the Rhineland occupation, the Saar and the Reparation, the wrangling over disarmament-all these fed the anger of many Germans'.

Growing danger of Communism: The growing strength of the Communists in Germany was also exploited by the Nazis to strengthen their position. After the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the Communist influence in Germany considerably increased. The Communists organised themselves effectively and succeeded in capturing a number of seats in the Reichstag.

Hitler expressed grave concern over these developments and warned the people that the Communists of Germany on getting power shall become the orderlies of the Russian masters and Germany shall be clouded by destructive doctrines of Communists. He impressed on the people that Nazism alone could keep the growing influence of Communism under check. Hitler asserted, 'If the National Socialist Party collapses there will be another ten million Communists in Germany'. By taking an open anti-communist stance, the Nazi Party succeeded in securing the support of the big industrialists and wealthy people who were greatly scared of the Bolshevik ideals. Highlighting this point Schuman says, 'Industrialists and Junkers subsidized the brown shirt Nazi storm troopers hoping to make use of them against Communists, Socialists, the trade unions and other threats, real or imaginary, to prosperity and privilege.'

The economic crisis and growing unemployment: The economic crisis, which confronted Germany in the post First World War period, and the growing unemployment, also considerably contributed to the rise of Nazism in Germany. No doubt as a result of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany was forced to suffer in agricultural production, colonies, foreign investments, merchant marine and foreign trade contracts. However, after 1923, Germany staged a remarkable recovery and made considerable industrial progress. By the end of 1929, as a result of commercial boom, the standard of living of the Germans rose very high. However, this position did not last long and after the middle of 1929, the country witnessed a steep economic decline. The reparation quarrels continued and Germany was not able to secure any foreign loans. The foreign countries raised tariff walls against the German goods. As a result, there was considerable increase in the number of unemployed youth. During the period of Economic Depression following the 1930s, unemployment figures reached an all-time high. In a population of 6,40,00,000 there were around 10 per cent people who were unemployed. Even the condition of the farmers and shopkeepers was

miserable. The Nazi Party fully exploited this and asserted that all it would see that no one walked without a job in Germany. Hitler said that the day the entire German race happened to abide by the Nazi ideology; it would recapture its lost glory, power and prosperity. Fortunately for the Nazis, when they came to power, the world began to recover from the Economic Depression. This greatly appealed to the German people and they extended full support to the Nazi Party.

Resurgence of militant nationalism: The Germans by nature and temperament had weakness for prestige and glory. They could not reconcile with the weak democratic parliamentary system prevailing in the country and still remembered with pride the days when order and discipline prevailed in Reichstag. They felt that only a strong man could restore the past prosperity and prestige of Germany. When they found such a strong man in Hitler, who promised them all glory, they welcomed him with open arms. The Germans felt the need for a strong man to check the growing popularity of Communism in the country, due to swelling ranks of the discontented workers.

Nazi propaganda against Jews and absence of unity among the opposition: The anti-Semitic propaganda carried on by the Nazi Party also contributed to its popularity. The Nazi Party described the Jews as traitors who conspired with the Allies during the war and had the potential to commit treason against Germany. It impressed on the people that their hardship was due to the exploitation by the Jews, who dominated the German economy. It called upon the people to settle the accounts with the Jews. In view of this anti-Semitic propaganda, all the anti-Jew people thronged behind the Nazi Party. Also, the rise of Nazi Party in Germany was facilitated due to a lack of any strong opposition party or unity among the opposition parties. As a result the Nazi Party did not encounter any effective resistance and gained smooth popularity.

Self Assessment Questions

1. Discuss the series of international crises that led to the First World War.
2. Explain the course and impact of the First World War.
3. Describe the various provisions of the Treaty of Versailles.
4. Critically evaluate the causes and course of the Russian Revolution.
5. Explain the February-March Revolution (1917).

Unit II

Second World War – Causes – Course – Consequences – UNO – Aims and Objectives – Organization- Specialized Agencies – Achievements – Post World War Settlements – Cold War.

Objectives

- ❖ Discuss the causes of the Second World War
- ❖ Assess the significance of the Munich Conference, 1938
- ❖ Analyse the growth of nationalism in Indonesia
- ❖ Evaluate the Japanese occupation of Indonesia

SECOND WORLD WAR: CAUSES AND EFFECTS

The Treaty of Versailles was being seen by Germany as a mark of humiliation. When Hitler came to power in Germany, he decided not to honour the treaty that was a source of mortification for Germany. Under Hitler, Germany had become an aggressor and a totalitarian regime. Hitler had his own expansionist plans and he had strengthened his army and navy to carry on his plans. But the Great Britain and France wished to avoid a repetition of World War I, and so adopted the diplomatic policy of appeasement. Under this policy, they allowed Hitler to capture territories. The Treaty of Versailles allowed the demilitarization of Rhineland. Hitler gave excuses of Germany feeling threatened and so sent the German forces to capture Rhineland. He feared the interference of France and Great Britain, and had ordered his forces to retreat if they faced resistance. Self-Instructional Material 165 World War II and Post-War Movements NOTES by France. But both France and Great Britain failed to act and Hitler was encouraged to capture more territories. The Treaty of Versailles

also forbade Germany to capture Austria, but Austria was Hitler's birth country. So, Hitler decided to integrate Germany and Austria. And even here, Neville Chamberlain, the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the Allied Powers adopted the appeasement policy to secure peace, which the League of Nations had clearly been failed to do. Part of this inaction can be attributed to the economic slump that most economies were facing at this time. This inaction by the Allied Powers instilled more confidence in Hitler. The Treaty of Versailles had made provisions for the creation of Czechoslovakia that also comprised the Sudetenland. Sudetenland was mainly occupied by the German population. The Nazi influence had spread even in Sudetenland, and in April 1938, a demand for autonomy came from the Sudeten Nazis. At this point, Chamberlain feared German invasion of Czechoslovakia. So, he issued a warning of Britain's interference to Hitler if Czechoslovakia was captured by him. Hitler ordered his military forces to launch an attack on Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain tried to hold peaceful negotiations with Hitler to prevent the invasion of Czechoslovakia. But Hitler had a new demand—that of absorbing Sudetenland into Germany.

The Czech President was advised by Britain and France to hand over all German territories that had a majority of German population. But this meant a huge loss to Czechoslovakia. Hitler warned that he would occupy Sudetenland and will expel the Czechoslovaks living there. Soon, events turned in a different direction, and a fourpower conference was held on 29 September, comprising Hitler, Chamberlain, Édouard Daladier (the Prime Minister of France) and Benito Mussolini (the Prime Minister of Italy) in Munich. They allowed Hitler to carry on his invasion of Sudetenland, but allowed that an international commission would be established to decide the fate of other disputed areas. Czechoslovakia was denied support from all other countries, and so, it had no alternative but to comply.

A peace treaty was signed between the United Kingdom and Germany. Chamberlain believed that he was able to establish peace now that

the peace treaty had been signed. But he could not be more wrong as a month later, Czechoslovakia ceased to exist, and was divided among Germany, Hungary, Poland and an independent Slovakia. The act of appeasement and capitulation before Germany that unfolded in Munich exposed the vulnerability of the erstwhile European powers like Britain and France, and paved the way for more such acts of aggression. The policy of appeasement helped in temporarily averting the War but it gave Hitler an apparently effortless way of furthering his policy of aggression through the 1930s. In his book *The Origins of the Second World War* (1961) A. J. P. Taylor argues that, 'Appeasement was a logical and realistic policy, but the mistake made by Chamberlain was of abandoning it which brought the war on'.

Propaganda Campaign in the Sudetenland

Hitler's excuse for the opening propaganda campaign in the Sudetenland was that 3.5 million Sudeten Germans under their leader Konrad Henlein, were being discriminated against by the Czech government. It is true that unemployment was higher among the Germans, but apart from that they were probably not being seriously discriminated against. The Nazis organised huge protest demonstrations in the Sudetenland, and clashes occurred between the Czechs and the Germans. The Czech President, Benes, feared that Hitler was stirring up the disturbances so that the German troops could march in to restore order. The British Prime Minister Chamberlain and the French Prime Minister Daladier were afraid that if this happened, war would breakout. They were determined to go to almost any lengths to avoid war and they put tremendous pressure on the Czechs to make concessions to Hitler. Chamberlain flew to Germany twice to confer with Hitler, but no progress could be made.

The Munich Conference, 1938

In a conference held in Munich, Germany, an agreement was negotiated among the major powers of Europe without the presence of

Czechoslovakia. This Agreement was signed by Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Italy. The main aim of the Munich Conference was to discuss about the Sudetenland's future in the face of territorial demands that were made by Adolf Hitler. In other words, it was an Agreement that permitted Nazi Germany's annexation of Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland. Sudetenland comprised areas along the borders of Czechoslovakia, which were mainly inhabited by the ethnic Germans. These areas were of immense strategic importance to Czechoslovakia, as most of its border defenses and its banks were situated or located there. When it seemed that war was inevitable, Chamberlain and Daladier were invited by Hitler to a Fourpower Conference which met in Munich on 29 September 1938. Here a plan that was actually written by the German Foreign Office was produced by Benito Mussolini and it was accepted. According to the plan unveiled at the Conference, Sudetenland was to be handed over to Germany immediately, but Germany along with the other three powers had to assure the rest of Czechoslovakia will remain intact. Neither the Czechs nor the Russians were invited to the Conference. The Czechs were told that if they resisted the Munich decision, they would receive no help from Great Britain or France, even though France had guaranteed the Czech frontiers at Locarno. The state of Czechoslovakia which was not even invited to the Conference felt betrayed by this act of the United Kingdom and France, and the Czechs and Slovaks called the Munich Agreement the 'Munich Dictate'. Sometimes, the phrase Munich Betrayal is also used because the military alliance which Czechoslovakia had with France and the United Kingdom was not honoured. The Government of Czechoslovak realising the hopelessness of fighting the Nazis alone reluctantly agreed to abide by the rules mentioned in the Agreement. According to the Self-Instructional Material 167 World War II and Post-War Movements

Settlement, Germany got the Sudetenland starting 10 October 1938 and also had defacto control over the rest of Czechoslovakia as long as Hitler

agreed to go no further. After some rest on 30 September, Chamberlain went to Hitler and asked him to sign a peace treaty between the United Kingdom and Germany. After this was interpreted to Hitler, he happily agreed. When Chamberlain came back in Britain, he was given a rapturous and joyful welcome by the public who thought war had been averted. Chamberlain himself remarked, 'I believe it is peace for our time'. Though the British, the French, the Nazi military and the German diplomatic leadership were pleased, Hitler was furious. He felt as if he was forced into acting like a bourgeois politician by his diplomats and generals. He shouted furiously soon after the meeting with Chamberlain and said, 'Gentlemen, this has been my first international conference and I can assure you that it will be my last'. However, everybody was not so enthusiastic like Britain and France. Churchill called Munich 'a total and unmitigated defeat'. Duff Cooper, the First Lord of the Admiralty, resigned from the Cabinet, saying that 'Hitler could not be trusted to keep the agreement'. Later, it was proved that they were right.

The German Occupation of Czechoslovakia, 1939

As a result of the Munich Agreement, Czechoslovakia was crippled by the loss of 70 per cent of its heavy industry and almost all of her fortifications to Germany. Slovakia began to demand semi-independence and it looked as if the country was about to fall apart. Hitler pressurised the Czechoslovakian President, Hacha, into requesting Germany for help to restore order. Consequently in March 1939 Germany troops occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia. Britain and France protested but as usual took no action. Chamberlain said the guarantee of the Czechoslovakian frontier given at Munich did not apply, because technically the country had not been invaded rather Germany troops had entered by invitation. However, the German action caused a great rush of criticism. Even for the first time the appeasers were unable to justify what Hitler had done because he had broken his promise and seized non-Germany territory. Even Czechoslovakia felt this

was going too far and for that it hardened its position. After taking over the Lithuanian port of Memel, Hitler turned his attention to Poland.

Hitler's Demand for the Return of Danzig

The German resented the loss of Danzig and the Polish Corridor at Versailles, and now that Czechoslovakia was safely out of the way and Polish neutrality was no longer necessary. In April 1939 Hitler demanded the return of Danzig and a road and railway across the Corridor, linking East Prussia with the rest of Germany. This demand was not unreasonable, since Danzig was mainly German speaking. However, after the seizure of Czechoslovakia the Poles were convinced that Germany demands were only the preliminary to an invasion. Already strengthened by the British assurance of help in the event of any action which threatened Polish independence the Foreign Minister, Colonel Beck rejected the German demands and refused to attend a conference. The British pressure to surrender Danzig had no impact on the Poles. The only way to save Poland could have happened through a British alliance with Russia but the British response was slow and they were hesitant in their negotiations for an alliance, which allowed Hitler to reach out first and sign a non-aggression pact with the USSR. It was also agreed to divide up Poland between Germany and the USSR. Hitler was convinced now that with the Russian neutrality, Britain and France would not risk intervention. When the British ratified their guarantee to Poland, Hitler took it as a bluff. When the Poles still refused to negotiate, a full-scale German invasion began on 1 September 1939. Even on this situation the British Prime Minister Chamberlain had still not completely thrown off appeasement and suggested that if Germany troops were withdrawn, a conference could be held, but Germany preferred to remain silent on this. Only when pressure mounted on him in the parliament and in the country Chamberlain did send an ultimatum to Germany. When this expired on 3 September, Britain declared war with Germany. Soon afterwards, France also declared war.

Causes of the Second World War

The Second World War which began in 1939 lasted for 6 years. Major powers of Europe were involved in this War, battles were staged in all corners of the world and 'it was the most widespread war in history, with more than 100 million people engaged in the military exercise that ensued'. In a state of total war, the major participant countries placed their entire economic, industrial, and scientific capabilities and abilities at the service of the war effort, and this erased the distinction between the civilian and military resources. This War was marked by many significant events involving the mass death of civilians, which included the holocaust and the only use of nuclear weapons in warfare. The War resulted in 50 million to over 70 million fatalities. Because of these deaths, the Second World War is considered as the deadliest conflict in all of human history. Although the immediate cause for the outbreak of the Second World War was the invasion of Poland by Germany but the real causes were much deeper and diverse in nature.

The Follies of Victors in the First World War

The Second World War origins were contained in the First World War itself. At the end of the First World War, many of the disputes were outstanding which still needed to be settled. When Germany surrendered, the Germans felt a huge amount of resentment for other countries interfering in their matters. The ill-feeling and divide between Germany and other countries was so massive that Germany was not even invited to participate in the peace treaties that were put in place at the end of the War. The Treaty of Versailles that specifically dealt with Germany's future left no room for discussion on the part of the Germans. The consequence was that Germany was left bitter and full of hatred for those who had sought to demean it as a race-hatred that would be exploited by Hitler in the 1930s during his rise to power. 'Hitler stood under the banner of revenge against other countries for Germany's defeat. His desire for power was justified by claims that he wanted

to get rid of the government that surrendered in the First World War, and replace it with his own organization, the National Socialist German Workers' Party, which became known as the Nazi party, so that he could have full control of the European powers that had subjugated Germany after 1918.' Thus, it is justified to conclude that the First World War was the major cause of the Second World War as it was the first in the chain of events that finally led to the declaration of war in 1939.

Failure of the Policy of Appeasement

The policy of appeasement adopted by Great Britain and France towards the Dictatorial States also contributed largely to the outbreak of Second World War. During the 1930s, many protagonists of appeasement policy and politicians in both Britain and France came to see that the terms of the Treaty of Versailles had placed restrictions on Germany that were unfair and the dictators had a real cause of grievance. Actions of Hitler were seen as understandable and justifiable. In 1934, when Germany began rearming, many politicians felt and believed that Germany had a right to rearm in order to protect itself. It was also argued or maintained that a stronger Germany would prevent the spread of Communism to the West.

In 1936, Hitler argued that as France had signed a new treaty with Russia, Germany was under threat from both France and Germany, and it was important for Germany to provide security for troops stationed in the Rhineland. France was not strong enough to fight Germany without the help from British and Britain was unwilling to go to war at this point. Furthermore, many people believed that since Rhineland was a part of Germany it was reasonable that the German troops should be stationed there. Chamberlain became the prime minister of Britain in May 1937. According to him the Treaty of Versailles had treated Germany badly and that there were many issues associated with the Treaty that needed to be corrected. According to Chamberlain giving in to Hitler's demands would prevent another war. This policy that was adopted by Chamberlain's government was known as the

Policy of Appeasement. The most notable example of appeasement was the Munich Agreement of September 1938. The Munich Agreement was signed by the leaders of Germany, Britain, France and Italy, and it was agreed that the Sudetenland would be returned to Germany and that Germany would make no further territorial claims. The Government of Czech was not invited to the Conference and it protested about the Sudetenland loss. They felt that both Britain and France with whom alliances had been made, had betrayed them. But, the Munich Agreement was generally viewed as a triumph and an excellent way of securing peace through negotiation rather than war. In March 1939, when Hitler invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia, the terms of the Munich Agreement were broken by Hitler. Although it was realised that the Policy of Appeasement did not work out, according to his statement Chamberlain was still not willing to take the country to war, 'over a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing'. Instead, he made a guarantee to come to Poland's help if it was invaded by Hitler. According to the critics of the Policy, this Policy was based on wrong assumptions and should have been disposed of as soon as the designs of Axis powers became clear. It was a folly to have persisted or continued with this Policy after 1937 when the designs of Nazi Germany became clear. However, according to the defenders of the Policy of Appeasement the Policy was necessary and important to postpone the war to gain time for the Western powers to grid themselves for the expected struggle. By perusing this Policy after 1937, Chamberlain played for time and made available the Western powers the much needed time for preparing for the struggle against the Fascist power. This no doubt gave the Western powers the time to increase the military strength. But, at the same time Germany and other Axis powers were not sitting idle. The time was more in favour of the Axis powers rather than the Allies as Germany was able to increase the number and strength of its army relatively in a more effective way. According to some historians if war had started in 1938 it was almost certain that Germany would have been

quickly defeated. By their inaction countries like Great Britain and France created a situation under which the democracies had to go to war under much worse or bad conditions. Thus, the Second World War was the result of the follies of the victors, rise of Fascism in Italy, Japanese imperialism, collapse of collective security, failure of disarmament, ideological conflict and the Policy of the Appeasement persuaded by Great Britain and France. Above all the Second World War was a 'war of revenge initiated by Germany and definitely the growing ambitiousness of Germany to become the greatest world power'. In 1937, although Japan was already at war with the Republic of China, the Second World War is generally said to have begun on 1 September 1939, when Poland was invaded by Germany, without a declaration of war. Great Britain and France declared war on Germany on 3 September and all the members of the Commonwealth of Nations, except Ireland, quickly followed suit.

UNO – Aims and Objectives

The **United Nations Organization (UNO)** was established on **24 October 1945** after World War II to maintain international peace and security. It is the largest international organization in the world, headquartered in **New York**.

Aims of the UNO

- ❖ **To maintain international peace and security** by preventing wars and resolving conflicts peacefully.
- ❖ **To promote friendly relations among nations** based on respect for equal rights and self-determination.
- ❖ **To achieve international cooperation** in solving economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian problems.
- ❖ **To protect human rights and fundamental freedoms** for all people regardless of race, religion, sex, or language.

- ❖ **To act as a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations**, helping countries work together for common goals.

Objectives of the UNO

- ❖ **Peaceful Settlement of Disputes:** Through negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and adjudication.
- ❖ **Collective Security:** Taking joint action against aggressors to prevent wars.
- ❖ **Disarmament:** Encouraging reduction of weapons and preventing nuclear proliferation.
- ❖ **Economic Development:** Supporting developing nations through aid, trade, and financial assistance.
- ❖ **Social Progress:** Improving education, health, labour conditions, and living standards.
- ❖ **Humanitarian Assistance:** Providing help during natural disasters, refugee crises, and famine.
- ❖ **Protection of the Environment:** Addressing climate change and promoting sustainable development.
- ❖ **Promotion of International Law:** Developing and respecting rules that guide nations' behaviour.

Specialized Agencies of the UNO

Specialized Agencies are **independent international organizations** linked with the United Nations through agreements. They work in specific fields such as health, education, labour, economy, agriculture, and culture. They coordinate their work with the UNO through the **ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council)**.

Major Specialized Agencies of the UNO

1. ILO – International Labour Organization (1919)

- Improves working conditions.
- Promotes labour rights and social justice.

2. FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization (1945)

- Works to eliminate hunger.
- Improves agriculture, forestry, and food production.

3. WHO – World Health Organization (1948)

- Responsible for international public health.
- Controls diseases and promotes global health standards.

4. UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (1945)

- Promotes education, science, culture, and communication.
- Protects world heritage sites.

5. IMF – International Monetary Fund (1944)

- Ensures global financial stability.
- Gives loans to countries facing economic crises.

6. World Bank Group (IBRD & IDA) (1944)

- Provides long-term loans for development projects.
- Works to reduce poverty.

7. ICAO – International Civil Aviation Organization (1944)

- Sets global aviation safety and standards.
- Regulates air transport.

8. ITU – International Telecommunication Union (1865)

- Manages global telecommunication networks and standards.
- Allocates radio frequencies.

9. WMO – World Meteorological Organization (1950)

- Deals with weather, climate, and water resources.
- Provides global forecasts and disaster warnings.

10. UPU – Universal Postal Union (1874)

- Ensures smooth international postal services.
- Standardizes international mail exchange.

11. IFAD – International Fund for Agricultural Development (1977)

- Reduces rural poverty.
- Supports agriculture and rural development.

12. UNIDO – United Nations Industrial Development Organization (1966)

- Promotes industrial development in developing nations.

13. IAEA – International Atomic Energy Agency (1957)

- Promotes peaceful use of nuclear energy.
- Prevents nuclear weapons proliferation.

14. WTO (*Connected with UN but not formally a specialized agency*)

- Deals with global trade rules.

Cold War

What is Cold War?

The Cold War was a period (1945-1991) of geopolitical tension between the Soviet Union and its satellite states (the Eastern European countries), and the United States with its allies (the Western European countries) after World War II. Post World War II, the world got divided into two power blocs dominated by two superpowers viz. the Soviet Union and the US. The two superpowers were primarily engaged in an ideological war between the capitalist USA and the communist Soviet Union. The term "Cold" is used because there was no large-scale fighting directly between the two sides.

Note: The Cold War was between Allied countries (UK, France etc. who were led by the US) and Soviet Union. The Soviet Union, officially known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). It is the world's first Communist state that was established in 1922.

Reasons of Cold War During the World War Allied countries (US, UK and France) and Soviet Union fought together against the Axis powers (Nazi Germany, Japan, Austria). However, this wartime alliance could not workout after World War II, due to multiple factors.

Potsdam conference The Potsdam conference was held at Berlin in 1945 among US, UK and Soviet Union to discuss : Immediate administration of defeated Germany. Demarcation of boundary of Poland. Occupation of Austria. Role of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe. Soviet Union wanted some portion of Poland (bordering Soviet Union) to be maintained as a buffer zone. However, the USA and UK didn't agree to this

demand. Also, the USA did not inform the Soviet Union about the exact nature of the atomic bomb, dropped on Japan. This created suspicion in Soviet Union about the intentions of western countries, embittering of the alliance. This created suspicion in the Soviet leadership.

Truman's Doctrine

Truman Doctrine was announced on March 12, 1947, by US President Harry S. Truman. 2/8 The Truman Doctrine was a US policy to stop the Soviet Union's communist and imperialist endeavors, through various ways like providing economic aid to other countries. For example, US appropriated financial aid to support the economies and militaries of Greece and Turkey. Historians believe that the announcement of this doctrine marked the official declaration of the Cold War. Iron Curtain Iron Curtain is the political, military, and ideological barrier erected by the Soviet Union after World War II to seal off itself and its dependent eastern and central European allies from open contact with the West and other noncommunist areas. On the east side of the Iron Curtain were the countries that were connected to or influenced by the Soviet Union, while on the west side were the countries that were allies of the US, UK or nominally neutral.

Berlin Blockade 1948

As the tension between Soviet Union and Allied countries grew, Soviet Union applied Berlin Blockade in 1948. The Berlin Blockade was an attempt by the Soviet Union to limit the ability of Allied countries to travel to their sectors of Berlin.

Further, on August 13, 1961, the Communist government of the German Democratic Republic began to build a barbed wire and concrete wall (Berlin Wall) between East and West Berlin. It primarily served the objective of stemming mass emigration from East Berlin to West Berlin.

Except under special circumstances, travelers from East and West Berlin were rarely allowed across the border. This Berlin Wall served as a symbol of the Cold War (US and Soviet Union), until its fall in 1989.

History of the Berlin wall

Allied countries (US, UK, France) and Soviet Union together defeated Nazi Germany in World War II in 1945, after which Yalta and Potsdam conferences (1945) were held between Soviet Union and Allied countries to decide the fate of Germany's territories.

At the conference, Germany was to be divided into zones under Russian, American, British and French influence.

The eastern part of the country went to the Soviet Union, while the western part went to the United States, Great Britain and France. Berlin, as the capital, was to be likewise split. However, Berlin happened to be in the middle of the Russian zone.

The three Allied zones got merged and became the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) or West Germany while the former Soviet occupation zone became the German Democratic Republic (GDR) or East Germany.

The division of Berlin was the main bone of contention between USSR and Allied countries, as West Berlin became an island within Communist East Germany

The Marshall Plan vs The Cominform

The Marshall Plan In 1947, American Secretary of State George Marshall, unveiled European Recovery Programme (ERP), which offered economic and financial help wherever it was needed. One of the aims of the

ERP was to promote the economic recovery of Europe. However, this was an economic extension of the Truman Doctrine.

The Cominform

The Soviet Union denounced the whole idea of Marshall Plan as 'dollar imperialism'. Therefore, the Cominform (the Communist Information Bureau) - was launched in 1947, as the Soviet response to the Marshall Plan. It was an organization to draw together mainly Eastern Europe countries.

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)

The Berlin blockade showed the West's military unreadiness and frightened them into making definite preparations. Therefore, in 1948, mainly the countries of western Europe signed the Brussels Defence Treaty, promising military collaboration in case of war. Later on Brussels Defence Treaty was joined by the USA, Canada, Portugal, Denmark, Iceland, Italy and Norway. This led to the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in April 1949. NATO countries agreed to regard an attack on any one of them as an attack on all of them, and placing their defence forces under a joint command

Warsaw Pact

The Warsaw Pact (1955) was signed between Russia and her satellite states shortly after West Germany was admitted to NATO. The Pact was a mutual defense agreement, which the Western countries perceived as a reaction against West Germany's membership of NATO.

Space Race

Space exploration served as another dramatic arena for Cold War competition. In 1957, Soviet Union launched Sputnik I, the world's first artificial satellite and the first man-made object to be placed into the Earth's orbit. In 1958, the U.S. launched its own satellite called Explorer I. However, this space race was won by the US, when it successfully landed, the first man (Neil Armstrong) on the surface of the moon in 1969.

Arms Race

The containment strategy of US provided the rationale for an unprecedented arms buildup in the United States, reciprocated by Soviet Union. Development of nuclear weapons took place on a massive scale and the world entered into the age of nuclear age.

The Cuban Missiles Crisis, 1962

The Cuba got involved in the Cold War when US broke off its diplomatic relations with Cuba in 1961, and Soviet Union increased their economic aid to Cuba. In 1961, the USA planned Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, intending to overthrow the head of Cuban state (Fidel Castro), who was backed by the Soviet Union . However, the operation failed. Fidel Castro then appealed to the Soviet Union for military help, to which Soviet Union decided to set up a nuclear missile launchers in Cuba aimed at the USA. 6/8 Cuban Missile Crisis, brought two superpowers on the brink of a nuclear war. However, the crisis was averted diplomatically.

End of the Cold War

In 1991, Soviet Union collapsed due to multiple factors which marked the end of the Cold War, as one of the superpowers was weakened.

Reasons of the collapse of the Soviet Union

Military reasons

The space race and the arms race drained a considerable proportion of Soviet Union's resources for military needs.

Policies of Mikhail Gorbachev

In order to kick start moribund Soviet economy, Gorbachev instituted the policies of glasnost (“openness”) and perestroika (“restructuring”).

Glasnost was intended for liberalization of the political landscape. Perestroika intended to introduce quasi free market policies in place of government-run industries.

It allowed more independent actions from various ministries and introduced many market-like reforms.

Rather than sparking a renaissance in Communist thought, these steps opened the floodgates to criticism of the entire Soviet apparatus. The state lost control of both the media and the public sphere, and democratic reform movements gained steam throughout the Soviet Union.

Also, there was growing disenchantment in the public due to falling economy, poverty, unemployment, etc. This made the people of the Soviet Union attracted to western ideology and way of life.

Afghanistan War The Soviet-Afghan (1979-89) was another key factor in the breakup of the Soviet Union, as it drained the economic and military resources of Soviet Union.

Self-Assessment questions

1. Explain the major causes of the Second World War. How did the failures of the League of Nations contribute to it?
2. Describe the course of the Second World War with reference to major theatres (Europe, Africa, and Asia) and important turning points.
3. Discuss the aims and objectives of the United Nations Organization (UNO). How does the UNO differ from the League of Nations?
4. Evaluate the role of specialized agencies of the UNO (like WHO, UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO) in promoting international peace and development.
5. What were the major consequences of the Second World War? Explain how the post-war settlements led to the beginning of the Cold War.

Unit III

Anti - Colonial Struggles - Decolonization Process in Asian and African countries - Indonesia - Indo-China - Philippines - West Asia & Africa.

Objectives

- ❖ To understand the causes and nature of anti-colonial struggles in Asia and Africa.
- ❖ To analyse the process of decolonization after the Second World War.
- ❖ To evaluate the impact of nationalism on the emergence of independent states.

Decolonization, Meaning, Types, Models, Scope

Decolonization began post World War II, with varying models and types across Asia, Africa, and the Americas. The French and British took different approaches to liberating their colonies. Decolonisation refers to the process by which a colony or a region that was previously under the political and economic control of a foreign power gains independence and sovereignty. It involves breaking from colonial rule and reclaiming the right to self-governance and self-determination.

Decolonization gained momentum in the mid-20th century, particularly after World War II when the anti-colonial movements and struggles for independence became more widespread....

When did the process of decolonisation begin?

During the interwar period (1919-1939) the colonies questioned the right of the coloniser to colonise and oppress the people of the third world.

It was after the end of World War II and the establishment of the United Nations that the process of decolonisation began when several Asian, African and Pacific countries emerged as sovereign independent countries.

What is decolonisation?

The term is used to refer to a chronological period, the post-World War II years, when political upheavals led to the establishment of nearly a hundred new nation-states across Asia, Africa and the Pacific. Decolonization encompasses more than just terminating direct political control; it also pertains to the cessation of all forms of colonialism.

Types of decolonisation

There are broadly four types of decolonisation:

- ❖ Self-government for white settler colonies as it happened in Canada and Australia
- ❖ A formal end to the empire followed by independent rule as in India
- ❖ Formal empire replaced by informal empire or neo-colonialism as in Latin America
- ❖ A mere change of imperial masters — in Indo-China when the French reluctantly left, the US moved in..

Models of decolonisation

- ❖ The specific methods used by different countries to achieve independence varied depending on the circumstances of each country.
- ❖ Through constitutional procedures and reforms: There were those colonies which became independent through constitutional procedures and reforms.

- ❖ For example India, Ghana, and Kenya.
- ❖ Armed liberation struggles: There were some which achieved independence through armed liberation struggles.
- ❖ For example Algeria, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe
- ❖ Intervention of UNO: Some attained independence due to international pressures and the intervention of organisations such as the League of Nations and the United Nations.
- ❖ For example Indonesia, Congo, Namibia.

The process of decolonisation

The process of decolonisation refers to the dismantling of colonial empires and the granting of independence to former colonies. While the specific process varied from colony to colony, some common elements and strategies were involved. The process of decolonisation coincided with the new Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States. It was often affected by superpower competition and had a definite impact on the evolution of that competition.

Emergence of Nationalist Movements: Nationalist sentiments began to grow in many colonised regions as local populations became more aware of their cultural identity, economic exploitation, and the desire for self-governance. Intellectuals, political leaders, and grassroots organisations played crucial roles in mobilising these movements.

Political Mobilisation: Nationalist leaders and organisations rallied support among the local population through various means, such as political parties, trade unions, student organisations, and armed resistance movements. They sought to unite people around a common national identity and articulate their grievances against colonial rule.

Resistance and Protests: Colonised populations engaged in a range of resistance activities, including peaceful protests, civil disobedience, strikes, boycotts, and demonstrations. These acts of resistance aimed to challenge colonial authority, demand political rights, and highlight the injustices of colonial rule.

International Support: The decolonisation process was influenced by changing international dynamics and the rise of anti-colonial sentiment worldwide. The United Nations, established in 1945, played a significant role in promoting self-determination and condemning colonialism.

Negotiations and Reforms: In some cases, colonial powers recognised the growing demand for independence and initiated negotiations with nationalist leaders. Reforms and concessions were sometimes granted, such as limited self-government or increased political representation.

Independence and Transfer of Power: Ultimately, colonial powers had to decide to grant independence or face prolonged conflicts. The process of transferring power involved negotiations, constitutional arrangements, and the establishment of new governments. Independence was often followed by the drafting of new constitutions, the formation of national institutions, and the transition to self-rule.

After the end of the Second World War, numerous regions remained under European colonial dominion. However, in the subsequent two decades, many Asian and African colonies successfully gained their independence, becoming sovereign nations. Despite this newfound freedom, these countries faced substantial challenges such as poverty, limited resources, and the lingering effects of prolonged colonial rule, which hindered their economic and societal progress....

The Decolonisation of Asia

The peoples of South-East Asia who were colonized took the lead in demanding the departure of Europeans and asserting their right to independence.

Historical Background: The decolonisation process in Asia was influenced by several factors, including the weakening of colonial powers after World War II, the rise of nationalist movements, and the spread of anti-colonial ideologies.

Indian Independence Movement: The Indian independence movement led by figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru played a pivotal role in inspiring and mobilising nationalist movements across Asia. India's independence in 1947 from British colonial rule became a catalyst for other Asian countries seeking self-determination.

Southeast Asia: After India, Indonesia gained independence from Dutch colonial rule in 1949, while Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia freed themselves from French colonial control in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Decolonisation of Africa

This was a much more protracted process than the decolonisation of India. It involved the independence of many different countries, and it was often accompanied by violence.

There were three main waves of decolonisation in Africa:

- ❖ First: Late 1940s and early 1950s, with the independence of Ghana, Nigeria, and the Gold Coast.
- ❖ Second: The mid-1950s and early 1960s, with the independence of Kenya, Tanzania, and Zambia.
- ❖ Third: The late 1960s and early 1970s, with the independence of Mozambique, Angola, and Zimbabwe.

The Decolonisation of the Americas

American Revolutionary War: The American Revolutionary War, fought between 1775 and 1783, marked a significant event in the decolonisation of the Americas.

Latin American Wars of Independence: In the early 19th century, independence movements swept across Latin America. Influenced by the ideals of the American and French Revolutions

Canadian Confederation: The process of decolonization in Canada was different from other parts of the Americas. The British colonies of Canada gradually achieved self-government and formed a confederation in 1867, leading to the creation of the Dominion of Canada. While Canada gained increasing autonomy, it remained part of the British Empire until it acquired full legal independence in 1982.

Decolonization in Indonesia

- Indonesia was colonized by the **Dutch** for more than 300 years (Dutch East Indies).
- Nationalism grew in the early 20th century with organizations like **Budi Utomo (1908)** and **Sarekat Islam**.
- **Sukarno** and **Mohammad Hatta** emerged as leading nationalist leaders.
- During **World War II**, Japan occupied Indonesia (1942-45), weakening Dutch control.
- After Japan's surrender, **Sukarno declared independence on 17 August 1945**.
- The Dutch attempted to regain control → led to Indonesian National Revolution (1945-49).

- International pressure (especially from the UN and USA) forced the Dutch to negotiate.
- **The Hague Agreement (1949)** recognised Indonesia's sovereignty.
- Sukarno became the first president, marking successful decolonization.

2. Decolonization in Indo-China (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia)

Indo-China was under **French colonial rule**.

Vietnam

- Nationalism rose under **Ho Chi Minh**, founder of the **Viet Minh (1941)**.
- Japan occupied Vietnam during WWII; after Japan's defeat, Ho Chi Minh declared **independence on 2 September 1945**.
- France tried to return → resulted in the **First Indo-China War (1946-54)**.
- **Dien Bien Phu (1954)**: Vietnamese victory forced France to withdraw.
- **Geneva Agreement (1954)** divided Vietnam into North (communist) and South (non-communist).
- Later led to the **Vietnam War** but French colonial rule ended in 1954.

Laos

- Under French rule.
- The **Lao Issara movement** demanded freedom.
- Gained independence legally through the **Geneva Agreement of 1954**.

Cambodia

- Japanese occupation weakened French power.
- King **Sihanouk** led peaceful negotiation with France.
- Gained complete independence in **1953**.

3. Decolonization in the Philippines

- Originally a **Spanish colony**.
- After the **Spanish-American War (1898)**, the Philippines became a colony of the **United States**.
- Filipino leaders like **Emilio Aguinaldo** fought against both Spanish and American rule.
- Gradual political reforms under US administration:
 - **Philippine Assembly (1907)**
 - **Tydings-McDuffie Act (1934)** establishing the **Philippine Commonwealth**
- During WWII, Japan occupied the Philippines (1942-45).
- After Japan's defeat, the US recognized Philippine independence on **4 July 1946**.
- **Manuel Roxas** became the first president of the independent Philippines.

Decolonization of Africa - Background, External & Internal Causes, Timeline, Challenges

Decolonization of Africa is the process by which African colonies freed themselves from colonial empires and assimilated into the new “world order.” During the Cold War, Africa underwent decolonization from the mid-1950s to 1975. Between 1945 and 1960, more than three dozen new

states in Asia and Africa achieved autonomy from their European colonial rulers. As colonial governments transformed into independent states, the continent experienced dramatic regime changes.

About Decolonization of Africa

Decolonization, the opposite of colonization, is the process by which a colony acquires its independence from a colonial power. Decolonization could be accomplished through independence, fusion with the governing power or another state, or creating a “free association” status.

The decolonization of Africa took place from the mid-to-late 1950s to 1975 during the Cold War. The changes during the process were sudden and radical as the colonies transitioned towards African independence, at times marred by political violence. Harold MacMillan, the British Prime Minister, helped begin decolonization. The transition from colonies to independent nations was abrupt and radical, occasionally marred by political violence. World War II was one of the main reasons for the decolonization of Africa. Many European nations needed help to keep up with their possessions in Africa after the war. Due to this, nationalists could negotiate the decolonization of Africa quickly and with few casualties. The wealth and political support required to put down uprisings needed to be improved in the European nations.

Historical Background of Decolonization of Africa

- European countries initially focused on coastal trading colonies in Africa, except for the British and the Dutch, who established settlements in South Africa.
- By 1880, less than 5% of Africa was under European rule, but the "Scramble for Africa" changed the situation within 20 years.

- Except for Liberia and Ethiopia, all of Africa was occupied by seven European nations: Belgium, Britain, France, Portugal, Spain, Germany, and Italy.
- In 1884, these colonial powers attended the Berlin Conference, where they divided Africa among themselves without considering African people, cultures, or natural boundaries.
- European armies easily overpowered African resistance, leading to widespread colonization.
- After World War II, European nations struggled to control their African possessions.
- Decolonization took place in Africa from the mid-1950s to 1975.

Causes of the Decolonization of Africa

There were many external and internal reasons for the Decolonization of Africa, like world war II, the emergence of new superpowers, the independence of Asian nations, the emergence of enlightened leaders in Africa, etc. Some of the external and internal causes are:

External causes

- World War II weakened European powers, making them unable to maintain their empires.
- The United States and the Soviet Union, the strongest, victorious nations, opposed colonialism.
- The United Nations and other international organizations supported decolonization.
- Thinkers like Montesquieu and Voltaire promoted equality and social awareness, which helped to fuel decolonization movements.
- Asia's social, political, and economic development influenced decolonization in Africa.

- After African independence, India supported decolonization in West Africa.
- The United States, which emerged as a world power after World War II, supported decolonization to gain access to markets and investment opportunities.

Internal causes

- After World War II, African nationalism emerged in many West African countries. This was due to a number of factors, including:
- The spread of Western education led to the rise of an educated elite who were aware of their rights and who were able to organize and mobilize people.
- The economic exploitation of Africa by colonial powers led to widespread poverty and resentment.
- The political oppression of Africans by colonial powers, which denied them basic rights and freedoms.
- African nationalists formed political parties, social welfare organizations, and labor unions to fight for independence. They also organized boycotts, strikes, and protests.
- The first major victory for African nationalism came in Ghana in 1957 when the country gained independence. This victory inspired other African countries to fight for their independence.
- By the early 1960s, most of Africa had gained independence. This was a major turning point in African history, and it profoundly impacted the continent's political, economic, and social development.

Scramble for Africa Led to Decolonization

- The colonization of Africa was part of a worldwide European project that spanned all continents. The impact of European colonialism and dominance on the world was profound.
- Historians claim that the European powers' hurried imperial conquest of the African continent began with King Leopold II of Belgium. He enlisted European forces to win respect in Belgium.
- Between 1881 and 1914, the Scramble for Africa occurred under New Imperialism. The Berlin Conference and British 'New' Imperialism, often known as the "Congo Conference," began. At the invitation of Portugal, German Chancellor Otto von Bismark convened a meeting of the world's leading Western nations in 1884. The meeting was to discuss and resolve issues about African dominance.
- The countries that are represented then include the following:
 - Austria-Hungary,
 - Belgium,
 - Denmark,
 - France,
 - Germany,
 - Great Britain,
 - Italy,
 - the Netherlands,
 - Portugal,
 - Russia,
 - Spain,
 - Sweden-Norway (united from 1814-1905),
 - Turkey, and
 - the United States of America.

Challenges Faced by Africa During Decolonization

Some of the challenges faced by African countries because of decolonization were:

- The colonisers' enormous military power brought many African nations together. But after the decolonization, they massacred one another inside these imposed artificial boundaries. This was because of their lack of shared cultural history and tribal hostility. The worst genocides occurred in Rwanda, Burundi, Congo (Zaire), and Nigeria.
- The majority of African nations were resource-rich. Hence, the two major blocs didn't want more states slipping into the sphere of their rival power. The result was protracted civil wars. For instance, the war between Angola, Uganda, Burundi, etc.
- Colonizers used African countries as sources of raw materials. As a result, these countries were vulnerable to Neo-Colonialism due to their lack of industries and subpar agriculture.
- The majority of their economies depended solely on the export of one or two commodities. Political unrest and civil wars erupted in countries as a result of falling global prices.
- Most colonial nations forbade Africans from receiving an education. As a result, there was a lack of wise leadership and faith in democratic processes. Due to this, most nations experienced civil war and corruption shortly after gaining independence.
- African nations are doomed by the devastating famines of the 1980s and the ongoing famines brought on by climate change. These occurrences ultimately destroy economies and destabilise governments. The spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic also posed a serious threat to these nations throughout the 1990s.
- Disasters brought on by climate change have been reported to affect third-world nations over the past 20 years, particularly those in Africa.

- The decolonization process led to ethnic conflict in some nations. This could be seen in nations where a sizable white settler population existed. They were evicted from their estates forcibly, as happened in Zimbabwe. This resulted in a general decline in productivity and a financial crisis.

Independence of Africa

- Many European nations found it challenging to maintain their possessions in Africa after World War II.
- Some African nations gained independence peacefully during the period leading up to independence. However, in other instances, they had to use force to reclaim their sovereign rights.
- French rule was reinstated after the war. The occupation of French North African colonies by British and American forces brought with it its own set of issues. In 1956, Morocco and Tunisia gained their independence.
- In order to prevent civil war at home, the French President granted Algeria full independence in 1962. This was after eight years of bloody fighting between:
 - French settlers,
 - Algerian nationalists,
 - Islamic insurgents, and
 - the French Army.
- The former colonies of Italy were incorporated into the UN in 1951, Libya became a new country, and Somalia in 1960.
- Following the brutal Mau-Mau uprising in Kenya, Malawi and Zambia gained their independence in 1964. They obtained independence along with Tanganyika and Kenya.
- France left its possessions in tropical Africa between 1958 and 1960, and Belgium left the Congo in 1960.

- When Britain granted Zimbabwe its independence in 1980, it was the last country to give up its colonial possessions.

Also, check out the [Global Slavery Index for UPSC](#) here.

Aftermath of Decolonization of Africa

Africa gained independence in the early 1980s, but civil wars broke out due to problematic borders and hostile tribes within nations. Colonial policies, political instability, and religious/tribal conflicts worsened the situation, leading to poverty and oppression. European settlers' desire for control caused problems in Algeria, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. South Africa experienced apartheid from 1948 to 1990, denying voting rights to locals. After apartheid's end, Nelson Mandela became South Africa's first black President in 1994.

The political dynamics of the Cold War era further contributed to the disunity of African states. This resulted in secession movements like Sudan and Eritrea. Unfortunately, violence still persists in many African nations, causing immense suffering for their populations.

Self-Assessment Questions

- 1) Describe the major factors that led to the rise of anti-colonial movements in Asia and Africa during the 20th century.
- 2) Explain the role of nationalist leaders in the decolonization process of Indonesia. How did the Japanese occupation influence Indonesia's independence?
- 3) Discuss the causes, course, and outcome of the anti-colonial struggle in Indo-China. How did Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh shape the movement?
- 4) Assess the nature of the anti-colonial movement in the Philippines. What were the contributions of the Filipino people in resisting Spanish, American, and Japanese domination?
- 5) Examine how the Second World War accelerated the decolonization process in West Asia and Africa. Provide examples of specific countries and their struggles.

Unit IV

Chinese Revolution of 1949 - US and Latin America in the Cold War Era - Arab Nationalism and Israel - Palestinian Wars

Objectives

- ❖ To study the causes and course of the Chinese Revolution of 1949.
- ❖ To understand the role of Mao Zedong and the Communist Party of China.
- ❖ To analyse the national and international impact of the Chinese Revolution.

Chinese history is vast and complex, stretching back thousands of years. It is traditionally divided into a series of dynasties, each of which marks a period during which a particular family ruled the empire. Read here to learn more. China is a nation with ancient culture and heritage. Unlike many other nations, almost whole of China was under a single authority for many centuries. Several dynasties ruled China like Xia, Shang, Han, Tang, etc. The last dynasty that ruled China was the **Qing Dynasty (also known as the Manchu Dynasty)**.

The Manchu Dynasty ruled China from the period 1644 to 1912. After that, there were intermittent times of dictatorship, a civil war between Kuomintang and the Communist Party, before the Communist Party established the People's Republic of China in 1949. Let's trace the major events in China's history.

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You are here: [Home](#) / [World History Notes](#) / Chinese History: Chinese Revolution, Civil War and Communist Revolution

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The major black marks on the PRC after 1949 are the mass killings that happened during the **Cultural Revolution** (1966-1976) and the **Tiananmen Square Protests**.

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Tiananmen Square protests of 1989

The **Tiananmen Square protests of 1989**, commonly known as the **June Fourth Incident** or **'89 Democracy Movement** were student-led popular demonstrations in Beijing which took place in the spring of 1989 and received broad support from city residents, exposing deep splits within China's political leadership.

The protests were forcibly suppressed.

The crackdown that was initiated on June 3-4 became known as the Tiananmen Square Massacre or the June 4 Massacre as troops with assault rifles and tanks inflicted casualties on unarmed civilians trying to block the military's advance towards Tiananmen Square in the heart of Beijing, which student and other demonstrators had occupied for seven weeks.

Self-Assessment Questions

- 1. Explain the major causes of the Chinese Revolution of 1949. How did social, political, and economic factors contribute to the rise of communism in China?**
- 2. Assess the leadership of Mao Zedong in the success of the Chinese Communist Revolution. What strategies helped the Communists defeat the Nationalists?**
- 3. Discuss the immediate consequences of the Chinese Revolution of 1949 on China's domestic and foreign policies.**
- 4. Describe how the Cold War shaped the relationship between the United States and Latin American countries. What were the political and economic impacts?**

Unit V

Decline of Soviet Union: Causes and Consequences

Dissolution of Soviet Union 1991, Factors, Consequences

The Soviet Union, formed after Russia's 1917 socialist revolution, collapsed due to economic crisis, political issues, and Gorbachev's reforms....

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which was created in 1922 after the socialist revolution in Russia, was a confederation of 15 republics under the leadership of Russia. It was disintegrated into smaller units in 1991, mainly due to Mikhael Gorbachev's economic and political reforms. This led to the end of the Cold War between the two superpowers, the USA and the USSR. The dissolution of the Soviet Union is marked by events like the fall of the Berlin Wall and the power shift from the Soviet centre to the republics.

With the collapse of the USSR, the United States became the single global power, putting an end to the world's bipolarity.

Establishment of USSR

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 succeeded in overthrowing the Empire in Russia, Russia witnessed a series of civil wars and then the USSR was formed in 1922.

Foundation: Initially, the Soviet Union in 1922 had six member states – Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia.

And by 1940, the number of member states increased to 15 expanding its influence into Central Asia and Baltic states.

Following its victory in the Second World War, the USSR emerged as a strong global power till the mid-1980s.

For about 70 years the Soviet Union was the major power of the world. However, for various reasons, the collapse of the Soviet Union started in the late 1980s....

Socialist Bloc

After the Second World War, the central and eastern European countries that the Soviet army had liberated from the fascist forces (German forces) came under the control of the USSR. These countries were also called Soviet satellite states. Seven Soviet satellite states: Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland and Romania.

Following the Second World War, Germany was divided between the socialist USSR and the capitalist Western powers.

The political and economic systems of all of these countries were based on the Soviet Union.

Warsaw Pact: The Warsaw Pact, also known as the Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance, was created on 14 May 1955 when the USSR and the seven Soviet satellite states signed the defence treaty.

Albania withdrew in 1968.

The countries of the Warsaw Pact together formed the 'Socialist Bloc' or 'Eastern Bloc' or the 'Second World'.

The break-up of the Warsaw Pact occurred in 1991, followed by the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Factors that led to the Dissolution of the Soviet Union

Multiple factors brought the end of the Soviet Union such as the economic crisis, political and administrative problems, the rise of national identities, and the impact of reforms introduced by Gorbachev- Glasnost and Perestroika reform.

Political Factors:

Gorbachev instituted the policies of Glasnost or political openness that intended to foster dialogue. This policy resulted in the state losing control of both the media and the public sphere.

The Soviet system became very bureaucratic and authoritarian and the lack of democracy and the absence of freedom of speech stifled people.

The one-party system represented by the CPSU had tight control over all institutions and was unaccountable to the people.

Shift of power: In the late 1980s, Power began to shift from the Soviet centre to the republics, especially in the more Europeanised part of the Soviet Union, which saw themselves as sovereign states....

Economic Factors: Cold War competition with the United States that had fed Soviet expansionism and the arms race created the economic conditions that preceded the collapse.

Due to a flawed policy of economic centralization in the agricultural and industrial sectors the USSR economy failed to bring expected prosperity.

The Soviet economy spent a significant portion of its resources on sustaining a nuclear and military arsenal, as well as developing satellite nations in Eastern Europe, resulting in a severe economic burden.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 undermined the system even more. Though wages continued to grow, productivity and technology fell. This led to shortages in all consumer goods and the economy became stagnant in the late 1970s.

Gorbachev's policy of Perestroika or economic restructuring introduced quasi-free market policies to government-run industries.

Social factors: Integration of divergent ethnic, linguistic, and religious identities in the Soviet Union was a complex process and the possibilities of dissension were inherent in the processes of integration.

In a situation, when the central authority became weak, the nations at the periphery raised their voices for autonomy.

Different ethnic groups opposed the Russification and asserted political and economic autonomy and ethnic cultural revival.

Rise of Nationalism: Countries such as Russia, the Baltic republics, Ukraine, and Georgia have experienced a rise in nationalism.

Ironically, in the USSR's most prosperous countries, there was a strong sense of nationalism.

This proved to be the final and most immediate cause of the disintegration of the USSR.

Many analysts think that Gorbachev's reforms speeded up and increased nationalist dissatisfaction....

Events leading to the Soviet Disintegration

A series of events from 1989 to 1991 led to the final collapse of the USSR, paving the way for the establishment of new, independent republics in the Baltics and Central Asia and the creation of the Russian Federation. The following were the main events that led to the disintegration of the USSR:

Impact of Gorbachev Reforms: Mikhail Gorbachev, who became General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985, aimed to modernise the system. The reform of Gorbachev had some other effects that neither he nor anyone else intended or anticipated.

Gorbachev initiated policies for economic and political reform and democratisation within the country. The reforms were opposed by leaders within the Communist Party.

The Nuclear Disaster: Throughout the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the United States teetered on the edge of mutual nuclear destruction.

In 1986, the Chernobyl power station in Pripyat (now in Ukraine) exploded causing a catastrophic disaster that was directly under the control of central authorities of the Soviet Union.

Communist Party officials acted quickly to suppress information about the severity of the disaster, but could not hold the truth.

This resulted in the loss of trust and legitimacy of the USSR government in the eyes of the states and the world.

Socialist bloc crisis: People in numerous East European countries began criticising their own regimes.

In 1988, independence movements began in Poland, Baltic states, Hungary, etc., and later spread to other USSR and Soviet satellite states.

The Soviet Union did not intervene when the disturbances occurred, and the communist regimes collapsed one after another.

Fall of Berlin Wall: The Fall of Berlin was a symbolic disintegration of the Soviet Bloc which triggered a succession of events, including the collapse of the USSR.

Final Disintegration: Russia, Belarus and Ukraine signed the Belovezha Accords on 8 December 1991, declaring that the USSR had effectively ceased to exist. Instead, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was established.

Russia had been officially recognised as the Soviet Union's successor state. It inherited the Soviet seat on the UN Security Council. The former Soviet Union was therefore declared dead and buried.

Yeltsin banned the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Currently, there are nine full member states of the CIS. The three Baltic states did not sign the Treaty, and, Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine withdrew later.

Consequences of the Dissolution of the Soviet Union

The fall of the Soviet Union's second-world and Eastern Europe's socialist systems had far-reaching implications for global politics.

Emergence of New Countries: The disintegration caused the emergence of 15 republics including Russia.

End of Socialist and Capitalist Dispute: The intellectual debate over whether the communist system could defeat the capitalist system was no longer an issue. It was interpreted as a win for capitalism against socialism, commonly known as the 'end of history' (termed by F. Fukuyama).

End of Cold War: Since this dispute involved the military of the two blocs, it generated a tremendous arms race and the stockpiling of nuclear weapons, resulting in the formation of military blocs.

The conclusion of the conflict necessitated a stop to the arms race and the possibility of a new peace.

Unipolar world: The end of the Cold War made the US the sole superpower. The capitalist economy, backed by the might and prestige of the United States, had become the dominant economic system on a global scale.

Dominance of Financial Institutions: Institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund became significant advisors to all of these countries after providing loans to help them transition to capitalism....

Impact on India

Though the founder of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), India had mutual strategic cooperation with the USSR as per its 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation. The USSR helped India on multiple fronts including defence supplies, Kashmir disputes, etc. The

disintegration of the USSR in 1991 impacted India in the following dimensions: Economic Impact: As a result of the USSR's dissolution, financial help from the Soviet Union to India and the volume of trade reduced drastically.

These were some of the causes of India's 1991 balance of payments crisis.

Reshaping the Foreign Policy: The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War compelled India to reconsider its foreign policy.

India improved its relations with the US and other Western countries.

India is now seen as a natural ally to the Western bloc countries, particularly the US, due to the democratic polity of India.

It also forged formal diplomatic relations with Israel, Japan, South Korea and South Africa. At the same time, it attempted to rebuild its relations with China and Pakistan.

Friendship with Russia: India was one of the first countries to recognise Russia as an independent country and the inevitable successor to the erstwhile USSR.

Following that, both countries demonstrated a stronger understanding of bilateral ties as well as global political issues.

In this way, India maintained its earlier policy to have a friendship with Russia.

Defence Procurement: The break-up of the Soviet Union disrupted India's most important source of defence supplies and took away a major Indian export market.

India, post-1991, has diversified its defence procurement, however, Russia is still its largest arms supplier....

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