



INSTITUTE  
OF DISTANCE  
EDUCATION **IDE**  
Rajiv Gandhi University



MAHIS -508

# History of the World (1815-1945 AD) -II

MA HISTORY  
4th Semester

Rajiv Gandhi University

[www.ide.rgu.ac.in](http://www.ide.rgu.ac.in)

# **HISTORY OF THE WORLD (1815-1945)-II**

**MA [History]**

**Fourth Semester**

**MAHIS – 508**

**RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY**  
Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA - 791 112



<b>BOARD OF STUDIES</b>	
1. <b>Prof. SK Singh</b> Department of History, Rajiv Gandhi University Arunachal Pradesh	Chairman
2. <b>Prof.B. Tripathy</b> Department of History Rajiv Gandhi University Arunachal Pradesh	Member
3. <b>Prof. S. Dutta (Retd.)</b> Ward No. 2, Bairagimath, PO: Dibrugarh-786003 Assam	Member
4. <b>Prof. (Mrs.) S. Hilaly</b> Department of History Rajiv Gandhi University Arunachal Pradesh	Member
5. <b>Prof.AshanRiddi</b> Director, IDE Rajiv Gandhi University	Member Secretary

#### **Authors**

Dr. M Wasseem Raja; 2021

Dr. Nirja Sharma; 2021

Dr Syed Mubin Zehra;2021

RP Tripathy;2021

All rights reserved. No part of this publication which is material protected by this copyright notice maybe reproduced or transmitted or utilized or stored in any form or by any means now known or hereinafter Invented, electronic, digital or mechanical, including photocopying, scanning, recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without prior written permission from the Publisher.

"Information contained in this book has been published by Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. and has been obtained by its Authors from sources believed to be reliable and are correct to the best of their knowledge. However, IDE—Rajiv Gandhi University, the publishers and Its Authors shall be in no event be liable for any errors, omissions or damages arising out of use of this information and specifically disclaim any implied warranties or merchantability or fitness for any particular use"



Vikas®<sup>1</sup> is the registered trademark of Vikas® Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.

VIKAS® PUBLISHING HOUSE PVT LTD<sup>1</sup>

E-23, Sector-8, Noida - 201301 (UP)

Phone: 0120-4078900 • Fax: 0120-4078999

Regd. Office: 576, Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi 110 014

• Website: [www.vikaspublishing.com](http://www.vikaspublishing.com) • Email: [help@vikaspublishing.com](mailto:help@vikaspublishing.com)

## About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.



## **About IDE**

The formal system of higher education in our country is facing the problems of access, limitation of seats, lack of facilities and infrastructure. Academicians from various disciplines opine that it is learning which is more important and not the channel of education. The education through distance mode is an alternative mode of imparting instruction to overcome the problems of access, infrastructure and socio-economic barriers. This will meet the demand for qualitative higher education of millions of people who cannot get admission in the regular system and wish to pursue their education. It also helps interested employed and unemployed men and women to continue with their higher education, Distance education is a distinct approach to impart education to learners who remained away in the space and/or time from the teachers and teaching institutions on account of economic, social and other considerations. Our main aim is to provide higher education opportunities to those who are unable to join regular academic and vocational education programmes in the affiliated colleges of the University and make higher education reach to the doorsteps in rural and geographically remote areas of Arunachal Pradesh in particular and North-eastern part of India in general. In 2008, the Centre for Distance Education has been renamed as "Institute of Distance Education (IDE)."

Continuing the endeavor to expand the learning opportunities for distant learners, IDE has introduced Post Graduate Courses in 5 subjects (Education, English, Hindi, History and Political Science) from the Academic Session 2013-14. The Institute of Distance Education is housed in the Physical Sciences Faculty Building (first floor) next to the University Library. The University campus is 6 kms from NERIST point on National Highway 52A. The University buses ply to NERIST point regularly.

### **Outstanding Features of Institute of Distance Education:**

#### (1) At Par with Regular Mode

Eligibility requirements, curricular content, mode of examination and the award of degrees are on par with the colleges affiliated to the Rajiv Gandhi University and the Department(s) of the University.

#### (ii) Self-Instructional Study Material (SISM)

The students are provided SISM prepared by the Institute and approved by Distance Education Council (DEC), New Delhi. This will be provided at the time of admission at the IDE or its Study Centres. SISM is provided only in English except Hindi subject.

#### (iii) Contact and Counseling Programme (CCP)

The course curriculum of every programme involves counselling in the form of personal contact programme of duration of approximately 7-15 days. The CCP shall not be compulsory for BA. However for professional courses and MA the attendance in CCP will be mandatory.

#### (iv) Field Training and Project

For professional course(s) there shall be provision of field training and project writing in the concerned subject.

#### (v) Medium of Instruction and Examination

The medium of instruction and examination will be English for all the subjects except for those subjects where the learners will need to write in the respective languages.

#### (vi) Subject/Counseling Coordinators

For developing study material, the IDE appoints subject coordinators from within and outside the University. In order to run the PCCP effectively Counseling Coordinators are engaged from the Departments of the University. The Counseling-Coordinators do necessary coordination for involving resource persons in contact and counseling programme and assignment evaluation. The learners can also contact them for clarifying their difficulties in their respective subjects.

**SYLLABUS**  
**History of the World (1815-1945)-II**

**UNIT I FIRST WORLD WAR**

- a) Alliances
- b) Treaty of Versailles

**UNIT II: RUSSIAN REVOLUTION**

- a) Causes
- b) Impact

**UNIT III: THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS**

- a) Background
- b) Functions
- c) Assessment

**UNIT IV: RISE OF FASCISM AND NAZISM**

- a) Rise of Fascism
- b) Rise of Nazism

**UNIT V: SECOND WORLD WAR AND UNO**

- a) Second World War
- b) UNO-Objectives and Structure and Assessment



## INTRODUCTION

For many historians, history of the world begins when ideas of the enlightenment began to germinate culminating in the collapse of monarchies throughout the European continent. From 1789-1917, Europe was to witness many revolutions, both social political; these revolutions formed the foundation of the modern world as we know it and changed the lives of workers, peasants, aristocrats, the middle class, women and minorities living in European countries.

However, modern European history was also witness many tragedies. Wars were fought that killed more people than at any other point in history. The idealism embodied in the French Revolution and later the Russian Revolution and the power of the Industrial Revolution culminated into the two most horrifying events in the of humanity-the two world wars. How could such horrors have been allowed to occur? What part did nationalism and imperialism play in the perversion of enlightenment ideas? This book, History of the World (1815-1945), will try to address such questions.

Moreover, one needs to learn the consequences of the most destructive wars First World War and Second World War-and also focus on the objectives of the League of Nations and the United Nations Organization formed after these wars respectively. The book History of the World (1815-1945) has been designed keeping in mind the self-instruction mode format and follows the simple pattern, wherein each unit begins with an Introduction followed by Unit Objectives. The detailed content is followed by Summary i.e., the concise review. Check Your Progress (questions and answers), Questions and Exercises (both short- and long-type questions). Key Terms, Activity, and Did You Know; all act as useful tools for students and are meant for effective recapitulation of the text.

The book comprises 10 units.

Unit 1: First World War

Unit 2: Russian Revolution

Unit 3: The League of Nations

Unit 4: Rise of Fascism and Nazism

Unit 5: Second World War and UNO

# UNIT 1 FIRST WORLD WAR

## Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 Outbreak of the First World War
  - 2.1 Causes
  - 2.2 Course of the War
- 3 Impact of the War
  - 3.1 Political Impact
  - 3.2 Economic Impact
  - 3.3 Social Impact
- 4 The Peace Settlement of Paris
  - 4.1 Treaty of Versailles
  - 4.2 Other Peace Treaties
- 5 Summary
- 6 Key Terms
- 7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 8 Questions and Exercises
- 9 Further Reading

## 0 INTRODUCTION

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 politico-socio-economical equilibrium of the world nations. The immediate cause of the First World War, which triggered the secondary causes such as the alliances, imperialism, militarism and nationalism, was the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary.

In June 1914, a Serbian nationalist (member of the Black Hand—an underground terror society) assassinated Ferdinand in Sarajevo (Bosnia), which was part of Austria-Hungary. The assassination marked the protest to Austria-Hungary on taking control of this region. Serbia sought taking over Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ferdinand's assassination led to Austria-Hungary declaring war on Serbia. Later, when Russia began to mobilize due to its alliance with Serbia, Germany declared war on Russia. Thus, began the expansion of the war to include all those involved in the mutual defence alliances.

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 many ways 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 the following:

- Search for newer markets
- Search for better sources of raw material
- Rise of nationalism
- Fierce competition due to spread of trade and commerce

Europe was the epicenter 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 massive 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 blocs 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.

---

## 1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

---

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Identify the reasons and causes for the outbreak of the First World War
- Explain the course of the war
- Assess the impact of the war
- Discuss the Peace Settlement of Paris

---

## 2 OUTBREAK OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

---

The First World War, 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 on all countries and regions of 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; rather it was the ultimate result of various developments in the economic and political sphere for almost 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 force. Ultimately, more than 70 million military personnel, including 60 million Europeans, were mobilized in this War and more than 9 million combatants were killed.<sup>1</sup> 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. Professor 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 troupes fired from air and Belgian forces, though strong, were not equipped to withstand such 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'.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.1 Causes

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.'<sup>3</sup>

On the eve of the War, alliances formed in the previous decades were brought into play. Within no time, the main powers were engaged in War through their colonies. The conflict soon spread around the world. The main reasons behind the First World War were as follows:

### 1. Formation of secret alliances

Historians are of the opinion that the secret alliances, which developed following the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 were the biggest factors responsible for the First World War breaking out. On the eve of the War, the whole of Europe was divided into two armed camps—Triple Alliance and Triple Entente. The Triple Alliance comprised Germany, Austria—Hungary and Italy, whereas Turkey became part of the alliance immediately after. The latter consisted of Great Britain, France and Russia.

Additionally, Great Britain and Japan had entered into an alliance in 1902 and Japan joined the Triple Entente after that. The first step towards creating the Triple



Alliance was Germany's entry into an alliance with Austria-Hungary. In 1882, Italy became part of this alliance. The Triple Entente started in 1894 when France ended an alliance with Russia. At the dawn of the twentieth century, Great Britain, following a policy of splendid isolation, also began looking for allies.

'Splendid isolation' was a policy Britain followed in the late nineteenth century, whose main feature was non-participation in European matters. Whether Britain followed the policy willingly or whether circumstances drove it to do so, is a matter of doubt. Britain signed a treaty with Japan in 1902 and with France in 1904.

The Triple Entente was born when Great Britain signed a treaty with Russia in 1907. Therefore, just before the War, entire Europe was divided into two camps associated with different secret alliances. The friction that occurred off and on between the two primary groups had driven Europe to the brink of war many times. The reasons behind the conflicts were many. They threatened to disturb the peace of Europe just like the naval rivalry between Great Britain and Germany. The French resented the loss of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany at the end of the Franco-Prussian War of 1871. The Germans feared that Germany would be contained by Great Britain, Russia and France. The Russians suspected Austria of getting too ambitious in the Balkans. They were suspicious of the Serbian nationalism too.

Serbia nurtured the ambition to unite the Serbs and Croats, most of whom resided within the Habsburg Empire in the southern Slav Kingdom (Yugoslavia). Therefore, it became essential to capture some areas from Austria-Hungary by threatening to make the Habsburg Empire collapse. This Empire comprised various nationalities and races including, Slovaks, Slovenes, Serbs, Croats, Italians, Germans, Czechs, Hungarians, Poles and Romanians. If the Serbs and Croats had left the fold, several others would have started demanding their independence, leading to the breaking up of the Habsburg Empire. As a result, several Austrians showed their interest in a 'preventive war', which would demolish Serbia before she gained the strength to demolish Austria-Hungary.

These resentments and tensions gave rise to a sequence of events, which ended in war in 1914. Historian, S. B. Fay believed there was no way the great European powers could have detached themselves from the war, if there was one as a result of the secret alliances. Each group was obliged to support the other to ensure group cohesiveness and solidarity.

## 2. Economic rivalries and imperialism

Yet another significant reason behind World War I was economic rivalry and imperialism. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, huge colonial empires had been set up by Great Britain, France and Russia. Germany's share in the wealth gained from these colonies was the smallest. Believing itself to be greatest of all nations, Germany was not ready to play second fiddle to anyone. Germany aimed to create a world empire, the only one of its kind. As a result, when Germany attempted to capture the market held by Great Britain, animosity began to brew between the two nations.

While Great Britain was unwilling to let go her colonies, markets and areas of influence, Germany, on the other hand, was determined to acquire them by hook or crook. In the meantime, the Industrial Revolution led to an increase in the rate of production across Europe. As a result, there was an increase in the demand for markets beyond Europe. The race to expand imperialistically became more intense after the



1880s. This economic rivalry existed primarily between Great Britain and Germany. Britain was afraid that Germany may get ahead in the race for colonies. Therefore, resistance between these two competitors was inevitable.

Britain and Germany competed against each other to capture markets in Argentina. Similarly, Russia and England were competing for oil in Persia. These economic rivalries resulted in Africa getting partitioned. A major part of Africa was captured by the European states in the 'scramble for Africa', as it was commonly referred to. The objective was to gain control over new markets and their raw material sources. Thus, the European powers managed to dominate in the Far East and the Near East. There were also interventions in the downfall of the empire of China. The states of Europe, the United States of America as well as Japan, at different times, drove China to consent to trade concessions. By 1914, the parts of the world suited for inhabitation were divided among the European states, and nations such as Germany looked for a 'place in the sun'. Some scholars of history opine that in trying to gain economic control over the world, Germany's traders, merchants and capitalists ended up declaring war on Great Britain, the owner of almost fifty per cent of the trading ships in the world, in 1914. This theory is supported by a few Marxist historians as it holds the capitalist system responsible for the War. However, those who oppose this theory draw attention to the fact that Germany was making its way to economic victory.

In 1913, leading German industrialists stated that if they could be permitted three or four years of peaceful conditions, they would definitely make Germany, the economic superpower of Europe. The ambition for imperialistic power was one of the main reasons for conflicts and the international crisis that ensued.

### 3. Germany's desire to be a world power

What contributed to the disturbance in the world was Germany's ambitions to create a world empire. With a great leader in Herr Otto von Bismarck, Germany was undoubtedly powerful and keen to maintain its position as a European supreme power.

Conservative political leader Bismarck played a significant role in unifying Germany. Being devoted to Prussia, after German unification, he set up the German empire under a Prussian leader. On becoming the President of Prussia, Bismarck attempted to wage war with Austria and France in order to make Germany the supreme power in Europe. He went on to become the First Chancellor of the German Empire. Bismarck was interested in the unification of the German states to establish a German Empire with Prussia as the heart. He believed this could only happen if the military of Germany is made powerful.

Bismarck designed foreign policies, which led to Germany forming alliances with most countries. As a result, Germany could not wage war with several countries. These alliances made the continent insecure and later became a cause for the First World War. With Bismarck's fall, Germany became even more ambitious to gain power and dominate the world, as is clear from what German historian Preitschke's said, '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. France's aspiration to get back Alsace-Lorraine

Another reason for World War I was the fact that Germany had forcefully taken away Alsace and Lorraine from the French, and the latter was determined to get back what



they had lost to the Germans. The government of the Third Republic in France did everything to maintain this spirit to take revenge and kept the hope of restoring Alsace and Lorraine alive. France was interested in getting back these provinces because they had rich mineral deposits, especially iron ore. The French believed that the Germans were industrially prosperous because of these mineral-rich provinces. Certain parts of France believed that if there had been no German intervention in Morocco, France would have been compensated for losing Alsace-Lorraine and given up the idea of avenging this loss. However, with Germany intervening constantly in Moroccan matters, the unpleasantness between France and Germany only increased.

### **5. Italian ambitions**

Yet another reason for the War was the ambition of the Italians to recover Prentino and the land surrounding the port of Trieste, where Italians lived, but were still controlled by Austria-Hungary. Since all these areas were once components of the Roman Empire, the Italians shouted slogans of 'Italia Irredenta' or 'unredeemed Italy'. In addition, due to a very poor economic situation and increased growth in population, Italy was forced to search for more land and economic resources. As a result, Italy became close to Germany, which was also very interested in challenging the status quo in Europe and setting up a large empire overseas.

### **6. Contest over control of Balkan Peninsula**

Tension had increased due to the Austria-Hungary and Russia competing with each other to gain control over the Balkan Peninsula. This was also a factor that led to World War I. When the Empire of Turkey fell, many small countries arose in the Balkan Peninsula, including Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia, which started warring against each other in their attempt to establish their rule over the fertile land of Macedonia. The Russians, who were keen observers of Balkan politics, supported the Serbians in their demand for a larger bigger Serbia. They realized it was a big chance to gain control over Constantinople, the warm water port in the South as well as the straits of Dardanelles and Bosphorus. Using these, the Russians wished to reach the Mediterranean Sea, as was the aim of Russia's foreign policy. During the Bosnian crisis of 1908, Russia showed sympathy towards Serbia threatening to tackle the aggressive Austrians. However, Germany declared that she would support Austria and provide complete military aid, forcing the Russians to withdraw. This development made the Austrians, Serbians and Russians bitter than ever before. During 1912-13, another crisis confronted Balkan, and Austria tried her level best to prevent Serbia from fulfilling her ambitions. Austria drove Serbia to abandon the Adriatic towns that had been conquered by the Serbs. The Austrians also made Albania an autonomous state so that Serbia was could not obtain any passage into the sea. Austria also wished to go to war, but was prevented by Germany. The attitude of the Austrians was not approved by either Great Britain or Russia. The conflict between the Austria and Serbia slowly became intense and led to increased tension in Europe, leading to disturbance in the continent.

### **7. Militarism and naval race between European powers**

A significant factor that caused the First World War was militarism. The continent of Europe was an armed camp on the eve of the First World War. The term 'militarism' implies that there exists a well equipped and strong army and navy, which stands prepared for war. The military and naval arms of the powerful nations began to expand



and become stronger with each passing year. Each nation was busy strengthening military power and planning war strategies.

The naval race was the result of the disgust, lack of trust, dread and suspicion among countries like Great Britain and Germany. Initially, Great Britain was not shaken by the growing German fleets, starting with Admiral Tirpitz's Navy Law of 1897. This was because Great Britain itself boasted of a strong navy. When the British 'Dreadnought' battleship was launched in 1906, all other battleships became outdated. But soon Germany started building new warships, which were almost at par with the British ships. This did disturb the British as its powerful position on the high seas was challenged. The naval rivalry that resulted between Great Britain and Germany continued till the War began in 1914. Winston Churchill felt that by mid 1914, the naval race stopped being the reason for conflict because the British were very confident that they could not be overtaken or beaten when it came to capital ships.

As a result of this militarism and naval race, the powerful nations of Europe started investing and spending more on their army and navy. The Germans increased their military and naval expenditure by up to 335 per cent while the Russians and the British did so by 214 per cent for military and 185 per cent for navy, respectively.

### **8. Lack of a world body to regulate international relations**

The absence of a global body, which could shoulder the responsibility of regulating the matters related to the states, was also another reason for the War. The states preferred to remain diplomatic and were rigidly confidential. Some states even kept secrets from the members of their ministry. Therefore, there was always a sense of mystery surrounding state-related matters. Even though, some principles of international law and morality had come into play by the end of the nineteenth century, through the Hague Conference, the states hardly paid any heed to them since these principles were not strictly enforced by any strong authority.

In addition, the states were aware of their power and independence. They had no intentions of giving in to any international body or organization. They were clearly not willing to be bound by any principles of international morality. With no powerful international authority, there was a lot of disorder and lawlessness in terms of international relations. The absence of a law-making institution capable of forcing all the nations to adhere to laws was strongly felt.

### **9. Series of international crises**

The series of international crises that led to the First World War are as follows:

- (i) **The Moroccan crisis:** Germany interfered in the affairs of Morocco in 1905–06 and demanded all powers to enjoy equal privileges in Morocco. This was one of the few remaining areas of the African Continent not controlled by a European power. The Germans believed that as per the Anglo-French Agreement Entente Cordiale signed in 1904; the French would recognize Great Britain's position in Egypt in return for British approval of a possible French takeover of Morocco. Fearing the possible French occupation of Morocco, the Germans announced that they would assist the Sultan of Morocco to maintain his country's independence, and insisted for an international conference to discuss its future. As per the demand of Germany, a conference was also held in 1906 at Algeiras in Spain.



Meanwhile, the British believed that if the Germans had it their way, it would be an important step on the road to the German diplomatic domination. The Germans did not take the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904 seriously, because there was a long record of hostility between Great Britain and France. However, to the utter surprise of Germany, Great Britain, Russia, Italy and Spain supported the French demand to control the Moroccan Bank and police. This was a grave diplomatic failure for Germany, which realized that the new line-up of Britain and France was a strong force to be reckoned with, especially as the Moroccan crisis was soon followed by Anglo-French military exchanges. This crisis further reduced the trust factor between various European powers.

(ii) The Anglo-Russian Agreement: The Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 was seen by Germany as another hostile move. The logic given was that in 1894 Russia had signed an alliance with France, which was Britain's partner in the Entente Cordiale signed in 1904. For years, the British had viewed Russia as a major threat to their interests in the Far East and India, which were colonies of Great Britain at that time.

However, the changing situation in 1904-05 where Japan defeated Russia had weakened it considerably, and it no longer seemed so much of a threat. This development forced Great Britain to change its mindset. On the other hand, the Russians were keen to end the long-standing rivalry and anxious to attract British investment for their industrial modernization programme. The Agreement, therefore settled their remaining differences. This Agreement was not a military alliance and not necessarily an anti-German move, but the Germans saw it as confirmation of their fears that Britain, France and Russia were planning to encircle it. Undoubtedly, this development enhanced the tension in Europe.

(iii) The Bosnia crisis: The Austrians, taking advantage of a revolution in Turkey, annexed the Turkish province of Bosnia. This was a deliberate blow to the neighbouring state of Serbia, because Serbia had also been hoping to take Bosnia. The motive behind Serbian interest was that Bosnia contained approximately three million Serbs among its mixed population of Serbs, Croats and Muslims.

The Serbs appealed for help to their fellow Slavs and the Russians, who called for a European Conference, expecting French and British support. When it became clear that Germany would support Austria in the event of war, the French drew back, unwilling to become involved in a war in Balkans. The British, anxious to avoid a breach with Germany, did no more than to protest to Austria-Hungary.

The Russians, after their defeat from Japan dared not risk another war without the support of their allies. In this situation, Serbia did not get any help from outside and no conference took place. Austria kept Bosnia, and it was a victory for the Austro-German alliance. After this development, Serbia remained bitterly hostile to Austria, and it was this quarrel that heightened the tension in the European continent; and later this led to the outbreak of the First World War. On the other hand, to avoid further humiliation, Russians were determined to embark a massive military build-up.

(iv) The Agadir crisis: The Agadir crisis of 1911 was a further development in the Moroccan Crisis. French troops occupied the Moroccan capital Fez in 1911 to suppress a rebellion against the Sultan. It looked as if the French were about to



annex Morocco. Hoping to pressurize the French and giving Germany compensation, Germans sent a gunboat, Panther to the Moroccan port of Agadir.<sup>4</sup>

The French stood firm making no major concessions, and eventually the German gunboat was removed. On their part, the Germans agreed to recognize the French protectorate over Morocco in return for two strips of territory in the French Congo. It was seen as a victory for the French; but this development triggered a naval race between the European powers like Britain, France and Germany.

(v) Balkan Wars: The Balkan War of 1912 started when Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro, who were known as the Balkan League, attacked Turkey and captured most of its remaining territory in Europe. After the outbreak of the War, Germany and Great Britain intervened and arranged a peace conference in London. They were anxious to avoid a conflict between the Balkan League and Turkey, and simultaneously they had to demonstrate that Great Britain and Germany could still work together. The resulting settlement divided the former Turkey's lands among the Balkan states. However, the Serbs were not happy with the gains of the Balkan states; rather they wanted Albania which would give them an outlet to sea. In the meantime, the Austrians with British and German support insisted that Albania should become an independent state. This was a deliberate attempt made by Austria to prevent Serbia from becoming more powerful.

A year after this development, the Second Balkan War broke out in 1913 because the Bulgarians were dissatisfied with the peace settlement. They were hopeful of acquiring Macedonia, but most of Macedonia was conquered by Serbia. This led Bulgaria to attack Serbia but its plan backfired when Romania, Turkey and Greece supported Serbia. In that War, the Bulgarians were defeated and by the Treaty of Bucharest of 1913, the Bulgarians forfeited most of their gains from the First Balkan War of 1912.

The Anglo-German influence prevented a further escalation of tension by restraining the Austrians who were about to support Bulgaria and planning to attack Serbia. The repercussions of these two Balkan wars were grave. On the one hand, Serbia was strengthened and it was determined to intervene between the Serbs and Croats who were living inside Austria-Hungary, on the other hand the Austrians were equally determined to put an end to Serbia's ambitions.

## **10. Assassination of the Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand**

The immediate cause of the First World War was the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the heir to the Austrian throne, by a Serbian in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914. The Archduke was paying an official visit to the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo when he and his wife were shot dead. The assassin, Gavrilo Princip, was a member of the Black Hand, a secret society of the Serbian terrorists.<sup>5</sup> Austrians were outraged at this incident and held Serbia responsible for this by serving an ultimatum for this reprehensible act. Serbia refused to comply with the ultimatum served by Austria because of Russian backing. In the mean time, Austria wanted to crush Serbia and even managed to get the support of Germany. An effort of mediation was made by the powers but to no avail. Finally on 28 July 1914, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, thus beginning the First World War. Initially, Great Britain and Germany tried to localize the War but soon it became evident that matters had gone out of their



hands. The Russians who didn't want to let down the Serbs, ordered a general military mobilization against Austria on 29 July. Germany demanded that Russia should put an end to its military mobilization and withdraw troops. But when the Russians refused to comply, Germany declared war on Russia on 1 August 1914 and on France on 3 August. When German troupes entered Belgium on their way to invade France, Great Britain who had promised to defend Belgian interest demanded their withdrawal. When Germany ignored this demand of Britain, Great Britain entered into the War on 4 August. On 6 August, Austria-Hungary also declared war on Russia and other countries joined later.

In the War that followed, Serbia was supported by Russia, France, England and Japan, and in 1915, Italy which was not a member of the Triple Alliance, also joined them and declared war against Austria-Hungary and Germany. Turkey, however, fought on the side of the Central Powers, which included Austria-Hungary and Germany. While fixing the responsibility for the outbreak of First World War in *The Origins of the First World War*, Prof. Fay observes that, 'It was primarily Russian general mobilization when Germany was trying to bring Austria to a settlement, which precipitated the final catastrophe, causing Germany to mobilize and declare war'.<sup>6</sup>

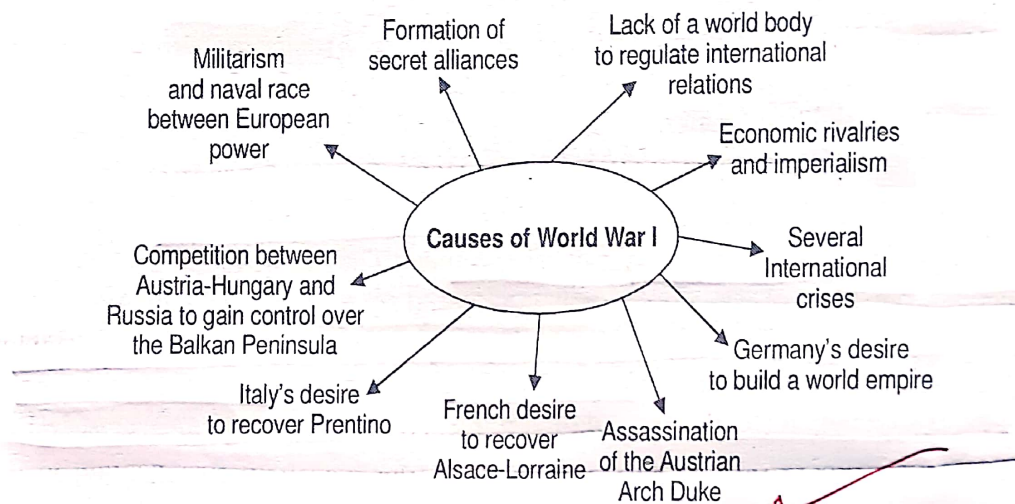


Fig. 6.1 Causes of the First World War

## 2.2 Course of the War

The War, which started with the attack of Serbia by Austria-Hungary, turned out to be quite different from what most people had anticipated. It was not confined only to the European continent, but soon saw the participation of many powerful countries of the world. Almost all the big countries of the world were automatically drawn into the War in various battles that were fought in different parts of the world.

Initially when Austria-Hungary attacked Serbia, Great Britain and Germany made efforts to localize the conflict. However, when Russia declared war against Austria-Hungary, Germany also declared war against Russia. Until this time, the war had not assumed the shape of a World War. It was only after Germany violated the neutrality of Belgium and Britain, and France declared war on it that the conflict assumed the shape of a World War. Although Great Britain joined the War on the plea that Germany has violated Belgium's neutrality, Belgium could not be saved and the German force was able to smash the resistance of Belgium. Germany then headed towards Paris and went beyond Marne. However, General Foch, aided by Great Britain compelled the German army to retreat from Marne to the northern side of river Aisne.



The battle of Marne was a turning point of the War because it foiled all German plans of crossing France and extending a helping hand to its allies for concerted action against the enemies. This development dashed all hopes of a short war. Both sides dug themselves in and spent the next four years attacking and defending lines of trenches.

During the War in Eastern Europe there were many other developments on the sidelines which precipitated the crisis. The early Russian success against the Austrians, who constantly had to be helped out by the Germans, caused friction between the two allies. On the Eastern front Russia mobilized at quick speed and invaded East Prussia but it was defeated by Hindenburg at Tannenberg. Russia was, however, more successful against the Austrians and occupied the Carpethian passes from where it could prove a threat for Hungary. However, the Germans came to Austria's rescue and pushed back the Russians and captured Warsaw, the capital of Poland.

In 1915, Italy joined the Allies in spite of its alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary because the Allies agreed to make territorial adjustment with regard to its frontiers. Further, Italy realized that this approach could help to recover some of the provinces which formerly belonged to it from Austria. Japan also joined the Allies as Germany had objected to Japan's taking of Liaotung from China in 1895 but was forced to surrender this. Turkey fought on the side of the Central Powers. At the initial stage of the War it inflicted heavy losses on the Allies, and prevented communication between Russia and the Allies. Great Britain was defeated at Gallipoli which was probably its greatest disappointment in the War. However, soon Great Britain recovered itself from the defeat and recaptured Kut and occupied Baghdad. It also made political concessions to the Arabs by recognizing their independence. Though in the first year of War Serbia resisted the Austrian attacks boldly, in 1915, it succumbed to double attack of the Bulgarians on the south and the combined Austro-German attack on the north.

As far as the War on the sea was concerned, the British navy maintained its dominance on others on the seas. On the sea front, Germans lost heavily in the operations of Doggerbank and the right of Helligoland. In the battle of Jutland, the losses on both sides were equally heavy though strategically the War went in favour of Great Britain. In spite of these setbacks, considerable German ships succeeded in doing damage to the allies' commerce. However, after the comprehensive defeat at Falkland Islands the German navy was rendered defensive.

After the defeat of Germany at Falkland Islands the Germans retaliated with mines and submarine attacks. This was their only alternative as their surface vessels were either destroyed or were blockaded in various ports. Initially, they showed respect to neutral shipping and passenger liners but it soon became clear that the German blockade was ineffective. Meanwhile Britain also tried to mislead the Germans by flying neutral flags and by using passenger liners to transport arms and ammunition. In 1915, the British liner Lusitania was sunk by a torpedo attack. Germans knew that Lusitania was armed and carrying vast quantities of arms and ammunition. So Germans claimed that the sinking of the boat was not an act of barbarism against the defenseless civilians. This act of Germany resulted in serious consequences as out of almost 2,000 dead, 128 were Americans. At this juncture the American President Woodrow Wilson recognised that the US would have to take part in the War to protect its trade. Whereas the British blockade did not interfere with the safety of passengers and crew, but the German tactics certainly did. This led to protests from America and the submarine campaign was toned down.



In the mid-1916, the German Admiral Von Scheer tried to lure part of Britain's fleet to come out of its base so that the numerically superior Germans could destroy it. However, contrary to the expectations of Germans the number of British ships were more. After a fierce battle, the Germans used torpedoes and destroyed 14 British ships whereas the British had also destroyed 11 German ships in the battle, and this is famous as the Battle of Jutland. The real importance of the Battle lay in the fact that the Germans had failed to destroy Great Britain's sea power. Due to British blockade, the German fleet of high seas stayed in Kiel port for the rest of the War. Finally, in desperation at the food shortages the German fleet embarked on unrestrained submarine warfare.

After the Battle of Jutland, the Germans had been concentrating on the production of U-boats to sink all enemy warships and merchant ships in the Atlantic. Although they knew that this act was likely to bring the US into the War, the Germans hoped that before the Americans could make any vital contribution they would force Britain and France to surrender. The Germans got enormous success in this field in April 1917 by sinking 430 ships and Britain was reduced to about six weeks of corn supply. However, by introducing the convoy system, where a convoy of large number of merchant ships were protected by escorting warships, Lyoyd George saved the situation. This act of George drastically reduced losses by protecting the merchant ships and with it the German gamble had once again failed. The submarine campaign was important because it brought the US into the First World War.

The British Navy helped by the Americans played a pivotal role in the defeat of the Central Powers. During that time, after the revolt of 1917, Russia suffered a number of defeats and ultimately surrendered to Germany by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The withdrawal of Russia from War enabled Germany to transfer a large section of its troops to the western front to give a big blow to the Allies. However, the Allies were saved by the entry of the US in the War. USA entered the War as a protest against the unrestrained submarine campaign carried out by Germany in violation of all legal and humanitarian considerations. At the end of 1917, only one American division had been in action but by mid-1918 over half a million men were involved. Most important was the psychological boost which the American potential in resources of men and material gave the allies and the corresponding blow it gave to German morale.

In 1917, a new European power, Greece, had also joined the War against the Central Powers and held the armies in Macedonia. In September 1918, Bulgaria surrendered before the marching armies of Greece and sought a ceasefire. In October 1918, Austria sought an armistice and was out of War. Turkey was also defeated. Thus, Germany was left alone in the War. In the meantime, there was a mutiny in Germany and the emperor was forced to abdicate. The new head of the German Government, Max Von Baden, sought peace based on the Fourteen Points announced by President Wilson of the US. The Fourteen Points of Woodrow Wilson were:

- (i) Eradication of secret diplomacy ✓
- (ii) Free navigation facilities at sea for all nations in war and peace ✓
- (iii) All round reduction of armaments ✓
- (iv) Elimination of economic barriers between states ✓
- (v) Evacuation of Russian territory ✓



- (vi) Re-establishment of Belgium
- (vii) Liberation of France and restoration of Alsace-Lorraine
- (viii) Readjustment of Italian frontiers along the lines of nationality
- (ix) Impartial adjustment of colonial claims in the interest of the populations concerned
- (x) Self-government for the people of Austria-Hungary
- (xi) Evacuation from Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, and Serbia giving access to the sea
- (xii) An independent Poland with secure access to the sea
- (xiii) A general association of the nations to preserve peace
- (xiv) Self-government for the non-Turkish people of the Turkish Empire and permanent opening of the Dardanelles

Germany thought by asking for peace, in 1918, it would save itself from invasion and preserve the army's discipline and reputation. Fighting continued for another five weeks while negotiations went on, but eventually an armistice was signed. On 18 November 1918, the terms of the armistice were conveyed to Germany. Though the terms were very hard, it had no other option but to surrender. Thus, in November 1918 the First World War ended. The War has been described as the worst disaster to humankind. Describing the enormity of the First World War, historian C.J.H. Hayes has rightly observed that, 'The war, thus closing, was indeed a World War. Never before had there been a struggle so gigantic, so deadly and costly'.

### 3 IMPACT OF THE WAR

The First World War left massive repercussions on contemporary society, polity and world economics.

#### 6.3.1 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 Hollezollerian 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, Czechoslovakia. The emergence of democratic system led to recognition of people's democratic rights.
- (ii) The War encouraged the principles of nationalism and self-determination. After the War empires of people with different culture were dissociated and independent states with distinct cultures came up to the fore. Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, Alsace-Lorraine among others, which had distinct cultures of their own made their appearance and were given to France. Similarly Schleswig-Holstein was restored to Denmark. China, Turkey, Egypt and Ireland were also influenced with the impact of nationalism.



- (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 the 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 pre-war period, the colonial powers treated their colonial possessions as per their wish and 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 even after the War ended, which greatly contributed to the development of the spirit of internationalism.
- (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 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. This has been discussed in detail in Unit 8.

### 3.2 Economic Impact

The First World War which was a terrible catastrophe caused massive loss of life, property and 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, Prof. 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 approximately 400 billion dollars.
- (ii) As a result of the War, the prices of all commodities registered a steep rise, which caused greater 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) 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 conditions 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) Scholars believe that the increasing use of paper currency was largely the outcome of the First World War. The shortage of metals after World War I 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 massive expenses of the War, different countries imposed heavy taxes on people, which in turn caused greater difficulty for the masses. However, these extra taxes proved to be insufficient to fulfill the enormous expenses. So, the government resorted to the 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 their currency and were faced with great challenges of economic reconstruction. In the post-war scenario and particularly in the 1930s, the contemporary situation paved the way for the economic depression, which caused much hardship to the public throughout the world.

### 6.3.3 Social Impact

In the social sphere, the World War also had far-reaching consequences. The massive loss of life and material during the course of War caused inexplicable suffering to countless families in various countries. It compelled 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 equipments, and developed other weapons of mass destruction. These modern techniques cut short the duration of the War. Further, the scientific inventions throughout the War period also contributed to industrialization and rapid agricultural progress.

The War promoted a feeling of goodwill and fraternity among the people. Before the War, 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



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) Scholars believe that the increasing use of paper currency was largely the outcome of the First World War. The shortage of metals after World War I 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 massive expenses of the War, different countries imposed heavy taxes on people, which in turn caused greater difficulty for the masses. However, these extra taxes proved to be insufficient to fulfill the enormous expenses. So, the government resorted to the 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 their currency and were faced with great challenges of economic reconstruction. In the post-war scenario and particularly in the 1930s, the contemporary situation paved the way for the economic depression, which caused much hardship to the public throughout the world.

### **6.3.3 Social Impact**

In the social sphere, the World War also had far-reaching consequences. The massive loss of life and material during the course of War caused inexplicable suffering to countless families in various countries. It compelled contemporary world leaders to think of some mechanism for avoiding recurrence 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 equipments, and developed other weapons of mass destruction. These modern techniques cut short the duration of the War. Further, the scientific inventions throughout the War period also contributed to industrialization and rapid agricultural progress.

The War promoted a feeling of goodwill and fraternity among the people. Before the War, 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 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.

---

#### 4 THE PEACE SETTLEMENT OF PARIS

---

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 approximately 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 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'. All these difficulties were ultimately overcome before the Paris Peace Conference leading to the conclusion of five treaties:

- (i) 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; and
- (v) 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.

#### 4.1 Treaty of Versailles

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 criticized 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.

#### Provisions of the Treaty

The provisions of the Treaty are as follows:

##### 1. Territorial provisions

The Treaty affected substantial territorial changes. According to the Treaty:

- (i) Germany lost Alsace and Lorraine to France, which it had taken from France in 1871. Belgium got back Eupen and Malmédy as well as Moresnet, which it got in partial compensation for the destruction of its forts by Germany.
- (ii) Germany agreed to give Upper Silesia and the southern part of East Prussia to Poland if the people concerned were in favour of joining it. The wishes of the people were to be determined by a plebiscite. When the plebiscite was actually held the decision was in favour of a complete merger with Germany. However, Poland insisted that it must be given those areas, which had Polish majority. After the intervention of France, the League Council partitioned Silesia, leaving more than half of the area and population to Germany, but the industrialized areas of Silesia were given to Poland. Danzig, the main port city of West Prussia was taken away from Germany and was set up as a free city under the



administration of the League of Nations, because its population was wholly German.

- (iii) Mamel was given to Lithuania in 1924 and in the north Germany lost northern Schleswig to Denmark after a plebiscite.
- (iv) The Saar Valley was to be administered by the League of Nations for 15 years, after which it was decided that the people would be allowed to vote on whether it should belong to France or Germany. In the meantime, France was given the exclusive rights of exploitation of coalmines of the Valley. Fifteen years after when the plebiscite was actually held, the people of Saar Valley voted for Germany.
- (v) Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania which had been handed over to Germany by Russia at Brest-Litovsk, were taken away from it and set up as independent states. This was an example of self-determination being carried into practice.
- (vi) Germany was also forced to renounce its rights over its overseas colonies. The Germany colonies were later distributed amongst the various powers including Great Britain, France, Belgium, Japan, the Union of South Africa, New Zealand and Australia as mandates of the League; this meant that various member States of the League 'looked after' these colonies. Japan got the lease of Kiaochow and the German portion of the island of Soma was left to the care of New Zealand. While Australia was entrusted the administration of German New Guiana, Togoland and Tanganyika were left to the administration of Great Britain. Certain portions of Tanganyika were left under the control of Belgium and Cameroons were given to France. The administrative rights over Germany and South-West Africa were given to the Union of South Africa.
- (vii) Germany also lost her economic privileges in Morocco, Bulgaria and in Turkey. Due to the Treaty, Germany lost around 90 lakh square miles area. The loss was accompanied by a blow to the German Pride because the Allies tried to justify their rule over the colonies by asserting that the German treatment of the native population in her colonies had been cruel and arbitrary.
- (viii) The treaty also provided that France pay war indemnity of five billion Francs to Germany. Till France had made the payment of the sum of five million Francs, the German army would continue to occupy parts of France.

## **2. 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 equipments, 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 kilometres to the east of the Rhine. This meant German troupes 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.

### 3. 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, USA, 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 (ton for ton 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.

### 4. 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 six 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 Treaty with regard to disarmament, transportation, colonies, abolition of capitulations, punishment of officers, etc. 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 1 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.

## 4.2 Other Peace Treaties

Apart from the Treaty of Versailles, four other treaties were also signed with the Allied Power by Germany.

### 1. The Treaty of St. Germain

When Austria was on the verge of defeat in the War the Habsburg Empire disintegrated as various states declared themselves independent. Austria and Hungary separated and declared themselves republics. Therefore, many important decisions had already been taken before the Peace Conference. However, the situation was chaotic and the task of the Conference was to formalize and recognize what had taken place. The Treaty of St. Germain was signed with Austria on 10 September 1919 and was to a large extent modeled on the Treaty of Versailles. The Peace Conference by this Treaty recognized the independence of Hungary, Poland and Yugoslavia. By this Treaty Austria lost Bohemia and Moravia which were wealthy industrial provinces with a population of 10 million to the new state of Czechoslovakia.

Countries like Dalmatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina merged with Serbia. Serbia with Montenegro became known as Yugoslavia. Austria also lost Bukovina to Romania, Galicia to the reconstituted state of Poland and the South Tyrol, Trentino, Istria and Trieste to Italy. Thus, three-fourth of the territory and people got detached from Austria. The Treaty also forbade the Union between Austria and Germany and greatly curtailed the military and navy of Austria. Its army was reduced to 30,000 volunteers and navy was reduced to 3 police boats on the Danube. Austria assented to a blank reparation cheque and acknowledged the rights of the Allies Powers to try Austrian war criminals. Then it was accorded access to the Adriatic Sea across the territories that formerly formed part of the Habsburg domain.

### 2. The Treaty of Neuilly

This Treaty was signed on 27 November 1919 with Bulgaria. According to the terms of the Treaty of Neuilly, the western part of Bulgaria which was inhabited by a large majority of Bulgarians was ceded to Yugoslavia. Western Trace and the Aegean coasts were handed over to Greece though Bulgaria was guaranteed access to the Aegean Sea. As per the Treaty of Neuilly the army of Bulgaria was reduced to 33,000 men and its navy was practically abolished. It was, however, allowed for police and fishery duties 4 Torpedo boats and 6 motor boats but a condition was fixed that these boats were to be without Torpedo and its apparatus.

Bulgaria accepted reparation obligations and the reparations were finally fixed at 9 million dollar in 37 years commencing from 1 January 1921. The Treaty thus deprived Bulgaria of 2750 square miles of territory and 3 lakh people.

The historians believed that these peace settlements were not a conspicuous success and they actually divided Europe into the states which wanted a revised settlement, among whom Germany being the main one, and those which wanted to preserve it the way it was. On the whole, there was lukewarm support to the latter.



However, the United States could not rectify the settlement and was unable to join the League of Nations. France was completely disillusioned with the whole thing as the Anglo-American guarantee of her frontiers mentioned in the Agreement could not be executed. Italy also felt cheated as it did not receive all the promised territory in 1915, and Russia was ignored because the powers did not want to negotiate with it. Because of this, Germany was only temporarily weakened and was soon strong enough to cause problems. All this tended to sabotage the settlement from the beginning and it became highly difficult to apply the terms fully.

### 3. The Treaty of Trianon

This Treaty was signed with the national government of Hungary at Trianon on 20 June 1920. By this Treaty, the ancient Magyar kingdom was dissolved into its ethnic components. This Treaty was not signed until 1920 because of the political uncertainties in the capital city of Budapest. The communists led by Bela Kun seized power and were then overthrown. According to the Treaty, Slovakia and Ruthenia were given to Czechoslovakia, Croatia and Slovenia to Yugoslavia, and Transylvania and the Banat of Temeswar to Romania.

Like Austria, the Treaty left Hungary with serious economic consequences. It was as badly affected like Germany and Austria. Its population reduced from 21 million to 7.5 million and some of its richest corn land was lost to Romania. Situation worsened when all the new states quickly introduced import and export duties. These hampered the flow of trade through the whole Danube area and made the industrial recovery difficult. Hungary's army was reduced to 35,000 men and its navy was curtailed to a few petrol boats. It was held responsible for war guilts and had to pay war reparations. This Treaty of Trianon also sowed the seeds of the acute racial disturbances and animosities which occurred later.

### 4. The Treaty of Sevres

This Treaty was signed with Turkey on 10 August 1920, although it actually came into force on 6 August 1924. This Treaty was also modelled on the Treaty of Versailles. According to the terms of the Treaty of Sevres, Asia Minor, Thrace, Adrinople and Gallipole were given to Greece. Syria was delivered to France. Palestine and Mesopotamia were given to Great Britain. The king of Hejjaj was declared independent and the state of Turkey was restricted within the Asia Minor. As per the Agreement Turkey's army was reduced to 50,000 and it surrendered all its air force to the Allies.

The Turkish ports of Constantinople and Alexandria were placed under international control. Although Turkey was charged with war guilt the reparation claims were waived in its case. The huge loss of territory, especially Smyrna on the Turkish mainland, outraged the Turkish national feeling led by Mustafa Kemal. They rejected the Treaty and chased the Greeks out of Smyrna. The Italians and France withdrew their occupying forces from the Straits area leaving only British troupes at Chanak. Eventually a compromise was reached and the settlement was revised by the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 by which Turkey regained Eastern Thrace including Constantinople and Smyrna. It was, therefore, the first state to challenge the Paris Peace Settlement successfully. The Treaty also uplifted the limitations imposed on the Turkish navy and military. Turkey also became independent in the economic sphere.

## ACTIVITY

Prepare a detailed report on the First World War. Also, find out the achievements and failures of the League of Nations.

## DID YOU KNOW?

In the First World War, more than 70 million military personnel, including 60 million Europeans, were mobilized—making it thus, one of the largest wars in history.

## 5 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- The Industrial Revolution in Europe leading to the search for newer markets and sources of raw material, the growth of modern means of transport, new found consciousness of nationalism and spread of trade and commerce led to fierce competition among the countries.
- The competing nations soon started building alliances to serve their common interests and protect their territories from rival powers. The objective of improving economic situation expanded into the act of raising a strong army and huge military build-up to safeguard the newly acquired territories and markets.
- The First World War, which was fought on global scale, was a major war centered in Europe. This 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.
- 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.
- More than 70 million military personnel, including 60 million Europeans, were mobilized in this War and more than 9 million combatants were killed, largely because of enormous increase in lethality of weapons, without corresponding improvements in protection or mobility.
- Though the immediate cause of the First World War was the murder of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, 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, international negotiations and the occurrence of a series of international crisis made the World War inevitable.
- The Fourteen Points of Woodrow Wilson were: (i) Eradication of secret diplomacy; (ii) Free navigation facilities at sea for all nations in war and peace,



(iii) All round reduction of armaments, (iv) Elimination of economic barriers between states, (v) Evacuation of Russian territory, (vi) Re-establishment of Belgium, (vii) Liberation of France and restoration of Alsace-Lorraine, (viii) Readjustment of Italian frontiers along the lines of nationality, (ix) Impartial adjustment of colonial claims in the interest of the populations concerned, (x) Self-government for the people of Austria-Hungary, (xi) Evacuation from Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, and Serbia giving access to the sea, (xii) An independent Poland with secure access to the sea, (xiii) A general association of the nations to preserve peace, (xiv) Self-government for the non-Turkish people of the Turkish empire and permanent opening of the Dardanelles.

- The First World War posed a serious threat to the educational system of that time as many educational institutions were forcibly closed down and students were encouraged to undergo military training to provide the necessary fighting force for the War.
- 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.
- The Treaty of St. Germain was signed with Austria on 10 September 1919 and was to a large extent modelled on the Treaty of Versailles. The Peace Conference by this Treaty recognized the independence of Hungary, Poland and Yugoslavia.
- The Treaty of Trianon was signed with the national government of Hungary at Trianon on 20 June 1920. By this Treaty, the ancient Magyar kingdom was dissolved into its ethnic components.
- The Treaty of Sevres was signed with Turkey on 10 August 1920, although it actually came into force on 6 August 1924. This Treaty was also modelled on the Treaty of Versailles.
- The Treaty of Neuilly was signed on 27 November 1919 with Bulgaria.

---

## 6 KEY TERMS

---

- **Balkan League:** During the Balkan War of 1912, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro were known as the Balkan League; they attacked Turkey and captured most of its remaining territory in Europe
- **Balkan Peninsula:** This is the most easterly of the three large peninsulas which form the southern extremities of the European continent. Its area, 184,779 square metre, is about 35,000 square metre less than that of the Siberian Peninsula, but more than twice that of the Italian
- **Dreadnought:** The British battleship which was launched in 1906
- **Entente Cordiale:** This was an understanding reached by France and Britain in April 1904, which settled outstanding colonial disputes
- **Imperialism:** creation and/or maintenance of an unequal economic, cultural, and territorial relationship, usually between states and often in the form of an empire, based on domination and subordination

- **Industrial Revolution:** It is the name given by historians to the period in history when there was significant and rapid change in the way things were made, produced or manufactured
- **Internationalism:** This is a policy or practice of cooperation among nations, especially in politics and economic matters
- **Italia Irredenta:** The term means unredeemed Italy and refers to an Italian patriotic and political party, which was of importance in the last quarter of the nineteenth century
- **League of Nations:** A world organization established in 1920 to promote international cooperation and peace
- **Militarism:** A strong military spirit or policy or the principle or policy of maintaining a large military establishment
- **Splendid isolation:** A policy followed by Britain through the late nineteenth century, characterizing a non-participation in European matters
- **Treaty:** A treaty is an express agreement under international law entered into by actors in international law, namely, sovereign states and international organizations
- **Triple Entente:** This was the name given to the alliance among France, Britain and Russia after the Anglo-Russian Entente was signed in 1907
- **Weltpolitik:** This term meant "world policy" and referred to the policy adopted by Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany in 1897, and replaced the earlier "Realpolitik" approach

---

## 7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

---

1. (a) 1914; 1918; (b) Triple Entente
2. (a) True; (b) False
3. (a) Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Czechoslovakia; (b) Devaluation
4. (a) True; (b) True
5. (a) Four; (b) Versailles; (c) Austria; (d) Sevres

---

## 8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

---

### Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the causes that led to the First World War.
2. What do you understand by the Weltpolitik? How was it significant in the First World War?
3. Explain the provisions of Treaty of Sevres in detail.
4. What were the main provisions laid down in the Treaty of Versailles?
5. What was the economic impact of the First World War?
6. 'The Treaty of St. Germain was signed with Austria on 10 September 1919 and was to a large extent modeled on the Treaty of Versailles.' Elaborate.



## Long-Answer Questions

1. Give reasons and causes for the outbreak of the First World War.
2. Discuss the series of international crises that led to the First World War.
3. Explain the course of the First World War.
4. Discuss Fourteen Points announced by President Woodrow Wilson.
5. Discuss the impact of the First World War.
6. Write a short note on the following:
  - (a) Treaty of Versailles
  - (b) The Treaty of St. Germain
  - (c) The Treaty of Trianon
  - (d) The Treaty of Sevres
  - (e) The Treaty of Neuilly

---

## 9 FURTHER READING

---

Hayes, C.J.H.; *A Political and Social History of Modern Europe*, Kessinger Publishing, 2004.

Thompson, David; *Europe Since Napoleon*, Penguin Books, UK, 1990.

Hayes, C.J.H.; *Modern Europe to 1870*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1963.

Gottschalk, Louis and Donald Lach; *Europe and the Modern World Since 1870*, Scott, Foresman and Company, 1954.

Grant, Arthur James, Agatha Ramm, Harold William and Vazeille Temperley; *Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Volumes 1-2, 7th (ed.), Longman, the University of Wisconsin – Madison, 1984.

Dev, Arjun, Indira Arjun Dev; *History of the World: From the Late Nineteenth to the Early Twenty-First Century*, Orient Blackswan, 2009.

### Endnotes

1. H P Willmott, *World War I*, New York, 2003, p. 307.
2. I. Geiss, *Origins of the First World War*, in Koch (ed.), *Origins*, p. 46.
3. S.B. Fay, *The Origins of the First World War*, 1928, p. i-2.
4. N. Lowe, *Mastering Modern World History*, 1982, Chennai, p. 8.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
6. S. B. Fay, *The Origins of the First World War*, 1928.
7. C.J.H. Hayes, *Contemporary Europe: Since 1870*, 1981, Delhi, p. 410.

# UNIT 2 RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

## Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 Russian Revolution: Causes and Course
  - 2.1 Causes for the Outbreak of the Revolution
  - 2.2 Course of the Russian Revolution
  - 2.3 Lenin's Leadership
- 3 Economic and Social Reconstruction in Soviet Union under Lenin and Stalin
  - 3.1 The Communist Party and its Socio-Economic Policies
  - 3.2 Framing of the Constitution
  - 3.3 Impact of the Russian Revolution
  - 3.4 Russia under Stalin
  - 3.5 Socio-Economic Reconstruction of Soviet Union under Stalin
  - 3.6 Socio-Political Changes under Stalin
  - 3.7 Changes in Soviet Society under the Communists
- 4 Summary
- 5 Key Terms
- 6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 7 Questions and Exercises
- 8 Further Reading

## 0 INTRODUCTION

One of the important causes of the February Revolution was the 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 low morale, began to fraternize with the enemy. However, the 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. Soon Russia witnesses 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.

The Russian Revolution is considered as one of the most significant events in human history. As already mentioned, it led to the end of the Tsarist rule and the establishment of a Republic. It is credited with transforming a deprived Tsarist Russia into a super power, under Lenin, Stalin and other leaders. The Revolution challenged the values of Western culture such as democracy and capitalism. The Revolution had instilled a feeling of empowerment in the proletariat and created a fear of the proletariat power among the capitalists all over the world. It was being claimed that the proletariat



had nothing to lose, but everything to gain. The influence of Marxism could be seen in people. Its impact was felt in the basic principles of trade and industry; the systems of governance; the methods of diplomacy; and the social, economic and political institutions. It had an irresistible appeal to the proletarians and hence struck terror in the capitalists' minds throughout the world. As far as the economic field is concerned, the Russian Revolution led to the emergence of concepts like economic planning or Five-Year Plans and the centralization of the national economy.

In this unit, you will learn about the various aspects of the Russian Revolution (February Revolution and the October or Bolshevik Revolution) of 1917.

---

## 1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

---

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the causes, course and impact of the Russian Revolution
- Discuss Lenin's and Stalin's policies
- Explain the various changes under the Communist

---

## 2 RUSSIAN REVOLUTION: CAUSES AND COURSE

---

The First World War placed an unbearable strain on Russia's weak government and economy, resulting in hunger mass shortages. In the meantime, the mismanagement and failures of the war turned people, and particularly soldiers, against the Tsar. The soldiers felt that Tsar's decision to take personal command of the army was responsible for their defeat. The revolution against the Tsars began in Petrograd by the workers in response to the shortage of bread. People believed that the government was hoarding bread in order to increase the prices. However, a revolt by the workers', by itself, was 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 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 did the socialist political parties become 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 Aleksandra, 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.

### **Ominous Beginning of Nicholas' Rule**

Nicholas's rule began on ominous notes. As the future Tsarina Aleksandra first appeared officially in Russia during Alexander III's funeral, people said, 'She arrives behind a coffin, she will bring bad luck.'

To mark the coronation of a new Tsar, it was the Russian tradition to offer food and drink to the masses. When Nicholas came to the throne, about 700,000 people were assembled in Khodynskoe field to celebrate it, but a stampede occurred and 2000 people were crushed to death.

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. 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 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.

## **2.1 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 to twentieth century international historical analysis. Even the major causes of this unrest of the common people towards Tsar Nicholas II and aristocratic landowners are numerous and complicated.

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 cruel treatment of peasants by the landowners, experience of poor working conditions by labourers and workers in 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.

### **I. Series of bad judgements by the Tsar**

The Tsar system failed due to incorrect moves and judgments made by the Tsar. During World War I, the troops were busy battling Germany due to which it was not possible to send forces to war against the Russian revolutionaries. The Tsar did not estimate the magnitude of the revolts in Petrograd properly. His generals tried convincing him that



the situation could only be tackled by the Duma. Strict censorship laws were imposed and all political dissidence was suppressed. These added to the reasons for the Revolution. These events resulted in the collapse of the autocratic system that had existed for centuries, and made the Russians miserable.

The Revolution began as a peaceful bread protest on International Women's Day. It was not the poor harvest that was responsible for the shortage of bread but the burden on the railways. Due to the war, the railways were overloaded and were not in a position to deliver grains to areas in the north. By the middle of February, Petrograd had just enough flour to last for ten days. The army recruited all the skilled labourers whereas the rail network was divided into segments under the control of the government and the military. This only added fuel to the public's belief that bread was being hoarded by the government in order to raise prices. The outcome was that the Tsarist rule invited a lot of public wrath and became highly unpopular because it was unable to supply, deliver and distribute food.

The suffering and discontented masses took the form of unruly mobs with support to their protest being lent by demonstrations by the factory workers of Petrograd, who were more militant in nature. In addition, the labourers of Putilov steel works and the textile workers went on strike. The crowd grew in number to more than 200,000 within a matter of three days. It looked more like a public revolt, an uprising, instead of a simple workers' protest or strike. Of course, the workers did play a significant role and were quite active in the demonstrations. In general, the protest transformed into a peasants' revolt with the disturbed crowd often getting violent.

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 slogans — 'down with autocracy' and 'stop the war'. On 22 January, 1905, several workers led by Gapon headed in the direction of royal with a petition for the Tsar listing out their complaints and grievances. The royal troupes opened fire at them to stop them. While many died, there were strikes in different parts of the country. The event went down in history as the 'Slaughter of Bloody Sunday'. As a result, there was a revolt within the army and the general Duke Sergus, uncle to the Tsar, was murdered. At last, Tsar Nicholas II was forced to issue a Manifesto in October 1905.

### ***International Women's Day's Connection with the Russian Revolution***

International Women's Day (8 March) is celebrated by women's groups across the globe. The idea of a day like this germinated at the dawn of the century. As per a





declaration by the Socialist Party of America, on 28 February, 1909, National Women's Day was celebrated for the very first time across the United States. Women continued the tradition, celebrating on the last Sunday of February. While the First World War was on, Russian women celebrated the first International Women's Day on the last Sunday of February 1913. Following the death of 2 million Russian in the War, Russian women once again decided to strike for 'bread and peace' on the last Sunday of February (23 February as per the Julian calendar being followed by the Russians, and 8 March according to the Gregorian calendar used elsewhere) 1917. Though politicians disapproved of the time of the strike, it did not stop the women from striking. Four days later, the Tsar was forced to step down, and the provisional government gave women the right to exercise their vote.

It was not protesting workers alone who transformed a mass-demonstration into a revolution. The government in Petrograd had also lost its power and authority when the forces from the garrison at Petrograd rose in mutiny in response to carnage at Znamenskii Square. A popular location for rallies and political gatherings, this Square was witness to a massacre when the forces of the Pavlovskii Guard Regiment opened fire at a crowd that refused to dissolve. Forty civilians lost their lives forcing the angry garrison of Petrograd to rise in mutiny. In the absence of a leader, despite transfer of power to the workers to some extent, a revolution was bound to happen. In fact, if the Tsar had acted appropriately and on time, the growth of a small rebellion into a major revolution could have been avoided.

The revolt required an organization's support and guidance to succeed. However, unfortunately, several leaders of political parties who had hoped to benefit from the revolt were in exile. A majority of the socialists did not see a revolution happening as foreseen by Lenin who had been doubtful of being witness to a revolution. As socialist revolutionary, Sergei Mstislavsky, had aptly stated, 'the revolution had surely come as a surprise, as if it had sprung on the members of the party when they were asleep'. When the February revolution was still in an immature stage, there was hardly any political involvement, especially from the socialists. Political parties kept themselves abreast of the goings on by getting information from each other over the telephone. The absence of organization was quite clear. The revolution of February 1917 cannot really be called a political revolution with total chaos and disarray of the socialist parties being its highlights.

Even the political parties could not really affirm that the protests were political. According to Alexander Gavrilovich Shliapnikov, who was a Russian communist revolutionary known for his memoirs of the October Revolution of 1917, the crowd seemed happy with their bread and were willing to dissolve and go away once they got that. Even the Tsar doubted whether these minor protests would take the form of a revolution. He hardly paid any heed to the reports that came from Petrograd dismissing them as nonsense. However, when he was informed of the worsening protests, which took on the form of a rebellion, he ordered that the Duma be dissolved, on 28 February 1917. He sent forces against the protestors. In response, the Duma created an executive committee while the soldiers and workers got together to form a Soviet, which acted as a rival to the Duma, in the left wing of the Tauride Palace.

The Soviet was powerful enough to control the streets but it was not legally authorized to rule. The Duma on the other hand, was legally authorized to rule but had no control over the streets. By his delayed response to the protests, the Tsar proved that a power base had come up in the Soviet, with which a collaboration of the autocratic system could not happen. There could be only two possibilities — either a full revolution



or full military suppression by armies already stretched too much. Full control by the military seemed a little far-fetched because of the ongoing war with Germany. If forces were called back from the war front to contain the revolutionaries, they would have to definitely face defeat from the Germans. The Tsar ordered General Ivanov to send forces to Petrograd and help bring back law and order in the capital. Neither General Ivanov nor the Tsar could estimate the degree of revolutionary activities. Only after a consultation with General Khabalov did General Ivanov get the real picture. Khabalov informed Ivanov that the revolutionaries had taken over the city and arrested the ministers. This information led Ivanov to realize the futility of the offensive. However, the decision had been made, and Tsar hardly had any other option but to step down. As Rodzianko also confirmed, the rebels would not settle for anything less than the Tsar's resignation.

With no let up in the frequency of strikes and mutinies, supplies at the front were being cut. It was feared that the chaos and disturbance in the capital would impact the front, which was not very far away. If that happened, there was a possibility of mass desertion within the army. The Tsar's generals advised Nicholas to step down for the sake of saving Russia's war effort. They felt it would satiate those who had risen in mutiny in Petrograd. Nicholas consented to resign and at first declared Alexis, his son, as his successor.

Yet another factor that led to the fall of the Tsar was that fact that he relied too much on a psychic called Rasputin, who was also a mystic and healer. He has his own unusual methods of curing people of diseases and dealing with human sins. When Alexis was suffering from hemophilia, the Tsarina was suggested that Rasputin be consulted since the doctors were unsuccessful in treating her son. Rasputin managed to somehow provide some relief to Alexis, albeit temporarily. This allowed him entry into the Russian court as an advisor to the Tsars. Being a womanizer, he received a lot of flak at the hands of Russian journalists who criticized his debauchery. Soon, because of him, the subjects started losing confidence in the Tsar. His proximity to Alexandra, the German-born wife of Nicholas, especially when her husband was away, did not go down well with the subjects. They believed that Rasputin was given powers that he did not deserve. Despite Rasputin's assurance that Alexis would recover, Nicholas' son did not improve. As a result, Nicholas gave up hope and declared Mikhail, his brother as his successor. However, on discovering that the Soviet was dead against the Romanov dynasty's reign, Mikhail declined the position putting an end to autocracy and Tsarist regime in Russia.

The February revolution, which start as a minor rebellion grew into a general revolt, all because of the active and significant role played by the workers. The sympathy of the farmers and the soldiers, and the ensuing mutiny snatched the power from the Tsar and handed it to the Soviet and the Duma. The Tsar's inability to judge the situation, his underestimation of the intensity of the revolution and the impact of war proved that he was not capable of suppressing the revolution. When he also failed to restore normalcy in Petrograd, it was suggested that he should step down, which he did in March 1917. His abdication, brought the more than three centuries old Romanov reign in Russia to an end.

It is interesting to note that the city of Petrograd was first known as St. Petersburg. This name was dropped later after the war with Prussia because the term 'burg' was seen as too German. During 1918, the communists were keen on getting rid of any Tsarist legacies, and Petrograd became Leningrad in the honour of Vladimir Lenin. Later in 1991, the name of St. Petersburg was restored to the city.





## II. Economic causes

Economic factors like poverty, misery and exploitation of the masses by the nobility played a major role in the Revolution. In the industrial sphere, Russia was backward and depended only on foreign capital. Because of the industrialization, a number of factories were set up in Russia. A large number of peasants left their jobs to take up jobs at these factories. However, the conditions of work in these factories were quite miserable. They had to work for long hours at deplorable wages. They had to go without any medical relief in case of an accident while on duty. They did not even have a weekly holiday. The workers were not permitted to form trade unions to bargain for better service condition and better salaries, and it was considered a crime to form trade unions. As a result, their economic condition was weak. The concentration of a large number of dissatisfied workers gave rise to the feeling of political consciousness and contributed to anti-Tsarist sentiments.

The condition of peasants was not better. Russia was mainly a backward agricultural country before the Revolution. The royal family, the nobility and the clergy owned most of the agricultural land. The peasants had a very small land holding. Many of them had to earn their livelihood from that small piece of land. In addition to this, they had to make use of primitive tools and methods of cultivation which were not very effective or productive. As a result of this, the poor peasants became poorer because massive sums of rent, tax and tributes were to be paid by them to their landlords every year. Moreover, no attempt was made by the government to improve these conditions.

Due to the above economic factors there was an imbalance in the social structure. Due to this, 70 per cent of the Russian population was illiterate. The social structure of Russia was completely devoid of education, medical relief, and public health. Above all the system prevailing in Russia made Russian social life, highly miserable, inhuman and wretched. This created great discontent among the factory workers and farmers who in order to end this economic and social system were ready to revolt against the Tsarist Government.

## III. Political causes

Political factors also formed an important cause of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Politically, Russia was subjected to autocratic rule of Tsar Nicholas II, who ruled the country in a ruthless and oppressive manner. No doubt as a result of the 1905 Revolution, a parliament had been established in Russia but sovereignty still rested in the hands of the Tsar and his henchmen. There were no constitutional checks on the authority of the Tsar and the people suffered under the autocratic rule. Even the church extended full support to the autocratic rule of the Tsars through the theory of divine rights of kings. Henchmen surrounding the Tsar were also in favour of the autocratic rule and opposed all kinds of reforms.

The Tsar also secured the support of the army by providing them numerous facilities which enabled them to lead a comfortable life. The masses on the other hand had no legal means of improving the social structure. A strike was considered to be a mutiny. The people had no media to ventilate their grievances. All this was naturally resented by the common people who wanted a democratic system of government on the pattern of western democracies be introduced in Russia. People also insisted on an effective share



in the government of the country, and pleaded for the freedom of speech and press as well as equality before law. However, Tsar Nicholas II turned down these demands.

People demonstrated against this ruthless, absolute and repressive Tsarist government in 1905. A peaceful demonstration at St. Petersburg was fired upon by the Tsarist troops. This incident further alienated people from Tsar Nicholas II. Widespread strikes, riots and the famous mutiny on the Battleship Potemkin ensued. Such was the climate in 1905 that Tsar Nicholas saw fit, against his will, to cede the people their wishes. In his October Manifesto, Nicholas II created Russia's first constitution and the Duma, an elected parliamentary body. The Duma (Parliament) had limited powers so it could not intervene immediately in matters relating to the Tsar. Later the growing discontent among the masses manifested itself in all aspects of national life. Till that time the working class became highly receptive to Marxist ideas infiltrating into Russia.

In 1893, the Social Democratic Party was founded and in 1903, this party was split into two; the Bolsheviks led by Nikolai Lenin, and the Mensheviks led by Martov. While the former was revolutionary and supported by Stalin, the latter was evolutionary and was supported by Trotsky. Therefore by 1917, the ground was fully prepared against the Tsar and the growing discontentment among the common people was waiting to burst and turn into a violent revolution. Therefore, historians have observed that the perversity of the Tsar and his blindness to the potential strength of the new forces, which were surging round him, produced the Revolution.

#### **IV. Impact of liberal Western ideas**

The material revolution in Russia was followed by a revolution in the realm of liberal thoughts and ideas. The Russian intellectuals were now divided between the two opposing groups of slavophiles and westernizers. Peter the Great was a westernizer much ahead of his times and that is why influences of Western culture are still apparent in St. Petersburg, a city created under him. The slavophiles and westernizers had completely opposite views on the Russian civilization and how it was to be carried forward. The slavophiles believed in the superiority of the Russian culture over the Western culture, and though they supported the emancipation of serfs and valued the freedom of speech and press, they still believed in an autocratic form of government. The westernizers, as the name suggests, were of the view that western technology and ideals of democracy should be adopted by Russia to march on the road to success. They also believed in socialism, liberalism and political radicalism.

Large number of Russians especially the middle class came in contact with the ideas of progressive writers and they were particularly influenced by the writing of Karl Marx who pleaded for the abolition of capitalism and establishment of a regime where power would be in the hands of the workers and the labourers. The other notable writers and intellectuals whose writings influenced the Russians included Tolstoy, Turgnev and Dostovesky. These writings revolutionized the minds of the Russians in such a way that the educated and the enlightened people called the support of the intelligentsia and demanded political reforms along Western lines. On the other hand, the radicals and the followers of Marx and Bukanin stood for socialism. The Russians at the same time also came in contact with the Western ideas of democracy.

During the First World War, the Allies declared that they are fighting the War for the welfare of general people. The Russians were greatly impressed by this declaration and were determined to fight for the establishment of people's rule in their country. As a result of the 1905 Revolution in Russia people were assured of some sort



of participation in the administration of the country. However, it was not conceded. So the people were determined to get this in actual practice. Under these circumstances nationalism also made its way into Russia which aimed at destroying everything in the existing order of the country. As a consequence of the above factors, demands started becoming louder for the establishment of constitutional and liberal form of government in Russia.

## V. 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, workers will 'inevitably rise 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 democrat, 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 industrialized, and industrial workers were in a big majority over peasants. They had little faith in cooperation 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 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 Tsarist regime, they wanted an agrarian society based on peasant communities operating collectively.

## VI. 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 was nobody left to defend the autocracy. The common people held the Tsar responsible for the miseries suffered by Russia. The suffering caused due to shortage of food and heavy loses of life and money further agitated their minds. They appealed to the Tsar to bring the 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 monopolized 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, realizing that it would be better to sacrifice the Tsar to avoid a revolution that might damage the entire social structure.

## 2.2 Course of the Russian Revolution

The first important event of the Revolution in Russia was the March Revolution or the February Revolution. 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 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. Not only were there strikes and riots but also a mutiny on the battleship Potemkin. The atmosphere was so tense in 1905 that Tsar Nicholas had no option but to give in to the wishes of his subjects. Nicholas was responsible for creating the first Constitution of Russia as well as the State Duma, which was an elected parliamentary body in the Tsar's October Manifesto. However, in trying to safeguard his 'divine right' to reign in Russia, Tsar Nicholas ended up spending a lot of time and effort to check the Duma's powers so that autocracy could be retained to the maximum possible extent. In 1914, following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand by Serbian political activists, the empire of Austria-Hungary waged war against its neighbours. The Serbians turned to the Russians for support. This was seen as an opportunity by Tsar Nicholas II to stir up his subjects against a common enemy, and avenge the humiliation they had faced in the war between Russia and Japan.

### First World War

Russian participation in World War I was nothing short of a disaster. It also put an end to the Tsarist regime that had existed for almost three hundred years. In their first clash with the Germans (who had supported the Austro-Hungarian Empire), at the Battle of Tannenberg, Russia had to accept defeat after losing 120,000 men as compared to Germany's loss of merely 20,000. In the autumn of 1915, Tsar Nicholas decided to travel from St. Petersburg with the aim of taking charge of the army personally and try and check the heavy losses. At about the same time, new recruits and untrained force were being dispatched to the front by Russia. They were ill-equipped to boot. In 1916, the morale of the people was almost zilch. Also, the pressure of war was mounting on proletarian families, whose men were being unfairly killed at the front while their families back home faced starvation. The Tsarist regime was blamed for the situation and there was civil disturbance which strengthened with each passing day.



## **The February–March Revolution (1917)**

As per the Russian calendar, the March Revolution began on 23 February 1917. However, the first revolution actually began on 08 March. On that day, there were bread riots in St. Petersburg, which soon grew into a large-scale demonstration with enraged industrial workers leaving the factories and protesting against the lack of food. Before long, the rioters came out to support them and with encouragement from politicians and social activists, a day later, the number of protestors had grown manifold. All shops, industries and enterprises came to a standstill as the masses went on strike. Tsar Nicholas had hoped for some intervention by the police and military; but the military had lost its faith in the Tsar and many raised mutinies and lent their support to the demonstrations. The entire city was in a state of conflict going on everywhere. Five days later, more than 80,000 from the army rose in mutiny and there were extensive riots and incidents of loot. The Duma and the generals were very sure that the Tsar would have to step down. The older generals advised Nicholas to renounce the crown in order to save the monarchy. As a result of this feeble scenario, Tsar Nicholas stepped down on 15 March, announcing Mikhail as his successor. However, Mikhail declined the throne. He preferred to be elected as the leader by the Duma. He put in his resignation the following day, leaving the Russians without a leader.

### **The Provisional Government**

The leaders of the Duma did not waste any time and formed a Provisional Government. This happened soon after the Romanov dynasty stepped down. The Provisional Government was recognized as Russia's legal government all over the world, till Russia had its elections. However, this government was not vested with any absolute or stable power. The Petrograd Soviet organization, which was a radical trade union of workers and soldiers, was more influential and powerful. It lent support to socialism on a full scale instead of simply democratic reforms, as preferred by the Provisional Government. Following three centuries of autocracy, Russia was consumed with political fervor. However, there were too many parties, groups and factions with varying ideas, which was bound to slow down the process of attaining stability.

### **Emergence of Lenin**

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov or Lenin as he was popularly known, was keen to turn the chaotic situation at St. Petersburg to his advantage. He spent maximum time in working, travelling, and campaigning in Europe. This was probably because he was scared for his own life, as it was common knowledge that he was an enemy of the Tsarist regime. However, after the arrest of the Tsar, and the turbulence that the political scenario in Russia went through, Lenin got the right chance to become leader of his party: the Bolsheviks, and bring it to power. He aimed at taking help from the Germans to make it back to Russia from Switzerland, his home.

He wanted Russia to back out of the Great War, which made the Germans want to give Lenin a safe passage via a 'sealed train'. Russia welcomed Lenin with open arms in April 1917. Instead of aiming at unifying the various parties, Lenin denounced the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet policies and ideologies. In his 'April Theses', published in the Bolshevik newspaper *Pravda*, he expressed his belief in non-cooperation with the liberals (i.e., non-hardline Communists) and putting a stop to the War immediately. At first, his opinions led to the isolation of the Bolsheviks and Lenin



himself. However, slogans, such as 'peace, land and bread', helped Lenin win over the Russians who were getting fed up with poverty, war and starvation:

In the summer of 1917, Lenin tried to start another revolution, with the objective of removing the Provisional Government. He tried to maneuver the Machine Gun Regiment which was unwilling to leave Petrograd (then St. Petersburg) for the front. But, the coup was foiled by Kerensky, one of the most significant faces at the time and a person who was part of the Provisional Government as well as the Petrograd Soviet. Trained and experienced forces entered the city to stifle any dissidence. The Bolsheviks were accused of conniving with the Germans and many were arrested, while Lenin fled to Finland. But this did not stop Lenin from continuing to strategize, plot and scheme. In the meantime, Kerensky had to face political setbacks and also had to request the Bolsheviks to lend him military support when he was afraid that Kornilov, his War Minister, was looking at a military dictatorship. By the time autumn set in, the Bolsheviks were back in terms of popularity. They won maximum votes within the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets and Leon Trotsky was elected president of the Petrograd.

### **The October–November Revolution**

According to the Julian calendar used by Russians then, the Revolution occurred in November 1917, which is why the October Revolution is often called the November Revolution.

Politically, Russia was still unstable when Lenin thought of taking advantage of the popularity of his party. His plan was to get rid of the Provisional Government through a coup. He planned to replace the ineffective Provisional Government with the Bolsheviks. He called a meeting of twelve of his party leaders on 10 October, to convince them about the need for a revolution. Even though only ten out of the twelve supported him, he still continued to plot.

### **Differences between the Provisional Government and the Soviets**

It was only with the arrival of Lenin from Switzerland and Trotsky from America on the scene that the Russian revolutionary movement assumed new direction. They denounced the provisional government of the country as subservient to the bourgeois of England and France, and laid emphasis on true revolution. They demanded for ending the War without annexation and indemnities, and pleaded for the transfer of all powers to the Soviets and abolition of army, the police and the bureaucracy. They supported confiscation of all estates, nationalization of all land and merger of all banks into a national bank under the Soviet control.

On the other hand, the provincial government headed by Kerensky continued to work for the introduction of parliamentary institutions on the Western pattern in Russia. However, the provisional government and the Soviets were sharply divided on the issues of democratization of the army and Russian foreign policy. The provisional government was opposed to democratization of army while the Soviets favoured it.

On 1 March 1917, the Soviet issued an order which provided for establishment of elective committees in every army unit, the sending of delegates to the Soviet by each unit, the control of all political activities in the army and army committees by the Soviet, the abolition of compulsory salute and simplified formulas for addressing the officers, etc. On the issue of foreign policy sharp differences existed between the Soviet and the provisional government. While the government considered the revolution as a protest



against the ineffective conduct of the War by the imperial regime and insisted on pursuing till victory, the Soviet measure stood for ending of the War with immediate effect and demanded peace without annexation and indemnities. It aimed to put necessary pressure through mass demonstrations to bring the imperial foreign policy to an end.

In view of the sharp differences between the government and Soviets, much could not be accomplished. However, it goes to the credit of the provisional government that it succeeded in ending the autocratic rule of the Tsars. It declared Russia as a Republic and courageously tackled the problem of nationality. It also put the Poles and the Finns on the road to independence, encouraged cooperatives in place of private enterprises, and passed a number of laws concerning civil right, prison reforms, equal rights for women, universal suffrage, and religious freedom. But its policies in the field of land reforms were not encouraging. It also failed to exercise proper control over the armies.

### **Rise of the Bolsheviks**

The growing unrest among workers, peasants, soldiers, and the prevailing anarchical condition in the country were fully exploited by the Bolsheviks under Lenin. They promised nationalization of land as well as banks and industries and won popular support. Due to this, the Bolsheviks came out victorious in the elections to towns and provincial Soviets. By promising the much desired peace they also won over soldiers to their side. Encouraged by its growing popularity, the Bolsheviks decided to start an armed uprising. They intensified propaganda for direct action and formed their own Red Guards. As a result, a large number of soldiers left the ranks and peasants continued to capture lands from the proprietors through plunder and violence.

In October 1917, Lenin created the Military Revolutionary Committee which gave the Bolsheviks an effective control over the troops in Petrograd. The Bolsheviks had already raised the armed factory workers as the Red Guards. Lenin wanted to take full advantage of the existing national mood and favoured a revolt at an early date. A Politburo, an inner group of the Committee, was formed to take necessary decision in this regard. On the other hand, the Provisional Government of Russia led by Kerensky proceeded with certain counter measures to meet the Bolshevik threat. But as the provisional government did not enjoy sufficient authority, it could not succeed in containing the Bolsheviks.

### **Provisional government overthrown**

Before the Revolution, the common people of Russia expected the autocracy of the Tsarist system to be replaced by a democratic republic with an elected parliament. As per the wishes of the people, Duma was set up in 1906 under the pressure of the Russian Revolution of 1905. In July 1917, Alexander Kerensky a moderate socialist took over as the Prime Minister. But, due to his limited authority, the Duma also faced several problems like the Tsars.

Taking advantage of this atmosphere on 20 October 1917, the Bolsheviks executed the long planned coup and overthrew the Kerensky government. On 24 October crucial positions in the city were taken over by the troops loyal to the Bolsheviks. These included the main offices of telephone and telegraph, banks, railroad stations, post offices, and major bridges. Guards who were commissioned by the Provisional Government, and who had got wind of the plot, fled or surrendered without a fight.



By 25 October, Bolsheviks controlled every key building in St. Petersburg, except the Winter Palace where Kerensky and the other ministers were held up. Before the Bolsheviks could catch Kerensky, he fled the Palace, never to return to Russia, but his ministers were arrested. On the 26, the Palace was seized with barely a shot fired, and the October Revolution of Lenin achieved its objective with the bare minimum of violence or bloodshed. The Provisional Government was abolished and the power passed on to the hands of the Revolutionary Military Committee. Apart from Georgia, Ukraine and Cossack, the Bolsheviks did not encounter much resistance from any other part of Russia and easily captured power.

### **Formation of Soviet Government under Lenin**

The All Russians Congress of the Soviet of Workers and Soldiers, which met on 25 October 1917, approved the coup, which was accomplished by the Bolsheviks with success. Subsequently the Congress authorized the setting up of a new government under the leadership of Lenin. The new government was to be known as the Soviet of People's Commissars. This confirmed that the Bolsheviks had acquired full control over Petrograd and Moscow.

However, most of the country was still independent of control. Fighting lasted a week in Moscow before the Soviet won control and it was the end of November before other cities were brought under control. Very few people expected the Bolshevik government to last long because of the complexity of the problems facing it. As soon as the other political groups recovered from the shock of the Bolshevik coup, there was bound to be some determined opposition. At the same time, they had somehow to extricate Russia from the War and then set about repairing the shattered economy, while at the same time keeping their promises about land and food for the peasants and workers.

### **Causes for the victory of Bolsheviks**

Despite trouble in various parts of the country and active intervention of the Allied powers, the Bolsheviks came out victorious in the October Revolution. Various factors contributed to the victory of the Bolsheviks. First, the opponents of the Bolsheviks were dis-united and as a result the Bolsheviks were able to shift their focus on the front where they were most needed.

Second, the Bolsheviks control over the interior lines of communications and railways greatly helped them in meeting the challenges. Third, the Bolsheviks carried on an effective propaganda against their enemies, which created dissent in the ranks of the opponents.

Finally, the Red Army which was raised by the Bolsheviks fought with missionary zeal backed by Communist party members who were inspired by high sense of discipline and were willing to undertake any task assigned to them by the Party without any hope of reward. It contributed to the ultimate victory of the Bolsheviks in the Revolution.

### **2.3 Lenin's Leadership**

Lenin's success as the leader of the Russian Revolution was mainly based on his comprehensive knowledge of Marxist theory. After analyzing the aims and intricacies of deteriorating capitalism and increasing socialism, he derived certain sensible conclusions. Lenin wished to guide the Communist Party across the world through the path of liberty and prosperity. Marxism had benefitted a lot from Lenin's analyses and theoretical studies.





Lenin can be credited for the following:

- Study of the parasitic nature of imperialism
- Analysis of crumbling capitalism
- Evaluation and assessment of various branches of science in the light of dialectical materialism
- Elaboration of the theory of irregular development of capitalism and its influence on imperialist war, proletarian revolution and the establishment of socialism in one country
- Explanation of the technique of transformation of imperialist war to civil war
- Analysis of the capitalist state and the domination of the proletariats
- Clarification of the role of the peasants in the revolution
- Solutions to several theoretical and practical issues
- Annihilation of pseudo-revolutionary groups through strong arguments, such as the Narodniks, Economists, Mensheviks, etc.
- Theoretical and organizational strengthening and unification of the Bolshevik Party, which ultimately became responsible for its success

Lenin was known to be a bold and resourceful politician who showed a great deal of flexibility when it came to political strategizing. He emphasized that the Revolution would survive on separate mass actions or general policies. In fact, the originality of this policies amazed one and all. There were several instances where Lenin had to put in extra effort to convince the majorities who went against his policies in Central Committee of the Party. He managed to convince everyone of the need of his proposals and how correct they were. He even managed to thwart the attempts of sabotaging elements, such as Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin and Trotsky.

He proved to be a great leader when the struggle of the masses after the war transformed into armed rebellion. His leadership skills led to the successful boycott of the first Duma and the conversion of the imperialist World War into civil war in Russia. He managed to resolutely support the Party against the Provisional Government in 1917. He was bold in allowing the development of the Soviets into the mass bodies or agencies, which caused the downfall of the capitalist, war-making regime. He mobilized the masses to thwart the Kornilov revolt, and simultaneously continued the revolt against Kerensky. Lenin was good at making political strategies and managed to successfully determine the right time and way of achieving the October Revolution. He proved to be the most accurate and able Marxian leader for the Party and the commoners.

Lenin tried to save the revolution from an attack from the imperialists by signing the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty, in the years that followed the struggle of the revolution in Russia. He was at the helm during the Civil War and during the complications of War Communism. He took on the challenge of not only drawing up but also elaborating on the New Economic Policy, which would help reconstruct the economy in the crumbling country. He also checked the rise of the Leftist revolutionaries who were not willing to work within the trade unions and middle class parliaments.

---

### **7.3 ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION IN SOVIET UNION UNDER LENIN AND STALIN**

---

After assuming power, the Bolshevik Government acted with great synergy and speed under the leadership of Lenin. One of the first actions which the government took was to conclude an amnesty without annexations or indemnities, with right of self determination



for all the people. But as France, Great Britain and the United States were not willing to negotiate peace on the terms announced by the Bolsheviks, the latter proceeded to conclude the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany. No doubt the terms of the Treaty were dictated by Germany, and it was a severe blow to the working class of Russia, the Russian Government accepted these terms to remain in power in Russia.

Also in the domestic sphere, the Bolsheviks introduced a number of changes. All estates of state, church and private owners were confiscated and handed over to the Volost land Committee. These lands were acquired without giving any compensation to the landlords. The banks, industries and means of transport and communication were nationalized. Laws were passed for the protection of women, minors and mineworkers. The working hours were fixed at eight hours a day. Civil ranks and classes were abolished. Insurance and price regulations were introduced. All pre-war loans of the Tsarist regime were declared null and void. Registration of births, marriages and deaths were made compulsory. Only civil marriages were recognized.

Religious institutions and Church were separated from the state and religious education in the schools was stopped. In the army all titles and class distinctions were abolished. Committees of soldiers were set up and elections of the officers were introduced. The inheritance of property was abolished and a programme to abolish illiteracy was launched. The courts were abolished and replaced by people's tribunals. The extraordinary commission or *Cheka* replaced the police system, which had completely collapsed during the Revolution. The Red Army was created and was charged with the defence with the socialist fatherland. The problem of nationalities was solved by promising the right of self-determination to all groups of the empire.

After coming to power, the Bolsheviks continued the formal Assembly proceedings of the constituent. However, ultimately in 1918 when the Assembly met the Bolsheviks; a demand was made that the Assembly should surrender all its powers to them and acknowledge the authority of the Congress of Soviets. After Assembly's unwillingness to do so, the Bolshevik entered the Hall of the Assembly and dissolved it. The action of the Bolsheviks was opposed by the civil servants, church, peasants and even the general public. Due to their strikes the whole administrative machinery was out of gear. However, unmindful of all this opposition the All Russian Congress of the Soviets which met four years after the dissolution of the Assembly adopted 'the Declaration of the Rights of Labouring and Exploited Masses'. Russia was declared, 'Republic of Soviets, of Workers, Soldiers and Peasants Deputies' and a 'free union of free nation'.

Under the new communist government, Russia's imperialist ambitions took a new form in the shape of the Treaty of Non-Aggression between Germany and the Soviet Union, also known as the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. The treaty was a non-aggression pact that was ratified by Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov and German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop on 23 August 1939. During this period, the Soviet Union was involved in a war with Japan over Nomonhan.

The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact offered non-interference by the Russians in the Germans' invasion of Poland a week after the Soviets were triumphant over the Japanese. Germany promised under the pact that it would not get into a military alliance with Japan. This way Stalin did not have to fear Germany in its war with Japan. The Soviet Union also offered to stay away from any war in Europe. When the war with Japan was concluded, the Soviet forces invaded Poland on 17 September



1939. The pact was honoured by both sides until 22 June 1941, when Germany invaded Soviet Union.

The pact had not only offered promises of non-aggression; it also comprised a secret protocol dividing Romania, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland into German and Soviet spheres of influence, anticipating potential 'territorial and political rearrangements' of these countries. Soon, Poland was divided between Germany and Soviet Union. The Soviets also captured Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and the Hertza region later.

### 3.1 The Communist Party and its Socio-Economic Policies

In March 1918, the Bolsheviks, which were hitherto known as the 'Russian Social Democratic Labour Party', renamed themselves as the Russian Communist Party. Slowly they captured all major posts in the government, army; trade unions and other similar organizations. The Communist Party then proceeded to reshape the entire national system. It adopted social policies, and passed a number of laws to this effect. Private ownership of all lands including that of the peasants was abolished. Rigid food controls were introduced and the prices were fixed.

The State started collecting a share of the grain directly from the farms with the help of armed forces. In February 1919 the first state farm was created. The key industries were nationalized and private trading, banks and private property were abolished. All foreign trade was nationalized. These changes introduced with a view to protect and promote the interest of workers proved disastrous. The rule that farmers had to handover the surplus foodgrains to the government without payment further encouraged them to produce only as much as was sufficient to meet their bare necessities.

### 3.2 Framing of the Constitution

The Communist Government worked without a constitution for some time. However, in April 1918 it appointed a committee to draft a constitution which was duly prepared and rectified by the Fifth Congress of Soviets on 10 July 1918. The Constitution declared Russia 'A Republic of Soviets, of Workers, Soldiers and Peasants Deputies' and gave it the name of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic or RSFSR. This Constitution remained operative till 1936 when it was replaced by a new Constitution.

The Constitution was mainly a statement of the principles based on the Communist Manifesto and a confirmation of what had been done by the Bolsheviks since the assumption of power. The Constitution started with the declarations of the rights of the toiling, and exploited masses and asserted that the objective of the Soviet government was to establish a Socialist society not only in Russia but also in other countries. It sought to suppress the bourgeoisie and prevent exploitation of man by man. It also granted to the Soviet citizens certain civil rights including the right to freedom of religion and anti-religious propaganda, freedom of assembly, right of the workers and peasant to have free education, etc.

The Constitution retained the existing political structure based on Soviet system. All authority remained with the Soviets elected through open voting by all persons above the age of 18. The Chief Legislative Authority of the country was vested with the Constitution in the All Russian Congress of Soviets. But in reality, the real power rested with the eighteen People's Commissioners chosen by the Central Executive



Committee. Thus, the Constitution which was created to strengthen democratic values concentrated all authority in the hands of Bolsheviks or Communists.

Under the leadership of Lenin, Russia was now world's first Communist State, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR). Power was held by the Communist party and no other parties were allowed. The main political problem now for Lenin was disagreement and criticism inside the Communist party. In March 1921, Lenin banned factionalism within the Communist party. This meant that discussion would be allowed, but once a decision had been taken, all sections of the party had to stick to it. Anybody who persisted in holding a different view from the official party line would be expelled from the party. During the rest of 1921, about one-third of the party members were expelled with the help of the ruthless secret policy. Lenin also rejected the claim of the trade unions that they should run industry. Traders unions had to do as the government told them and their main function was to increase production.

In May 1922, Lenin suffered a stroke and after this he gradually grew weaker, suffered two more strokes, until he died in January 1924 at the age of 53. His mission of completing the Revolution by introducing a fully Communist State was not finished, and the successful Communist revolutions which Lenin had predicted in other countries had not taken place. This left the USSR isolated with an uncertain future. Though his health had been falling for some time, Lenin had made no clear plans about how the government was to be organized after his death and which meant a power struggle was inevitable. Lenin remains a controversial figure to date but some historians admire him. To quote A.J.P Taylor, 'Lenin did more than any other political figure to change the face of the twentieth century world. The creation of Soviet Russia and its survival were due to him'.

### **3.3 Impact of the Russian Revolution**

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 was an event of great significance. It not only uprooted the autocratic rule in Russia which had existed for many centuries, but also abolished the class distinction which characterized the Russian society. It laid the foundations of a new society in which the church ceased to be an important political factor. Private property, ownership of land and wealth of every other kind were abolished. The means of production and most of the distribution system came under the direct control of the state. Every peasant was given sufficient land to support his family. The management of the factories was entrusted to a council of the workers which worked under the supervision of the national labour organization. Better education facilities were provided to all sections of the students and military education became compulsory. National education which was controlled by the church was nationalized. Department of Education was set up which looked after the education system of the country. The wards of peasants and workers were provided free education. All the treaties concluded by the autocratic government of Russia were annulled. Even the loans taken by the farmers were waived.

The new Bolshevik government tried to build a technologically sound economy through the instrument of economic planning. With the support of the State through the Five Year Plans the industrialization of the country was expedited. With a view to attain social and economic equality the entire resources of the country were mobilized to attain an accelerated rate of economic growth.

In contrast to the policies of the autocratic Tsarist regime, the new government tried to eliminate discrimination towards non-Russian nationalities. All the nationalities



were assured equal representation in one or two chambers of the USSR legislature. The republics formed by these foreign nationals were given considerable autonomy. They were given the freedom to develop their languages and cultures.

The Bolshevik Revolution also had many negative impacts. The Revolution led to institutions of censorship of press, speech and assembly. The Bolsheviks outlawed all the middle-class political parties as well as other Socialist parties. It also marked the beginning of the establishment of first secret policing system. In the international sphere as well, this Revolution left a profound influence. The successful accomplishment of the Revolution in accordance with the ideas of Marx provided a platform to similar revolutions in other parts of the world. The Russian leaders organized the Comintern and tried to promote revolutions on an international scale. The Comintern deliberated 'by all available means, including armed force, for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie and for the creation of an international Soviet republic as a transition stage to the complete abolition of the State'. They encouraged the formation of the Communist parties in other countries which were affiliated to the Comintern.

As a result of all these measures, Socialism became one of the most widely practised ideologies within a few decades of its emergence. The spread of socialist ideas greatly contributed to the growth of internationalism. The nations of the world came to realize that they must not merely try to promote their narrow interests and must look at problems in the broader world context. This outlook was totally opposed to the policy of imperialism and greatly contributed to its abolition. The Russian Revolution also struck terror in the minds of the ruling class of capitalist states. Analyzing its impact historians have opined that, 'Certainly nothing has let loose such a deluge of condemnation and eulogy and nothing has so completely challenged orthodox theories since the France revolutionists overthrew the Bourbons. The Russians in a few years have set up standards for a new way of living and thinking'.

The communist ideology that prevailed in the Soviet Union during this period was Marxism-Leninism. This ideology sought to create an international communist organization under a vanguard party leadership having a revolutionary socialist state at its core being dictated by the proletariat. The ascension of Joseph Stalin brought with it the spread of this ideology in the Soviet Union. The leadership tried to eliminate everything that represented bourgeois culture. It tried to promote universal atheism and dedicated its efforts towards the abolition of religion. It had no place for bourgeois democracy and empowered the proletariat. It endorsed socialist form of economy where the state owns the means of production.

György Lukács, the Hungarian Marxist scholar, Lukács concentrated on developing Leninist ideas in the field of philosophy. His basic works in this duration were the essays collected in his magnum opus *History and Class Consciousness*, first published in 1923. Though these essays showed signs of what Lenin described as 'ultra-leftism', they debatably carry through his attempt of providing Leninism with a better theoretical basis than did Lenin himself.

As a Hungarian exile, he continued to be active on the left wing of Hungarian Communist Party, and his 'Blum theses' of 1928 called to put an end to the counter-revolutionary regime of Admiral Horthy by a strategy that was similar to the Popular Fronts of the 1930s. He promoted a 'democratic dictatorship' of the proletariat and peasantry as a transitional stage that lead to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lukács's strategy was rejected by the Comintern and after that he drew back from active politics and concentrated on theoretical work.





The Institute for Social Research at Frankfurt with its scholars like Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse provided a fresh perspective to Marxism, with their Hegelian perspective. These Marxist scholars believed that the social system is a totality in which all the aspects reflected the same essence. When they analyzed the modern culture, they talked about the one dimensional nature of modern cultural existence. Their experience of Fascism in Germany and commercialism in America made them have that kind of a view. It is important to note here that the Institute was exiled in 1933, and was relocated in New York, but finally returned to Frankfurt in 1950.

Marxism was seen in a positive light by the Leninist and social-democratic thinkers too. The theorists of the Frankfurt School relied fundamentally on the epistemology of Karl Marx's theories. They emphasized that Marx tried to establish a branch of critical analysis that was aimed at unifying theory and practice. Therefore, what was aimed at was the prevalent ideology that was to be critiqued in comparison with the social realities of the time predominantly social inequality and exploitation. This was referred to as the dialectical method created initially by Hegel and Marx.

### 3.4 Russia under Stalin

Joseph Djughashvili, after joining the Bolsheviks in 1904 took the name Stalin or 'man of steel'. He was born in 1879 in the small town of Gori in the province of Georgia. His parents were poor peasants. Joseph's mother wanted him to become a priest and he was educated for four years at Tiflis Theological Seminary, but he hated its repressive atmosphere and was expelled in 1899 for spreading socialist ideas. Due to his administrative qualities, Djughashvili was able to build up his own position under Lenin. When Lenin died in 1924, Stalin was Secretary-General of the Communist party and a member of the seven member politburo, the Committee which decided government policy. At first it seemed unlikely that Stalin would become the dominant figure in Russia after Lenin. Trotsky called him 'the party's most eminent mediocrity or a man who is destined to play second or third fiddle'. Lenin thought him to be stubborn and rude, and suggested in his will that Stalin should be removed from his post. The most obvious successor to Lenin was Trotsky, an inspired orator, an intellectual, a man of action and the organizer of the Red Army. However, Trotsky's brilliance worked against him and circumstances arose which Stalin was able to use to eliminate his rivals.

As Secretary-General of the party Stalin had used his position. He had full powers of appointment and promotion. He used this power to place his own supporters in various key positions of the party, and at the same time removed the supporters of others to distant parts of the country. Later, a split occurred between Bukharin on the one hand, and Kemenev and Zinoviev on the other, who were feeling unhappy about New Economic Policy (NEP). In this situation Stalin supported Bukharin and Trotsky, Kemenev and Zinoviev voted out of the politburo replaced by Stalin's supporters and they were finally expelled from the party in 1927. When Bukharin protested against the NEP, he too was expelled in 1929 and Stalin remained as the supreme leader. Having reached the pinnacle, Stalin found that Russia was facing many problems in the economic front, in the political and social front, and in foreign relations.

Stalin who was considered as Russia's supreme leader further developed Marxism-Leninism through various invaluable theoretical accomplishments. His principal contributions to the theory of Marxism lie in pointing towards the path of the actual building of Socialism in the USSR. Thus, his 'powerful polemics against Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin and their counter-revolutionary affiliates comprised the greatest ideological



struggle of the age'. They specified every aspect of the vast and unique problem of building Socialism in one country, and surveyed international capitalism whole position. They resulted in a decisive victory for the Communist Party leadership and, thereby, of Socialism.

The foundations of Socialism were laid by Marx and Engels by establishing its primary scientific principles. Lenin was the theoretician of 'the revolutionary seizure of power and the establishment of the fundamental institutions of Socialism'. The profound Marxist analysis of the capitalist system and the class struggle was further developed by him, carrying it into the era of imperialism. The complete Marxist-Leninist structure was raised by Stalin to another level by exposing the path to the actual building of Socialism and the development towards Communism.

Stalin was a great strategist and showed a high intellect of political strategy. Stalin had Lenin's boldness, flexibility and clear-sightedness. It was important to note that in the various difficult strategical moves that Lenin worked out, Stalin found himself in agreement with him, despite the fact that at times many Central Committee members were uncertain, unsure or in opposition. This quick glance of the true meaning of policies formulated by Lenin was a sign of the Stalin's great strategical ability which he displayed after Lenin's death in 1924.

Stalin's greatest masterpiece of political strategy, similar to his main theoretical work, was that of building Socialism in Russia. Under his leadership there was an intense drive to industrialize the USSR and to collectivize its agriculture. He started the First Five-Year Plan which began in 1929, and made the Soviet Union the second industrialized country of the world with the most advanced agricultural organization. Important complementary features of this great task of Socialist construction were the timely economic and political liquidation of the *Nepmen* (small traders) and the *kulaks* (rich farmers).

### **2.3.5 Socio-Economic Reconstruction of Soviet Union under Stalin**

Though Russian industry was recovering from the impacts of the First World War, production from all the major industries was still surprisingly low. In contrast, the production of countries like Germany, France and USA was way ahead. At this point Stalin believed that a rapid expansion of the heavy industry was essential to enable Russia to deal with the attack from the Western capitalists who hated communism.

Stalin realized that industrialization was indispensable to gain the support for the government because he believed the industrial workers were the real communists in relation to the peasants and considered peasants as the enemies of Socialism. However, at that point of time the industry workers were less in number in comparison to the peasants. One serious obstacle to overcome this situation was lack of capital for industrial expansion, since foreigners were unwilling to invest in Russia under a communist rule.

The primitive agricultural system which was allowed to continue under NEP was incapable in providing good harvest and create surplus resources for the country. Although Stalin had no economic experience, he explained in 1931 that why Russia was 100 years behind the advanced countries. He said 'we must make good this distance in 10 years by taking both the industry and agriculture firmly under government control'. For that he had introduced many economic reforms designed to overcome the economic problems in the shortest possible time. The key initiatives by Stalin for the socio-economic reconstruction of Soviet Union had the following major ingredients:



## 1. Five-Year Plans

The series of Five-Year Plans tackled the industrial expansion. In 1928–32, the First Five-Year Plan was introduced, and in 1933–37 the Second Five-Year Plan; and these were said to have been completed the tasks a year ahead of schedule, although both of these never reached the full target. 'The First Plan concentrated on heavy industry, coal, iron, steel, oil and machinery including tractors for cultivation and emphasized to raise the level of output.' Some increase in consumer goods as well as in heavy industry was provided by these two subsequent plans.

Despite shortcomings and some exaggeration of the official Soviet figures, the plans succeeded remarkably. The USSR had overtaken Britain in iron and steel production by 1940, but not in coal, and it was within the reach of Germany. Many factories were built, many of these in new towns on the east of the Ural Mountains, for example the iron and steel works at Magnitogorsk, tractor works at Kharkov, and Gorki, hydroelectric dam at Dnepropetrovsk and the oil refineries in the Caucasus, where they would be safer from invasions. The investment on these projects was entirely paid by the Russian government by charging heavily from the peasants and from exporting grain. By recruiting thousands of foreign technicians and ruthlessly enforcing discipline in factory, Stalin achieved the Five Year Plan targets.

Commenting on the successful implementation of the Five-Year Plans Ivar Spector said, 'In spite of all obstacles, the Five Year Plans laid the foundation of a powerful iron and steel industry in the Soviet Union, including the establishment of the new centers of heavy industry in Siberia. In complete contrast with efforts under the Tsarist regime to Westernize Russia the new industrial offensive was conducted without recourse to foreign loans and without returning to the policy of foreign concessions, characteristic of the new economic policy, although quantities of industrial equipment were obtained on credit terms ranging from six months to several years.'<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Industrialization

Resources mobilization by state planning expanded the industrial base of the country. From 1928 to 1932, peak iron output, necessary for the industrial infrastructure's further development rose from 3.3 million to 6.2 million tonne per year. Coal, the essential product fueling modern economies and industrialization, successfully rose from 35.4 million to 64 million tonne, and iron ore output rose from 5.7 million to 19 million tonne. Many industrial complexes such as Magnitogorsk and Kuznetsk, the Moscow and Gorky automobile plants, the Urals and Kramatorsk heavy machinery plants, and Kharkov, Stalingrad and Cheliabinsk tractor plants were constructed during the time.

In reality, the standards of living of workers' tended to drop, rather than rise during the industrialization. Stalin's laws to 'tighten work discipline' made the situation worse for example, a change to the labour law code made in 1932 permitted firing workers who had not been present without a reason from the workplace for just a day. Being fired meant losing 'the right to use ration and commodity cards' as well as the 'loss of the right to use an apartment' and even 'blacklisted for new employment' which together denoted risk of starving. Since managers frequently needed to hire new workers, those measures were not fully enforced.

In contrast, the legislation of 1938 introduced labour books, and this was followed by major revisions of the labour law which were enforced. For example, being absent or not being present or even if the worker was 20 minutes late, covered grounds for becoming



fired; criminal prosecution was faced by managers who failed to enforce these laws. Later, the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet on 26 June 1940, 'On the Transfer to the Eight-Hour Working Day, the Seven-day Work Week, and on the Prohibition of Unauthorized Departure by Laborers and Office Workers from Factories and Offices', replaced the 1938 revisions with obligatory criminal penalties for quitting a job (2–4 months imprisonment), for being late by 20 minutes (6 months of probation and pay confiscation of 25 per cent), and other draconian measures.

According to the Soviet government the Five Year Industrial Production Plan had been fulfilled by 93.7 per cent in only four years because of these strict measures, while parts devoted to heavy-industry were fulfilled by 108 per cent. In December 1932, Stalin declared the success of the Plan to the Central Committee, as increases in the coal and iron output would fuel future development. Due to the huge investments made in the First Five-Year Plan, industries under the second Five Year Plan expanded extremely rapidly, and nearly reached the Plan. Coal output was 127 million tonne, pig iron 14.5 million tonne, and there had been very rapid developments in the armaments industry by 1937.

This no doubt marked a massive leap in industrial capacity, but the first Five Year Plan was extremely tough on industrial workers; it was difficult to fulfil quotas which required that miners put in 16- to 18-hour workdays. If these quotas were not fulfilled it invited charges of treason. Conditions of work were poor, and even hazardous. By some estimates, 127,000 workers died from 1928 to 1932. A famine broke out due to the allocation of resources for industry along with decreasing productivity. Labour camps inmates were used as expendable resources for industrial complexes construction. However, during the second plan conditions improved. Throughout the 1930s, industrialization was joined together with a rapid expansion of education at schools and in higher education.

From 1921 until 1954, 'during the period of state-guided forced industrialization, 3.7 million people were sentenced for alleged counter-revolutionary crimes, including 0.6 million sentenced to death, 2.4 million sentenced to labor camps, and 0.7 million sentenced to expatriation'. Other estimates show these figures much higher. However, the evidence supporting these high numbers is disputed by some historians, much like with the famines. This is a minority view. The peak of the repressions was during the great Purge of 1937–38, and it greatly slowed down production in 1937.

### 3. Collectivization

This process strongly dealt with the problems of agriculture. The idea of collectivization was, small farms and holdings belonging to the peasants should be merged to form large collective farms jointly owned by the peasants. The main reasons behind this decision were, first, the existing system of small farms was inefficient, whereas large farms under state direction, using modern machinery, were expected to raise grain production. Stalin wanted to eliminate the class of prosperous peasants, because he saw *Kulaks* or the peasants as the biggest enemy of communism. Often he had said, 'We must smash the *Kulaks* so hard that they will never rise to their feet again'. This policy was launched in 1929 and had to be carried through by sheer brute force.

So determined was the force in the countryside that it proved disaster, from which probably, Russia took long time to recover. In their reaction when peasants refused to join collective farming, they were arrested and taken to labour camps or shot. When newly collectivized peasants tried to sabotage the system by producing only enough for



their own needs, local officials were instructed by the government for seizing the required quotas at the time of harvesting. Due to this system the overall production of grain did not increase at all, in fact it was less in 1934 than it had been in 1928. This led to famine in various parts of Russia during 1932–33 and especially in the Ukraine. The collectivization turmoil was particularly heavy in Ukraine and the heavily Ukrainian adjoining Volga regions, and this fact led many Ukrainian scholars to argue that there was a deliberate policy of starving the Ukrainians. In Ukraine alone, the number of people who died in the famines was estimated at between 3 and 10 million. The other countries dispute about the actual number of estimated 'victims'. 'Soviet sources vary between denying the existence of the famine and estimating much smaller numbers of dead. Yet one and three quarter million tonnes of grain were exported during that same period, while over five million peasants died of starvation.' But collectivization did not end and by 1937, around 90 per cent of all farmland had been collectivized in the country.

### 3.6 Socio-Political Changes under Stalin

During the ruling period of Stalin the socio-political problems, were to some extent, his own creations. According to Stalin under his totalitarian regime, there was need to control socio-political activities just as much as there was need to control economic life. He aimed to attain complete and unchallenged power and he became increasingly suspicious and intolerant of criticism.

In 1930, there was growing opposition in the party which aimed to slow down industrialization, allowed peasants to leave collective farming, and removed Stalin. However, according to Stalin the political opponents and critics must be eliminated forever. According to them life's social and cultural aspects needed to be 'brought into line and harnessed to the service of the State'. The non-Russian states wanted to become independent, but Stalin did not sympathize with nationalist ambitions and was determined to hold the union together. Stalin faced many socio-political problems, however, he took stringent action to control all of them.

1. 'Using the murder of Sergei Kirov in 1934, one of the supporters of Stalin in the Politburo as an excuse, Stalin launched what became known as the Purges.' Over the next 4 years many officers of the government and political critics were 'arrested, tortured, made to confess to all sorts of crime of where they were largely innocent and forced to appear in a series of show trials at which they were invariably found guilty and sentenced to death or sent to labour camp'. By using this brutal method of Purges, Stalin eliminated possible alternate leaders successfully and in terrorized the masses into obedience. But there were serious consequences as many of the best brains in the government, in the army, and in industry disappeared. That hampered the rapid progress of Russia.
2. To suppress the public anger a new and comparably more democratic constitution was introduced in 1936 in which everybody was allowed to vote by secret ballot to choose members of the national assembly known as the Supreme Soviet. The Supreme Soviet also chose the Union Soviet of Commissars, a small group of ministers of which Stalin was the secretary, and which wielded the real power. There was mention of freedom of speech but anybody who ventured to criticize Stalin was quickly purged.
3. As per its socio-cultural policies, writers, artists and musicians were expected to produce works of realism glorifying soviet achievements. This is known as socialist



realism. Anyone who did not obey the rules was prosecuted. Education like every other thing, was closely watched by the secret police. Although it was compulsory and free the quality had deteriorated. However, at least the literacy rate increased which was an achievement for Stalin. Finally, an attempt was made to clamp down on the Orthodox Church. Churches were closed and the clergy persecuted, but until 1940, probably more than half of the Russian population were believers.

4. The problem for the Communist government in holding the union together was that its 47 per cent population were non-Russian and it proved difficult to hold them all together as they were bitterly resentful of the rule from Moscow. Stalin adopted two methods. On the one hand national cultures and languages were encouraged and the republics had a certain amount of independence, but on the other hand Moscow had the final say in all important decisions and force was used to preserve control by Moscow.

### **7.3.7 Changes in Soviet Society under the Communists**

Soviet society experienced many changes under the Communists. The Communist government paid attention to the social welfare of people. Not only facilities like medical and healthcare were made available to the people during sickness, disability, old age, but attention was also paid to create parks, rest houses, cultural centers and canteens were established for the recreation of workers in factories and agricultural farms. To enable women to work, crèches were established for their babies. These measures went a long way in improving the general living conditions of the workers and peasants. Although the Communist government under the leadership of both Lenin and Stalin took various repressive measures to establish its hegemony, nevertheless, the Soviet Union went through great transformation in the Socio-Economic sphere during their rule.

Under the Communist rule there was rise in employment; '3.9 million jobs per year were expected by 1923, but the number was actually an astounding 6.4 million. By 1937, the number rose yet again, to about 7.9 million, and in 1940 it was 8.3 million. Between 1926 and 1930, the urban population increased by 30 million.' While the Tsars were reigning, NEP unemployment was seen as a big issue. However, it ceased to be so after the implementation of Stalin's industrialization programme.

The need for labour rose when resources were mobilized to bring about the industrialization of the agricultural society. This brought unemployment down to nil. Unemployment was taken care of by fixing wages, which, in actual terms, reduced by half, from 1928 to 1940. This made it feasible for the state, in financial terms, to give jobs to the workers. Several ambitious projects were established and supply of raw materials was done to the military for weapons and also for consumer products. The automobile plants at Gorky and Moscow manufactured automobiles for the use of the public. When production of heavy plants and steel expanded, cars began to be manufactured in bigger numbers, and with ease. By 1931, production of cars and trucks touched an unbelievable 200,000. Several schools came up to provide education to the industrial workers. In 1927, 7.9 million students went to study in 118,558 schools. By 1933, a whopping 9.7 million students attended 166,275 schools. By 1933, an additional 900 specialist departments along with 566 institutions were functioning smoothly. The rate of literacy went up significantly, particularly in the Central Asian republics.

The Soviet people gained from social liberalization too. Women were to be given equal treatment in terms of education and employment. However, this was not put into practice completely even though in trying to do so, women did end up enjoying better



status in the society and the economy. Stalin also ensured that healthcare facilities were developed and improved from what they were during the Tsarist regime. He ensured that the Soviets received free healthcare and education. He encouraged large-scale immunization programmes, which rid the masses of the fear of typhus and cholera. As a result, very few cases were reported and there was a sheer drop in infant mortality rates. The life expectancy for men as well as women went up by more than 20 years from the middle of the 1950s.

In the 1920s, anarchism, internationalism, the nuclear family being a bourgeois concept, and other such fashionable social and political ideas were done away with. The schools began focusing on a more nationalistic course, which emphasized on the history of Russia and its leaders. Of course, Marxism was never lost sight of. Stalin started creating a Lenin cult. During the 1930s, the Soviet society adopted the basic shape of a communist format, which it continued with till 1991.

Another field wherein some improvement was seen, other than economic development, was the field of technology. The generation that was fortunate enough to be born during Stalin's reign was almost the universally literate lot. Engineers got the opportunity to travel abroad to be educated on the latest in industrial technology. Several engineers from abroad were invited to Russia on contract too, to share their knowledge. Transport links saw massive improvements when several new railway lines were built albeit with forced labour, which cost thousands of lives.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the Soviet government waged a war against organized religion in the country. Several churches and monasteries were closed and many priests were put in prison and even faced execution. The State promoted atheism, denouncing religion as a relic of capitalist society. Pope Pius XI condemned these religious attacks in the Soviet Union in 1937. By 1940, there were just a handful of churches left, which were open. At first, Lenin's anti-religious campaigns were majorly directed at the Russian Orthodox Church, because it was a symbol of the Tsarist government. However, in the 1930s, all faiths, such as the Christian minority as well as those following Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism came under attack.

Following World War II, the western part of European Russia was destroyed. With roads, railways, and industries being devastated, 25 million people were rendered homeless. Stalin's reign continued for eight more years in Russia. He was determined not to relax government controls and also to reconstruct the economy. 1946 saw the commencement of the Fourth Five-Year Plan, which successfully restored industrial production to the level it was in 1940. Stalin passed away in 1953, before beginning another purge. Needless to say, those close to him were relieved. Historians have not been able to reach an agreement regarding the extent of Stalin's achievements or indeed whether he attained more with his brutal ways than what he could have achieved through less severe techniques.

## ACTIVITY

1. Find out the differences between the Julian calendar and the Gregorian calendar.
2. Find out the differences and similarity of opinions between Lenin, Stalin, and Marx.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Tsar Nicholas II was the last representative of the Romanov dynasty, whose three-centuries old reign had started in 1613, with Mikhail Feodorovich being elected as the monarch of Russia. Nicholas had ascended the throne in 1894, and during his rule there were not only social disturbances but many conflicts with the lower classes. Even the wars entered into during his time proved to be disastrous. In March, 1917, he had to denounce the throne. Along with his wife Alexandra, and children Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia and Alexei, the Tsar was kept imprisoned in Tsarskoe Selo, a royal residence south of Petrograd (Saint Petersburg).

## 4 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- 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, whose decision to take personal command of the army seemed to make him personally responsible for the defeats.
- The first revolution in February overthrew the Tsar on 15 March 1917, and set up a moderate provisional government. When this 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 Russian Revolution of 1917 which is popularly known as Bolshevik Revolution is one of the most significant events in the history of the twentieth century world and ranks in importance in the category of the French Revolution.
- 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.
- Economic factors like poverty, misery and exploitation of the masses by the nobility played a major role in the Revolution. Political factors also formed an important cause of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Politically, Russia was subjected to autocratic rule of the Tsar Nicholas II, who ruled the country in a ruthless and oppressive manner. No doubt as a result of the 1905 Revolution a parliament had been established in Russia but the sovereignty still rested in the hands of the Tsar and his henchmen. There were no constitutional checks on the authority of the Tsar and the people groaned under the autocratic rule.
- The material revolution in Russia was followed by a revolution in the realm of liberal thoughts and ideas. The Russian Tsars had attempted to check the infiltration of liberal and radical ideas of the West. But in spite of that the liberal ideas of the



West infiltrated into the Russian soil and produced movements which ultimately resulted in the overthrow of the Tsarist system.

- 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.
- Vladimir Lenin was one of the social democrat, 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 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.
- 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.
- The first important event of the Revolution in Russian 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- The growing unrest among the workers, peasants, soldiers, and the prevailing anarchical condition in the country were fully exploited by the Bolsheviks under Lenin. They promised nationalization of land as well as banks and industries and won the popular support. Due to this, the Bolsheviks came out victorious in the elections to towns and provincial Soviets.
- The primary basis of Lenin's brilliant successes as the Russian Revolution leader can be attributed to his deep mastery of Marxian theory.
- After assuming power the Bolshevik government acted with great synergy and speed under the leadership of Lenin. One of the first actions which the government took was to conclude an amnesty without annexations or indemnities, with right of self determination for all the people. But as France, Great Britain and the United States were not willing to negotiate peace on the terms announced by the Bolsheviks, the later proceeded to conclude the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany.
- In March 1918, the Bolsheviks, which were hitherto known as the 'Russian Social Democratic Labour Party', renamed themselves as the Russian Communist Party. Slowly they captured all the major posts in government, army, trade unions and



other similar organizations. The Communist Party then proceeded to reshape the entire national system. It adopted social policies, and passed a number of laws to this effect.

- The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 was an event of great significance. It not only uprooted the autocratic rule in Russia which had existed for many centuries, but also abolished the class distinction which characterized the Russian society. It laid the foundations of a new society in which the church ceased to be an important political factor. Private property, ownership of land and wealth of every other kind were abolished. The means of production and most of the distribution system came under the direct control of the state.
- Joseph Djugashvili, after joining the Bolsheviks in 1904 took the name Stalin or 'man of steel'. He was born in 1879 in the small town of Gori in the province of Georgia. His parents were poor peasants. Joseph's mother wanted him to become a priest and he was educated for 4 years at Tiflis Theological Seminary, but he hated its repressive atmosphere and was expelled in 1899 for spreading socialist ideas. Due to his administrative qualities, he was able to build up his own position under Lenin.
- Soviet society experienced many changes under the Communists. The Communist government paid attention to the social welfare of the people. Not only facilities like medical and healthcare were made available to the people during sickness, disability, old age, but attention was also paid to create parks, rest houses, cultural centers and canteens were established for the recreation of workers in factories and agricultural farms. To enable the women to work, crèches were established for their babies.

---

## 5 KEY TERMS

---

- **Bolshevik Revolution:** The Bolshevik Revolution was the overthrow of the government of Russia, which took place in the fall of 1917
- **Comintern:** The Communist International which later came to be known as Comintern
- **Communism:** Communism (derived from Latin *communis* - common, universal) is a revolutionary socialist movement to create a classless, moneyless, and stateless social order
- **Duma:** The Duma was the council assemblies and was created by the Tsar of Russia
- **Pravda:** Pravda is a Russian Political Newspaper and Official Mouthpiece of Communist Party of the Russian Federation
- **Socialism:** This is a social and economic doctrine that calls for public rather than private ownership or control of property and other natural resources

---

## 6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

---

1. (a) Bolshevik Revolution; (b) Lenin
2. (a) True; (b) True
3. (a) Lenin, (b) Russian Communist Party
4. (a) False, (b) True





## 7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

---

### Short-Answer Questions

1. What was the main cause that led to the Russian Revolution of 1917?
2. What kind of economic reforms were brought under the rule of communists after the fall of the Russian Tsar?
3. Explain the course of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.
4. Write a short note on the Russian Communist Party.
5. What socio-political changes were introduced under Stalin's rule?

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the causes and course of the Russian Revolution.
2. Describe the February–March Revolution (1917).
3. Give a detailed account on the emergence of Lenin and Stalin.
4. List the causes for the victory of the Bolsheviks.
5. Explain the impact of the Russian Revolution.
6. Identify and discuss the various changes in Soviet Society under the Communists.

---

## 8 FURTHER READING

---

Hayes, C.J.H.; *A Political and Social History of Modern Europe*, Kessinger Publishing, 2004.

Thompson, David; *Europe Since Napoleon*, Penguin Books, UK, 1990.

Hayes, C.J.H.; *Modern Europe to 1870*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1963.

Gottschalk, Louis and Donald Lach; *Europe and the Modern World Since 1870*, Scott, Foresman and Company, 1954.

Grant, Arthur James, Agatha Ramm, Harold William and Vazeille Temperley; *Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Volumes 1-2, 7th (ed.), Longman, the University of Wisconsin – Madison, 1984.

Dev, Arjun, Indira Arjun Dev; *History of the World: From the Late Nineteenth to the Early Twenty-First Century*, Orient Blackswan, 2009.

### Endnote

1. I. Spector, *Introduction to Russian History and Culture*, p. 310.



# UNIT 3 THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

## Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 Origins of the League of Nations
- 3 Objectives of the League of Nations
- 4 Organizations of the League of Nations
- 5 Important Incidences Related to the League of Nations
- 6 Achievements of the League of Nations
  - 6.1 Successes of the League in the Social Sphere
  - 6.2 Failures of the League to Preserve Peace
- 7 End of the League of Nations
- 8 Summary
- 9 Key Terms
- 10 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 11 Questions and Exercises
- 12 Further Reading

## 0 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 6, you read about the events that led to First World War. The most important contribution of the War was the creation of an international organization—the League of Nations. Its main motive was to encourage peace, harmony and international cooperation.

Many world leaders like Woodrow Wilson and Jan Christian Smuts, began advocating the need for an international organization to bring about permanent peace and dispute settlement by arbitration during the First World War. Robert Cecil, who was a member of the British government, wrote a memorandum in September 1916 where he contended that civilization's survival was possible only if it could form an international system that would ensure peace.

America entered the First World War in 1917 and was horrified to see the devastation that had occurred, that too in a part of the world considered to be the most civilized. American President Woodrow Wilson realized that to avoid a repetition of such a disaster, it was essential to form an international body whose main objective would be to maintain peace in the world, and sort out international conflicts if they took place.

However, the biggest weakness of the League was that America refused to join it. Despite President Woodrow Wilson being the main force behind the formation of the League, his own country, which was undoubtedly the most powerful nation in the world, opted for an isolationist policy. This was not the only weakness of this international body. There were other reasons too which you will read in the following pages. In fact, three strong nations of the world refrained from lending support to the League.

In this unit, you will learn about how the League was formed, study its achievements and assess its rise and fall.



## 3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- List the origin and aims of the League of Nations
- Categorize organization and achievements of the League of Nations
- Assess success, failure and the collapse of the League of Nations

## 2 ORIGINS OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

During the First World War, in October 1918, when peace negotiations started, Woodrow Wilson was adamant that his Fourteen Points should form the basis for the signing of the Armistice. Formation of the League of Nations was included in this. So the League of Nations is often talked about as being the brainchild of the American President. Although Wilson certainly supported the idea, the League was actually the result of a union of similar suggestions, formulated by different reputed leaders during the First World War.

Lord Robert Cecil of Britain, Jan Smuts of South Africa, and Leon Bourgeois of France presented detailed schemes to show how such an organization might be established. Lloyd George also referred to it as 'one of Britain's War aims'. The greatest contribution of Wilson was to include the League Covenant or the list of rules by which the League was to operate or function, in each of the separate peace treaties. This was to actually ensure that the League of Nations came into existence instead of remaining merely a topic of discussion just on paper.

In April 1919, the Paris Peace Conference adopted the League of Nations constitution and the League of Nations formally came into being on 10 January 1920, the same day when the Treaty of Versailles became operative. The League became the first truly international organization to have responsibility for managing international peace. After the turmoil of the Treaty of Versailles, many expected the League to bring stability to the world.

The headquarters of the League was in Geneva, Switzerland, and Sir Eric Drummond was its first Secretary General. The choice of Geneva was natural as Switzerland was a neutral country, and had not participated in the First World War. No one could challenge this choice especially because the Red Cross was already based in Switzerland.

After the initial jolts, the League started functioning successfully during the 1920s. It resolved minor international disputes, and also succeeded in performing valuable economic and social work. For instance, it helped thousands of refugees and former war prisoners to find their way home again. In the 1930s, after the peace treaties, the League of Nations supporters felt optimistic about its future and statesmen like Jan Smuts observed that, the League was a 'miracle' of history'.

However during the 1930s, the authority of the League was challenged. It was the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 that challenged it first. This was followed by the Italian attack on Abyssinia in 1935, and later several times by other countries in the late 1930s. The aggressors did not bother about the League's order to withdraw, and for many reasons, it was impossible to force them to follow such orders. After 1935, the value of the League dropped as its weaknesses came to light. The League was not consulted during Germany's dispute with Czechoslovakia and Poland, which



led to the Second World War, and it was unable to influence, even slightly, or prevent the War. It did not meet again after December 1939 and it was dissolved in 1946 as it failed to prevent the War.

### 3 OBJECTIVES OF LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The Constitution of the League of Nations had several objectives. The League had to:

- Maintain peace through collective security. According to this provision, if one state attacked another state, the League members would get together and control the invader either by economic or military sanctions.
- Prevent outbreak of war again
- Settle international disputes before they became unmanageable.
- Peacefully sort out disputes by arbitration.
- Encourage/Prescribe open, just and honourable relations between nations.
- Firmly establish an understanding of international law as the actual rule of conduct among governments.
- Encourage international cooperation, in order to solve economic and social problem.

The League of Nations, under its Covenant, could do three things if a dispute occurred. These were known as its sanctions which were as follows:

1. It could request the states involved in the dispute to sit down and discuss the problem in a systematic and peaceful manner. This was to be done in the League's Assembly which was essentially the League's Parliament. Here, the disputes would be heard and a course of action would be decided. To the offender nation, the League could issue a warning that it needed to get out of another nation's territory or to face serious consequences.
2. If the states in dispute failed to obey the decision made by the Assembly, the League's Councils could introduce economic sanctions aimed at financially hitting the invading nation; so that there is no option but to obey the League's order. The logic behind this was to push an aggressor nation towards bankruptcy, so that the frustrated and angry people in that state would force their government to accept the League's decision. The League could order its members not to trade with an aggressor nation in an effort to check that aggressor nation.
3. In case of failure of these steps, the League could resort to physical sanctions. This meant that military force would be used to put into place the decisions made by the League. However, there was no military force at its disposal and no League member had to provide one, unlike the United Nations today.

Therefore, no threats could be carried out and any country defying its authority would have been very aware of this weakness. Britain and France were the only two member countries in the League that could have provided any military might but both these countries were severely depleted in strength in the First World War. They were in no position to provide the League of Nations with the required level of backing or support. In addition, Great Britain and France were not financially sound to pay for an expanded army after the War.



## 4 ORGANIZATIONS OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The three main constitutional organs of the League of Nations were: the General Assembly, the Council, and the Secretariat. The two essential wings of the League were the Permanent Court of International Justice and the International Labour Organization.

The Assembly and the Council relations were not explicitly defined and their competencies, with a few exceptions were more or less the same. Each body was competent to deal with any matter within the ambit of the League of Nations or affecting world peace. Particular questions or tasks were to be referred either to the Council or to the General Assembly and reference was to be carried forward from one body to another. There were 42 member states at the beginning, and it increased to 55 by 1926 when Germany was included. Its important sub-organizations were as follows:

1. **The General Assembly:** It comprised representatives of all Members of the League. There were three representatives and one vote for each state. The Assembly had its headquarters in Geneva and met once a year on the first Monday of the month of September (for its session) according to the Rules of the Procedure of the Assembly, which was adopted at its Eleventh Meeting on 30 November 1920. If a member made a request, a special session of the Assembly was summoned, provided the majority agreed to it.

The Assembly's special functions included admitting new members, electing non-permanent Council Members regularly, electing the Council of the Permanent Court judges, and controlling the budget and ensuring unanimous approvals before finalizing decisions. In practice, the General Assembly became the general directing force of League activities.

2. **The Council:** A much smaller body, which met more often than the General Assembly. It met at least thrice a year with Britain, France, Italy and Japan as its permanent members. The United States of America was to be a permanent member, but it decided not to join the League. Four other members were also elected by the Assembly for three years.

By 1926, the number of non-permanent members increased to nine. The Council's task was to deal with specific political disputes as they arose; even in this case the decisions had to be unanimous. The Council also prepared disarmament plans and the Secretary-General was nominated, subject to the Assembly's approval. Owing to its small size and regular meetings the Council went on to act like an executive body. However, the role of the Assembly was limited to primary action and the determination of the principles.<sup>1</sup>

3. **The Secretariat:** The Permanent Secretariat, comprised a body of experts from various backgrounds or fields under the Secretary General's direction. The Secretariat was established at the seat of the League at Geneva.

The principal Sections of the Secretariat were: Politics, Finance and Economics; Communications and Transit; Minorities and Administration (Saar and Danzig); Mandates; Disarmament; Health; Social (Opium and Traffic in Women and Children); Intellectual Cooperation and International Bureau; Legal



and Information. Each section owed a responsibility towards all official secretarial work related to its particular subject, and organized all meetings and conferences held in that connection.

The League's Secretariat staff was responsible for preparing the Council and Assembly agenda and publishing meeting reports and other routine matters, effectively acting as the civil service for the League. The Secretariat was considered to be too small to handle all the administrative affairs of the League. For example, the total number of members of the Secretariat was 75 in September 1924. The total staff, including all clerical services approximately, comprised 400 peoples. In short, the Secretariat looked after all the paper work, preparing agendas, and resolution writings and reports for carrying out the decisions of the League.

- 4. The Permanent Court of International Justice:** The Permanent Court of International Justice, often referred to as the World Court, was an international court which was attached to the League. This was created in 1922. It was based at Hague in Holland. Court of International Justice consisted of 15 judges of different nationalities; and it dealt with legal disputes between states, as opposed to political ones. In the beginning, the Court met with a good response both from the states and academics, with many cases submitted to it in its first 10 years of operation. By the 1930s, however, international tension heightened, the Court was used with decreasing regularity. By a resolution, which was passed by the League of Nations on 18 April 1946, the Court ceased to exist, and was replaced by the International Court of Justice.

There were three sources from where the Court's mandatory jurisdiction came. These were: (i) the optional clause of the League of Nations, (ii) the general international conventions, and (iii) the special international treaties. States could directly submit the cases, but they were not forced to submit material or evidences unless it fell into those three categories. Either judgments or advisory opinions could be issued by the court. While judgments were directly binding, advisory opinions were not. In practice, the members of the League followed advisory opinions, fearing the fact that to not do so could weaken the moral and legal authority of the Court and the League.

- 5. Commissions and Committees:** A number of commissions and committees were there to deal with specific problems, some of which had arisen out of the First World War consequences. The main commissions were those, which handled the mandates, military affairs, minority groups, peacekeeping and disarmament. Committees were formed for international labour, health, economic and financial organization, child welfare, drug problems and women's rights.

---

## 5 IMPORTANT INCIDENCES RELATED TO THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

---

The League wished was to put an end to the war. The only way to measure success was to see whether war was avoided or the degree to which a settlement could be reached peacefully. The League managed to resolve some political disagreements presented before it in the early 1920s.



## **1. The Aaland Islands (1920)**

These islands situated equidistant from Finland and Sweden, were originally part of Finland, but most of the occupants wished to be governed by Sweden. However, both Sweden and Finland found it difficult to arrive at a decision regarding the ownership of the islands. Ultimately, in 1920, the League was requested to arbitrate. The League ruled that Finland should govern the Aaland Island, but should not keep any weapons there. The decision was acceptable to both Sweden and Finland, and the same has remained so till date.

## **2. Upper Silesia (1921)**

Through the Treaty of Versailles, the people of Upper Silesia enjoyed the right to a referendum on whether they wished to be part of Germany or Poland. The referendum, in which 700,000 people cast their votes in support of Germany, was held over the rival claims of Germany and Poland to the industrial area of Upper Silesia. The referendum saw only 500,000 people voting for Poland. A riot ensued between those who favoured Germany and those who favoured Poland. Again, the League was requested to be the arbitrator and resolve the issue. Their inquiry lasted six weeks following which the League made the decision to divide the area of Upper Silesia between the two countries. The decision was thought to be a fair one by not only the Germans and the Polish but also the people of Upper Silesia.

## **3. Memel (1923)**

This port in Lithuania was occupied mostly by Lithuanians. Thus, the Lithuanian government was of the view that the port should be governed by it. However, according to the Treaty of Versailles, Memel and its surrounding area were to be controlled by the League. A French was made governor of the port for a period of three years. In 1923, however, there was an invasion by the Lithuanians. At once, there was an intervention by the League, which decided to give the area surrounding Memel to Lithuania and make the port an 'International Zone'. The decision was acceptable to Lithuania, and thus, the issue was successfully resolved, thanks to the League. However, some also believe that the situation was an outcome of the use of force and the League responded positively, that is, in favour of the Lithuanians.

## **4. Turkey (1923)**

The League was unsuccessful in stopping a war from happening when Turkey tried to claim the province of Mosul. At the time, Mosul was a part of that territory of Iraq, which was under the British. The outcome of the war was that there were approximately 1,400,000 refugees, most of whom were women and children. There was an outbreak of typhoid and cholera. The League sent doctors to help check the disease from spreading. £10 million were spent to build farms, homes and shelters for the refugees. Seeds were bought, wells were dug and digging tools were also purchased. By 1926, 600,000 people had work, a state that was referred to as 'the greatest work of mercy which mankind has undertaken', by the League.

## **5. Greece and Bulgaria (1925)**

Greece and Bulgaria shared a border. In 1925, the guards on patrol at this border opened fire at each other, killing a Greek soldier. The outcome was an invasion of Bulgaria by the Greeks. Bulgaria turned to the League for help. The League responded at once by



intervening and ordering both the armies to stop fighting. The Greek withdrew their forces from Bulgaria.

Further afield, in South America, squabbles were settled between Peru and Columbia, and also between Bolivia and Paraguay. However, it is significant to note that world peace was not seriously threatened by these disputes, and none of the decisions went against a major state, which might have challenged the League's verdict. In fact, during this same period, the League found itself twice overruled by the Conference of Ambassadors which was based in Paris, which had been set up to deal with problems starting from the Versailles treaties. In 1920, there were first the rival claims of Poland and Lithuania to Vilna, and this was followed by the Corfu incident of 1923. This was a quarrel between Mussolini's Italy and Greece. The League did not respond to these 'acts of defiance' and this was not a good sign for the League's future.

---

## 6 ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

---

It would, not be fair to dismiss the League as a total failure. Valuable results were achieved by many of the committees and commissions and much was done to promote international cooperation. One of the most successful achievements of the League of Nations was the formation of the International Labour Organization (ILO) under its French socialist director, Albert Thomas. Its main aim was to improve labour conditions all over the world by convincing governments to—fix a maximum working day and week, specify adequate minimum wages, introduce sickness and unemployment benefits, introduce old age pensions, etc. It also collected and published a vast amount of information, and various states were asked to take action.

The Refugee Organization was led by Fridtjof Nansen, and solved the problem of thousands of former war prisoners who were stranded in Russia at the end of the war, about half a million were returned home. After 1933, valuable help was given to thousands of people fleeing from the Nazi persecution in Germany.

The Health Organization of the League did good work in investigating the causes of the outbreak of epidemics, and succeeded in combating a typhus epidemic in Russia, which at one point of time seemed likely to spread across Europe.

The Mandates Commission supervised the government of the territories which were taken from Germany and Turkey, while yet another Commission was responsible for managing the Saar. It did this very efficiently. The 1935 plebiscite was organized, wherein a large majority voted in favour of Germany and wanted the Saar to be returned to it.

Some of these commissions performed successfully, however, the Disarmament Commission made no progress in the near impossible task of persuading members to lessen armaments, even though they had all promised to do so when they agreed to the Covenant.

### 6.1 Successes of the League in the Social Sphere

At a social level, the League gained success and most of this was forgotten with its failure at a political level which actually dominated the discourse. Many of the groups that worked for the United Nations now grew out of what was established by the League. Many teams were sent to the Third World to dig fresh water wells, and the Health Organization started a campaign to wipe out leprosy. This idea of wiping out a disease



like leprosy from the world was taken up by the United Nations along with its smallpox campaign.

Work was also conducted in the Third World to improve the status of women and prevent child labour/slavery. Drug addiction and drug smuggling were also attacked.

These problems still exist in the twenty-first century, so it would be incorrect to criticize the League for its failure to eradicate them. If we find it a challenge today, the League had a far greater challenge then given the limited resources.

The League was successful in informing the world that these social issues did exist and that they should be tackled or handled carefully. No organization had done this before the League. Although these social problems still continue, the fact remains that they were now being actively investigated by the League and were then focused on by the United Nations and this must be viewed as a success.

### 8.6.2 Failures of the League to Preserve Peace

In 1923, at the time of Corfu incident, many people wondered what would be the result if a powerful state were to challenge the League on a matter of foremost importance, like, invasion of an innocent country. How effective would be the League, then? Unfortunately, there were several such challenges during the 1930s, and on every occasion the League failed to rise to the occasion.

- 1. It was rejected by the USA:** In its initial stage, the League received a serious blow in March 1920 when the United States of America senate rejected both the Settlement of Versailles and the League. It was a serious blow because President, Woodrow Wilson who had actually dreamt of the League and initiated the idea, had refused to join it. With America being a powerful nation, this refusal was a blow to the League's prestige. This refusal by America was in synchronization with its wish to follow an isolationist policy throughout the world. The League had to make do without a powerful member, America, whose membership would have given a lot of financial as well as psychological strength and support.
- 2. The League did not allow Germany to join:** Germany was not allowed to join the League in 1919. As Germany had started the war, one of its punishments under the Treaty of Versailles was that it was not to be considered as a member of the international community and, thus, Germany was not allowed to join until 1926. This came as a great blow to Germany but it also showed that the League could not use whatever strength Germany had to support its campaign against aggressive nations.
- 3. The League did not allow Russia to join:** Russia was also not allowed to join. In 1917, it had a communist government that generated fear in the minds of the people of Western Europe; and in 1918, the Russian royal family, the Romanovs, were murdered. Such a country could not be allowed to join the League. Russia became a member only in 1934, when Germany left the League. Therefore, during the first few years of its existence, three of the world's most powerful nations: United States of America, Germany and Russia, stayed out of the League. The two most powerful members were Britain and France. During the War, both Britain and France had suffered financially and militarily. Neither wished to get involved in disputes that did not affect Western Europe. Therefore, the League had a 'fine ideal to end war for good'. However, if an aggressor nation had decided to ignore the League's verbal warnings, all that the



League could do was enforce economic sanctions; and hope that these worked as it could not enforce its decisions using the military force.

4. **It was closely linked with the Treaty of Versailles:** The League was closely linked with the Treaty of Versailles. It also had to defend a peace settlement which was far from perfect. Some of its provisions were bound to cause trouble, for example, the disappointment of Italy and the inclusion of Germans in Czechoslovakia and Poland.

5. **The League played no part during Crisis**

A. **Italy (1919):** Italian nationalists in 1919 were angered that the 'Big Three' powers had broken promises to Italy at the Treaty of Versailles and had captured the small port of Fiume. Under the Treaty of Versailles this port was given to Yugoslavia. Fiume was governed by an Italian nationalist called d'Annunzio for 15 months but the newly created League did nothing. The situation was finally solved by the Government of Italy who could not accept the fact that d'Annunzio was seemingly more popular than they were. So, the Italian government bombarded the port of Fiume forced a surrender. In all this, the League played no role despite the fact that it was set up with the specific task of maintaining peace.

B. **Teschen (1919):** Teschen was a small town situated between Poland and Czechoslovakia. It was important as it had valuable coalmines and both the Poles and the Czechs wanted these mines. Both Poland and Czechoslovakia were newly created nations, and both wanted to make their respective economies as strong as possible and rich coal mine acquisition would certainly help in this respect. Polish and Czech troops fought in the streets of Teschen in January 1919. Many people died. The League was asked to help and it decided that the 'bulk of the Teschen town should go to Poland, while Czechoslovakia should have one of Teschen's suburbs'. This suburb included the most valuable coalmines and the Poles refused to accept this decision passed by the League. Though there was no more major violence, still the two countries continued to argue over the issue for the next 20 years and the League failed to decide about Teschen's fate.

C. **Vilna (1920):** Many years before 1920, Russia took over Vilna. Historically, Vilna was the capital of Lithuania—the state that existed in the middle ages. After the First World War, Lithuania was re-established and Vilna became its capital. However, by 1920, '30% of the population was from Poland with Lithuanians only making up 2% of the city's population'. In 1920, Vilna was seized by the Poles. Lithuania asked for the League's help but the Poles could not be persuaded to leave the city. Until the outbreak of the Second World War, Vilna remained with Poland. The use of force by the Poles led to triumph.

D. **War between Russia and Poland (from 1920 to 1921):** In 1920, Poland occupied the land held by Russia. The Russian army was overwhelmed by the Poles and made a swift advance into Russia. By 1921 the Russians had no choice, but to sign the Treaty of Riga, under which nearly 80,000 square kilometres of Russian land was handed over to Poland. This one Treaty doubled the size of Poland.



There were questions on the sincerity of the League in dealing with this violation of another country by Poland. Like in several other crises, the League did nothing in this issue. By 1919, Russia was a communist country and the West was greatly feared by this development. After the League had been set up, Britain, France and America sent troops to attack Russia. According to the British War Minister, Winston Churchill the plan was to strangle Communist Russia at birth. Once again, it seemed to outsiders as if League members were selecting which countries were acceptable and which were not. Russia's allied invasion was a failure and it only served to make Communist Russia even more antagonistic to the West.

- E. The Invasion of the Ruhr (1923):** Under the Treaty of Versailles, Germany was ordered to pay reparations either in cash or kind for war damages. The Germans failed to pay an installment in 1922. They claimed that 'they simply could not rather than did not want to'. However, the Allies refused to accept this as the anti-German feeling at this time was still strong. Both the French and the Belgians believed that they had to take some strong action to 'teach Germany a lesson'.

Contrary to the rules formulated by the League in 1923, Germany's most important industrial zone, Ruhr, was invaded by France and Belgium. Within Europe, France was considered a senior League member like Britain, and the anti-German feeling that was felt throughout Europe allowed both France and Belgium to break their own rules which were introduced by the League. The League needed the support of its major alliances in Europe, Britain and France to enforce its will. France was one of the invaders and Britain was its major supporter. Other nations believed that if you wanted to break the rules formulated by the League, you could. Few countries criticized what France and Belgium did. However, the example that they set for others in future years was obvious. The League failed on this occasion, primarily due to its involvement in breaking its own rules.

- F. Italy and Albania (1923):** The border between Italy and Albania was not clear and this issue was never addressed by the Treaty of Versailles. It was a continuous source of irritation between these two nations. A mixed nationality survey team was sent out to settle the issue in 1923. The section of the Italian survey team became separated from the main party while traveling to the disputed area. The five Italians, who had been in hiding, were shot by gunmen. Greece was accused by Italy of planning the whole incident and it demanded payment of a large fine. But Greece refused to pay. In response, navy was sent to the Greek island of Corfu by the Italians and bombarded the coastline. Greece requested the League for help but Italy, which was lead by Benito Mussolini, refused to recognize its competence to deal with the problem or issue. Mussolini threatened to withdraw Italy from the League, and persuaded the League through the Conference of Ambassadors, to fine Greece 50 million lire.

To follow-up this success, the Yugoslavian government was invited by Mussolini to discuss the ownership of Fiume. Under the Treaty of Versailles, Fiume was given to Yugoslavia but with the evidence of a bombarded Corfu, the Yugoslavs handed over the port to Italy with little argument.



## **6. Serious Weaknesses in the Covenant**

Article 11 of the League's Covenant stated, 'any war or threat of war is a matter of concern to the whole League and the League shall take action that may safeguard peace'.

Therefore, any conflict between nations which ended in war and the victory of one nation over the other must be considered as the League's failure. And immediately the League must take action to make peace. These made it complicated to ensure that decisive action was taken against any aggressor. It was very difficult to get unanimous decisions as the League had no military power of its own and though under Article 16 members were to supply troops if necessary, a resolution was passed in 1923 that each member would decide for its own self whether or not to fight a war in crises. This clearly presented the collective security issue which was a non-serious one. There were several attempts made to strengthen the Covenant, but it failed to get unanimous vote. In 1924, the most notable attempt was made by the British Labour Prime Minister, Ramsy MacDonald. He introduced a resolution which was known as the Geneva Protocol. This pleaded arbitration to be accepted by the members and to help any victim of unprovoked aggression. But unfortunately, a resolution which was proposed by one British labour government was actually rejected by the Conservative government of the same country and the League was left still lacking real power.

## **7. The World Economic Crises**

This also contributed towards the League's decline. 'It brought unemployment and falling living standards to most countries and caused extreme right-wing governments to come to power in Japan and Germany, together with Mussolini in Italy, they refused to keep to the rules and took a series of actions which revealed the League's weaknesses'.

## **8. The Japanese invasion of Manchuria (1931)**

Japanese troops invaded the Chinese territory of Manchuria in 1931. China appealed to the League after this aggression, which condemned Japan and ordered to withdraw its troops. On Japan's refusal, a commission was appointed by the League under Lord Lytton and in 1932 it decided that there was fault on both the sides and it was suggested that Manchuria should be governed by the League. However, this proposal was rejected by Japan and it withdrew from the League in March 1933. Britain and France without American help were reluctant to boycott Japan in trade in case it led to war as they were ill equipped to win. Therefore, Japan had successfully defied the League.

## **9. The Failure of the World Disarmament Conference**

During 1932-33, the World Disarmament Conference met under the auspices of the League, and its failure came as a grave disappointment. The Germans demanded for equality of armaments with France, but France demanded that this should be postponed for at least 8 years. Hitler used the attitude of the French as an excuse to withdraw Germany from both the Conference and the League.

## **10. The Italian Invasion of Abyssinia**

This caused the most serious blow to the League of Nations. In 1935, after the invasion of Abyssinia, Italy was condemned by the League and economic



sanctions were imposed. However, exports of oil, coal and steel to Italy were not included in this. Italy completed the Abyssinian conquest without much inconvenience. A few weeks later, these economic sanctions were lifted and Mussolini successfully flouted the League. Britain and France, which were the powerful member states, were not interested in antagonizing Mussolini too much, so as to keep him as a supporter against the real danger: Germany. However, the results were devastating. First, the sanctions annoyed Mussolini who began to draw closer to Hitler. Second, small states lost all faith in the League and Hitler broke the Treaty of Versailles. After 1935, the League was never taken seriously again.

---

## 7 END OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

---

The League of Nations gained a reputation for failing as a peace-keeping organization. However, where the parties to a dispute were well disposed towards acts of mediation and arbitration, the League was able to facilitate agreements using its limited powers. In the border conflict in 1925 between Greece and Bulgaria the League was able to affect a troop withdrawal and arrive at an arrangement for maintaining peace to which both parties could subscribe. In 1921, it was able to mediate in the dispute between Finland and Sweden over the Aaland Islands. However, reputation of the League of Nations suffered, mainly due to European dictators. They flourished throughout the remaining years of its existence.

After the First World War, a parliamentary representative democracy and federal republic was established in Germany. Most scholars are of the opinion that this was bound to fail as Germany had suffered a major humiliation at the War and accepted crippling terms of the Treaty of Versailles under this leadership. The fall of Weimar Republic was responsible for the rise of Hitler and Nazi Party. The Nazi Party came to power in the 1930s. The Nazis supported dictatorship and ended Germany's fourteen year experiment with democracy. In Germany, the Weimar Republic of the 1920s coexisted peacefully with the League, but in the 1930s, the Nazi Government exposed its weakness in the face of determined aggression. The organization's inadequacy was amply displayed in the Saar, in Rhineland, and in the takeovers of Austria and Czechoslovakia.

Under Mussolini, the Italian Government showed a disregard for its strictures during the Abyssinian crisis, disregarding the League's attempts at conciliation and its threats of sanctions. Later, the League was still undermined further by the Hoare-Laval Pact, under which Abyssinia was handed over to the Italian dictator. The League of Nations legacy to its successor, the United Nations, was a varied one. Clearly it had been very weak to solve the problems which were posed by the aggressive dictators. On the other hand, it made encouraging progress on a number of humanitarian fronts of grounds.

Undoubtedly, the establishment of the League was a revolutionary step, as it created the belief that 'aggressive war is a crime against humanity and it is the duty of every state to prevent it'. Although the League could not achieve much success during its existence, yet it greatly succeeded in spreading the idea of international cooperation. Though the League was unable to preserve the security and peace of the world, still one must not lose sight of the excellent work done by the League of Nations and its agencies in various fields. The League's greatest achievement was that it did not die but merged with the UNO as Lord Cecil said, 'The League is dead, Long Live the United Nations'.



## ACTIVITY

1. Write an essay on the USA's role in the genesis of the League of Nations.
2. Conduct a research on the Internet and find out more about the UNO.

## DID YOU KNOW?

In 1935, the League completed its successful 15 year administration of the Saar territory conducting a plebiscite under the supervision of an international military force. But even this success was not sufficient to offset the failure of the Disarmament Conference, Germany's withdrawal from the League (1933), and Italy's successful attack on Ethiopia in defiance of the League's economic sanctions (1935).

## 8 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Many world leaders like Woodrow Wilson and Jan Smuts, began advocating the requirement for an international organization to protect permanent peace and dispute settlement by arbitration during the First World War.
- America entered the First World War in 1917 and was horrified to see the devastation that followed.
- In April 1919, the Paris Peace Conference adopted the League of Nations constitution and the League of Nations formally came into being on 10 January 1920, the same day when the Treaty of Versailles became operative. The headquarters of the League were in Geneva in Switzerland, and Sir Eric Drummond was its first Secretary General.
- During the 1930s the League of Nations authority was first challenged by the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, Italian attack on Abyssinia in 1935, and later several times by other countries in the late 1930s.
- The three main constitutional organs of the League of Nations were, the General Assembly, the Council, and the Secretariat. The two essential wings of the League were the Permanent Court of International Justice and the International Labour Organization.
- The principal Sections of the Secretariat were—Political; Financial and Economic; Communications and Transit; Minorities and Administration (Saar and Danzig); Mandates; Disarmament; Health; Social (Opium and Traffic in Women and Children); Intellectual Cooperation and International Bureau; Legal and Information.
- The League's desire was to end war, and the only criteria that can be used to classify success or achievement was whether war was avoided and a peaceful settlement formulated after a crisis between two nations. Some of the political disputes were resolved by the League. In the early 1920s, several political



disputes were referred to the League and in many cases the decisions of the League were accepted.

- It would be unfair to dismiss the League as a total failure. Valuable results were achieved by many of the committees and commissions and much was done to promote international co-operation. One of the most successful achievements of the League of Nations was the formation of International Labour Organization (ILO) under its French socialist director, Albert Thomas.
- At a social level, the League gained success and most of this was forgotten with its failure at a political level which actually dominated the discourse. Many of the groups that worked for the United Nations grew out of what was established by the League. Many teams were sent to the Third World to dig fresh water wells, and the Health Organization started a campaign to wipe out leprosy.
- The League of Nations gained a reputation for failing as a peace-keeping organization. However, where the parties to a dispute were well disposed towards acts of mediation and arbitration, the League was able to facilitate agreements using its limited powers.

---

## 9 KEY TERMS

---

- **Armistice:** A situation in a war where the warring parties agree to stop the fight
- **General Assembly:** A body that consisted of representatives of all members of the League of Nations
- **Geneva Protocol:** The Protocol for the Prohibition of the use of asphyxiation, and poisonous gases in War; it also prohibited bacteriological methods of warfare, including chemical and biological weapons
- **League Council:** This was a much smaller body which met more often than the General Assembly, at least thrice a year and Britain, France, Italy and Japan were its permanent members
- **League of Nations:** An international body that came into being after the end of First World War, and whose task was simply to ensure that war never broke out again
- **Leon Bourgeois:** A French statesman whose ideas influenced the Radical Party regarding various issues
- **Paris Peace Conference:** The meeting of the Allied victors following the end of First World War to set the peace terms for the defeated Central Powers
- **Permanent Court of International Justice:** Often referred to as the World Court, it was an international attached to the League
- **Permanent Secretariat:** A body established at Geneva, comprising experts from various spheres under the Secretary General's direction
- **Treaty of Riga:** Under this Treaty, nearly 80,000 square kilometres of Russian land was handed over to Poland

---

## 10 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

---

1. (a) Armistice; (b) general international conventions
2. (a) True; (b) True





3. (a) Fridtj of Nansen; (b) Settlement of Versailles
4. (a) False; (b) True

---

## 11 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

---

### Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on Geneva Protocol.
2. How far was the League of Nations a success in the social sphere?
3. What were the functions of the General Assembly of the League of Nations?
4. Write a short note on any two achievements of the League of Nations.
5. Which were the major events that led to the collapse of the League of Nations?

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the origin of League of Nations.
2. What were the aims of the League of Nations?
3. Explain the organization of the League of Nations.
4. What were the achievements of the League of Nations and committees and commissions?
5. Discuss the failure of the League of Nations.
6. Discuss the failure of the World Disarmament Conference (1932–33).

---

## 12 FURTHER READING

---

Hayes, C.J.H.; *A Political and Social History of Modern Europe*, Kessinger Publishing, 2004.

Thompson, David; *Europe Since Napoleon*, Penguin Books, UK, 1990.

Hayes, C.J.H.; *Modern Europe to 1870*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1963.

Gottschalk, Louis and Donald Lach; *Europe and the Modern World Since 1870*, Scott, Foresman and Company, 1954.

Grant, Arthur James, Agatha Ramm, Harold William and Vazeille Temperley; *Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Volumes 1-2, 7th (ed.), Longman, the University of Wisconsin – Madison, 1984.

Dev, Arjun, Indira Arjun Dev; *History of the World: From the Late Nineteenth to the Early Twenty-First Century*, Orient Blackswan, 2009.

### Endnote

1. Vandenbosch and Hogan. *The United Nations, Background, Organization Functions, Activities*. p. 68.



# UNIT 4 RISE OF FASCISM AND NAZISM

## Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 Causes for the Rise of Dictatorship or Totalitarianism in Europe
- 3 Rise of Fascism in Italy
- 4 Rise of Nazism in Germany
- 5 Civil War and the Rise of Dictatorship in Spain
- 6 Military Dictatorship in Turkey
- 7 Summary
- 8 Key Terms
- 9 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 10 Questions and Exercises
- 11 Further Reading

## 0 INTRODUCTION

History is replete with examples where dictators have left nations exhausted, overturned and on the verge of a social, cultural, economic and 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-First World War era. After the First World War, nations of the world geared towards creating amnesty between the nations, especially Europe.

The first decade post-First World War 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 and 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 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.

The one characteristic feature of the dictatorial states is the belief in the supremacy of the state and everything it constituted, except for the sovereignty of the individuals who were a part of it. It believed in doing 'everything for the state, everything within the state and nothing outside the state'. According to a few writers, totalitarianism and dictatorship constituted a tendency to subordinate all institutions and classes to the state for achieving the supreme objective and victory of control. Lenin, in this context stated that a 'dedicated minority could take over control from a less dedicated majority', which exemplified a type of totalitarian control. He also projected how human rights and institutions were subordinated to the needs of a single group, like the Communist party.

However, other historians claimed that the totalitarian or dictatorial states used modern means to use complete political power. The state tried to control the economic, social, intellectual and cultural aspects of the lives of the people. Any deviation in art, music, or even family behaviour was considered criminal. There was nothing that was politically neutral, and nothing that was outside the scope or control of the state. This was in total contrast to the principles of the American and French Revolutions, which had sought to limit state power and protect the rights of individuals. 'Totalitarians were disgusted by liberal ideals such as peaceful progress and individual freedom.' They believed in the power of the 'will', preached conflict and used violence as an effective tool. The individual was infinitely less important than the state, and there were no lasting rights, only individual rewards for services rendered loyally to the state. A form of modern totalitarianism or dictatorship is the concept of fascism, a term that glorified war and militarism, most commonly associated with Hitler and Mussolini. Fascism dominated nations shared characteristics of ethnocentrism, extreme nationalism, often to the extent of expansionism, antisocialism—intended to destroy working class movements, and association with powerful capitalists and landowners, mass parties, etc., which appealed to the middle class and peasantry.

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, Italy, Spain and Turkey.

---

## 1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

---

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Recognize and assess the causes behind the rise of dictatorship or totalitarianism in Europe
- Identify the causes of Fascism in Italy, Nazism in Germany, and dictatorship in Spain
- Identify how dictatorship led to the modernization of Turkey



## **2 CAUSES FOR THE RISE OF DICTATORSHIP OR TOTALITARIANISM IN EUROPE**

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 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 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 and Germany 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.

Secondly, 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 those who could alleviate them to achieve national ambitions. And they found such attributes in Benito Mussolini, who established his totalitarian rule in Italy.

Thirdly, 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.

Fourthly, Communism came to Russia during the First World War period. After the War, 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.

---

## **3 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 dissatisfied nation. Italy was not happy by the Paris Peace Settlement (1919) because it was not given what had been promised by the Allies 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. The War had cost Italy dearly, draining her of money, saddling her with a budget deficit of over twelve thousand million Lire thereby, increasing 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.'<sup>1</sup> 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 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 people 'order and glory' also greatly attracted them and they extended their wholehearted support to its leaders. Some of the main principles emphasized 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 the nation's pride.
- (v) It favoured equal control over all sections of society.
- (vi) It favoured aggressive foreign policy and regarded war as an instrument of national interest.

### **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 JH 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.'<sup>2</sup>

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 *fasces* meant the bundle of rods with protruding axe which used to symbolize the authority and power of the ancient Roman consuls.<sup>3</sup> 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 organized a march to Rome, where the King, Victor Emmanuel III, terrified by this action, dismissed 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 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, 'Now was the time to begin the real work of Fascist reconstruction of Italy. Mussolini had achieved power by force; he could hold it only if he succeeded in improving the economic conditions of his people. Italy was a poor country; with two thirds of land as sterile and mountainous not enough wheat could be grown to feed her population; mineral deposits were low with and no colonies rich in raw materials, she had to rely on exports from foreign countries for the raw materials to industries such as coal, iron, petrol, and cotton. To pay for these imports, she exported mainly wine, olives and fruit, leatherwork, woodwork and glass; the products of the traditional skill of Italian husbandmen and craftsmen. These exports were not enough to pay for the imports, and the balance was made up, before the war, in a rather humiliating way by the remittances sent back to their families by [the] Italian emigrants, and by the money spent in the country by



foreign tourists. During the war the tourist traffic ceased, and after the war foreign countries had further no use for Italian emigrants. Poverty increased in Italy, and the resultant dissatisfaction was behind the strike epidemic of post-war years.<sup>24</sup>

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 condition of workers by nationalizing 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 self-sufficient.

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 authorized to appoint bishops and teachers to teach religion. Under the pact, the fascist government recognized 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.

### **Benefits of the Fascist Rule**

Much of the Fascist policy was concerned with improving the economy, though Mussolini knew very little 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 the 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 of trees in mountainous regions, as part of the drive to improve the agricultural yield.

An impressive programme of public work 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, theaters, 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 Mussolini's rule was in many ways far from being 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, DM 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 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's 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 South-Eastern Europe and took various aggressive steps to strengthen Italy's position in this area. By the Treaty of Laussane in 1923, Italy got back the Dodacanse 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 was a boost 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 South-Eastern Europe.

### **Seizure of Abyssinia**

Abyssinia was the next victim of the expansionist policy of Mussolini. Italy was prompted to undertake this action because:

- (i) It needed more territory for the growing population of the country.
- (ii) It needed raw materials for its growing industries and markets to get finished products.
- (iii) This step was essential to divert the attention of the people from the miserable economic condition of the country.
- (iv) A war against Abyssinia could arouse patriotic spirit of the Italians who had suffered a defeat at the hands of Abyssinia in 1896.
- (v) The region of Abyssinia was of strategic value to Italy. It could link the Italian possession in Somaliland, Eritrea and South-East Africa.

Although Mussolini had nourished designs against Abyssinia for a long time, he did not actually undertake this project till he was sure of a military victory against it. The attitude of the League of Nations and other big powers towards the conquest of Manchuria by Japan convinced Mussolini that despite the principle of collective security, nobody was going to stop him from conquering Abyssinia.

Further, due to the Great Economic Depression, the great powers of Europe were preoccupied with their domestic problems. Internationally, they were occupied with problem of Hitler's rise to power and the pursuit of an aggressive policy by him. Taking this opportunity into consideration, the Italian troops entered into Abyssinia in October 1935. Immediately the League of Nations declared that, 'Italy had resorted to war in disregard to its obligations under Article 12 of the Covenant'. The League appointed a Co-ordination Committee and asked every member of the League to prohibit all loans or credits to Italy and place an embargo on export to Italy. However, the Italian forces continued to penetrate into Abyssinia and ultimately occupied it in May 1936.

### **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 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 Entente and substituting it with a combination directed from Italy. When Italy was unable to have a monopoly over these alliances, it encouraged Germany against France's plans of reconstruction. Even in the matter of disarmament, Italy supported Germany's stand of parity between Germany and France. 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 one another. 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 the 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 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 as 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 USA 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 the German 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.

---

## 4 RISE OF NAZISM IN GERMANY

---

The First World War ended disastrously for Germany. The collapse of Germany led to political turmoils in the country. Kaiser William II, the last German Emperor, was held responsible for the debacle of the German army and the miseries of 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 Elbert and Schidemann 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 rationalization of its industrial and business life. The establishment of branches of the foreign firms in Germany not only led to the utilization of the German raw materials but also provided employment to the massive unemployed German labourers.

In the sphere of foreign policy, Germany, during this period pursued three aims: (1) to induce the Allies to evacuate areas of Germany, which they had occupied; (2) to restore the sovereignty of the Reich, and recovery of Danzig and the frontier in Upper Silesia; and (3) 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 mentioned 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 started and in 1931, when economic depression was at its worst, Germany was spending \$700 million on arms. Despite all these achievements, the Germans, 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 officials to denigrate the ideals and heroes of imperial Germany also greatly irritated young students, above all, 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 sharp 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 emphasized 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 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 the Parliamentary system of government which was detrimental to the interest of the country.

In the economic sphere, the party stood for increasing incomes, limitation of profits from wholesale enterprise, land reform, nationalization of all trusts, departmental stores and ban on land speculation. Similarly, in the social sphere, the party favoured old age and maternity benefits, reorganization of higher education and government control of press. 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 recognition among the lower-middle classes who as a result of widespread unemployment and extreme frustration were suffering inexplicable 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 the 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 30, Adolf Hitler had been an insignificant person in Germany. Hitler had no formal qualifications, and he was an aimless drifter and a 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.<sup>5</sup> 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 popularized the Nazi Party. Soon Hitler succeeded in ousting the leader of the party Drexler and assumed supreme power over 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 the 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 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 the Nazis in a free election, and they never won an overall majority.<sup>6</sup> However, Hitler managed a majority in Reichstag by putting all Communist deputies in 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:

1. **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 Germans, 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 Rhineland, 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 Benns, '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 wastepaper basket'. The humiliating treatment was also the major factor, which Hitler exploited to win 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'.<sup>7</sup>

- 2. 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 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'.
- 3. 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 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 64,000,000 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 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 Germans and they extended full support to the Nazi Party.

4. **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 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.
5. **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 was impressed on the people that their hardship was due to the exploitation by 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-Jews thronged 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.
6. **Establishment of Volunteer Corps:** The development of Nazism in Germany was greatly facilitated by the establishment of volunteer corps. Under the Peace Settlement, the number of forces of Germany was considerably curtailed and a large number of German soldiers were thrown out of employment. The Nazi Party roped in all these soldiers and organized volunteer corps, which served as party army. The party army was divided into two wings. One wing wore brown shirts and red patch on the left arm with *swastika* sign. The other wing, which consisted of the chosen members of the party, wore black shirts. These party army members propagated the programme of the Nazi Party and worked for safeguarding its interests. These cops rendered great service to the popularization of the Nazi Party in Germany.
7. **Leadership of Adolf Hitler:** The personality of Hitler was one of the major factors in the rise of Nazism in Germany. As historians pointed out, Hitler was an adept psychologist, a clever demagogue and a master showman. He was a resourceful agitator, a tireless worker and an able organizer. He was convinced that a political revolution must be preceded by a psychological revolution. He tried to create this psychological revolution through his autobiography *Mein Kampf* and mentally prepared the young Germans to avenge the wrong done to them by the Allies in 1918.



8. **Contrast between the Weimar Republic and the Nazi Party:** The Weimar Republic, which was the name given to the parliamentary representative democracy of Germany after the First World War, was dull in working and unable to maintain law and order. On other hand, the Nazis promised strong, powerful, and decisive government for the restoration of national pride. People were impressed by this irresistible combination of the Nazi Party.

Moreover, the Germans favoured Nazism as it provided a sense of normality after the Weimar Republic instability. Therefore, any violent act committed by the Nazis, whether directed or aimed against the Jews, Communists or any opposition faction of German society, was legitimized and this in turn led to both active and passive consent from the German population, whose attitudes were already finely tuned by propaganda. The success of Nazis, whether in foreign policy, matters of economy or the creation of a sense of national community explains peoples' active consent throughout most of the Nazi regime or period. The impact or effect of Nazism was so much on the German population that even when the tide began to turn against the Nazis in 1942-43, Nazism was not actively resisted by the German population; instead, they remained passive with some informal resistance.

Although many different interpretations concerning the extent of Nazism's social-political impact are there, it is unreasonable to state that partial inroads were made into wider German society. Significant and important changes took place in mentality among the general population as well as the creation of a national community, but at the same time there was no change in the basic class structure. These inroads can be explained by the successes of the Nazi regime in the fields or areas of foreign policy, increased economic prosperity and political stability, as these were manipulated by Nazi propaganda and there was terror to create a society that either actively supported the regime, or was too afraid to openly resist it.

For millions of Germans, the feeling of insecurity and instability of Weimar was replaced by a sense of normality and strong leadership, and for rest of the world this was the violence and injustice of the Nazi regime or period. The rise of Nazi Germany and the aggressive policies pursued by it encouraged the growth of revisionist sentiments that strengthened the status quo. This led to a division of the world in two hostile camps, which ultimately culminated in the Second World War.

---

## 5 CIVIL WAR AND RISE OF DICTATORSHIP IN SPAIN

---

Spain formed a part of the Roman Empire before the barbarians conquered it in AD 406. In AD 720, it passed into the hands of Arab Muslims and remained under their domination until 1492. By the sixteenth century, it developed into a leading power and became a rival of Great Britain in the race of colonization. However, due to its internal conflicts, the decline started and during the next 300 years, Spain remained a relatively insignificant power. But, with the dawn of the twentieth century it began to consolidate itself though it remained neutral during the First World War.

Spain lacked a strong middle class, which traditionally forms the backbone of representative institutions. So the soil of Spain was unfavourable for the growth of parliamentary institutions at the time of War. Political corruption, illiteracy and revolutionary conspiracies made the prospects of democratic regime unviable. The crisis was further aggravated when the Riff tribes in the Battle of Annual defeated the



Spanish army in 1921. The people held King Alphonso XIII responsible for this defeat. King Alphonso was a weak, inefficient and incapable ruler. He lacked wisdom and statesmanship. In 1923, General Primo de Rivera seized power in a bloodless coup, with Alphonso's approval, and ruled for the next seven years. The king called him 'My Mussolini',<sup>8</sup> but though Primo was a military dictator, he was not a fascist.

On seizing power, Primo declared a state of war in the country, and imposed strict press censorship, and all political activities were banned by him. Once he had restored law and order in the country, he introduced many ambitious schemes for public works, railways electrification, irrigation schemes and road development. He also introduced income tax and this in turn improved the national finances. Primo encouraged and stimulated home industries, channelled investments, and created state monopolies. In 1923, industrial production jumped threefold and the most impressive of all, Primo managed to end the war in Morocco in 1925.

In his zeal for carrying out reforms, Primo suppressed the dissidents and unwilling people. There were frequent student riots in the universities against the dictator. Finally, the world Economic Depression of 1929–30 caused the collapse of Spanish industries, unemployment increased to an all time high leading to the collapse of the national economy. On 28 January 1930, admitting his defeat, Primo resigned from office, and died in Paris, on 16 March 1930.

In April 1931, municipal elections were held in which the Republicans won control of all the large cities. As huge crowds gathered on the streets of Madrid, Alfonso decided to abdicate to avoid bloodshed on 14 April 1931, and a democratic republic was established. But as Spain never had a strong democratic tradition, from 1931 to 1936, democracy was able to maintain itself by a somewhat precarious balance between the Royalists and other Reactionaries on the Right, and Anarchist and Communists on the Left. During this period, the finances of the country were in shambles and the public order was frequently threatened. However, the Radicals and Socialists were defeated by the Moderate Republicans in the elections of November 1933, and Lerroux was their leader. A Popular Front was formed by the Anarchists. It violently opposed the Moderates government. In the elections of 1936, the Popular Front obtained a majority in the national legislature and formed the government. The Popular Front government was not willing or was unable to prevent its Communist and Anarchist allies from executing destructive activities. On 19 July 1936, General Franco and some important officers rebelled against the Popular Front government. The clergymen, royalists, rightists, landlords and conservative republicans fully supported General Franco.

## **Factors behind the Civil War**

The factors behind the Civil War are as follows:

1. **The New Republic faced Serious Problems:** With the inception of the republican system, the new Republic of Spain faced a number of serious problems. Firstly, provinces like Catalonia and the Basque wanted independence. Secondly, the Roman Catholic Church was bitterly hostile to the Republic, which in return disliked the Church and was determined to reduce its power. Thirdly, the economic crisis caused by the Depression created more problems. Agricultural prices were falling, wine and olive exports declined, land went out of cultivation and peasant unemployment rose manifold. Before the state resolved these problems, the Republic was likely to lose the support of the workers.



2. **The Right-Wing opposition:** The solution to these problems was not acceptable to the Right-wing parties, which became increasingly alarmed at the prospects of a Social Revolution. Firstly, the dominant groups in the Parliament (*Cortes*) like the Socialist and the middle class radicals introduced reforms. Catalonia province was allowed self-government. Secondly, Church was attacked and separated from the state, the government would no longer pay priests and the religious education was ceased. Thirdly, large numbers of army officers were retired, and an attempt was made to raise wages of the industrial workers. Each measure infuriated one or the other Right-wing groups. In 1932, some army officers tried to depose the Prime Minister, Manuel Azana, but the rising was easily suppressed by the government. But a new Right-wing party, the *Ceda*, was formed to defend the Church and the landlords.
3. **The Left-Wing opposition:** Opposition from two powerful Left-wing groups, namely, the Anarchists and the Syndicalists, who favoured general strike and overthrow of the capitalist system from the country, further weakened the Spanish Republic. They organized strikes, riots and assassinations. In January 1943, the condition was serious when some government guards set fire to houses in the village of Casas, to smoke out some Anarchists. In this incident, 25 people were killed due to which the government lost the support of the majority section of the working class. This forced the Socialists to withdraw support from Azana. In the following election of November 1933, the Right-wing parties won a majority and the new Catholic Ceda emerged as the largest group under the leadership of Gil Robles.
4. **Actions of the New Right-Wing Government:** The newly elected Right-wing government cancelled most of the Azana's reforms, interfered with the working of the new Catalan government and refused to allow Basques provinces self-government. The Right-wing government by refusing the self government made a serious error because the Basques had supported the Right-wing in the elections but after this decision they switched their support to the Left.

As the government moved further Right, the Left-wing Socialists, Anarchists, Syndicalists and Communists came closer to form a Popular Front. With it, revolutionary violence grew, there were rebellions in Catalonia and Asturia, and there was a general strike in 1934 called by the newly created Popular Front. The miners of Asturias fought bravely but were crushed ruthlessly by the troops under the command of General Franco. The financial as well as political situation of the country deteriorated, the Right-wing fell apart and in the elections of February 1936 the Popular Front came out victorious.

The Popular Front hoped to seize power when the middle-class government failed. But from the very beginning, the Socialists decided not to support the government and the government seemed incapable of maintaining law and order. The condition got aggravated in July 1936 when a leading right wing politician was murdered by the police. This incident terrified the Right and convinced them that the only way to restore order was by a military dictatorship. A group of generals conspiring with the Right had already planned a military takeover. Using the right wing politician's murder as an excuse, they began a revolt in Morocco where General Franco soon assumed leadership and a civil war ensued.



## **The Spanish Civil War (1936–39)**

Taking advantage of internal dissensions, the nationalists under the leadership of General Franco, the Commander of Troops in Spanish Morocco, raised the banner of a revolt against the government and crossed into Spain with an army in 1936. The army mainly comprised the Moorish Troops. Franco controlled much of the area of North and the whole of Western Spain without much resistance.

In October 1937, the capital of Spain was moved from Valencia to Barcelona which implied that the fall of the government seemed imminent. The struggle was a bitter one in which both sides committed terrible atrocities. The Church suffered horrifying losses with over 6,000 priests and nuns murdered at the hands of the Republicans. The nationalists were helped by Italy and Germany who sent arms, men, food supplies and raw materials. The Republican received some help from Russia. However, Great Britain and France refused to intervene, merely allowing volunteers to fight in Spain. The nationalists captured even Barcelona and the whole of Catalonia in January 1939 and the civil war ended in March 1939 when the nationalists captured Madrid.

Franco came out victorious in the war because he was extremely skillful in holding together the various right wing groups like the Army, Church, Monarchists and Falangists. Also, the Republicans were much less united and anarchists and Communist actually fought each other for a time in Barcelona. The nationalists on the other hand fought unitedly under the leadership of Franco. Further, the extent of foreign help for the nationalists played a decisive role; this included 50,000 Italian and 20,000 Portuguese troops, a large Italian air force and hundreds of German planes and tanks.

### **End of Civil War and Emergence of Franco**

After the end of the civil war, General Franco taking the title of *Caudillo* or leader, set up a government which was similar in many ways to those of Mussolini in Italy and Hitler in Germany. His rule was marked by repression, military courts and mass executions. However, in other ways it was not a Fascist government because Franco supported the Church and which was given back its control over education that would have never happened in a true Fascist state.

Franco was also shrewd enough to keep Spain out of the Second World War, though Hitler expected Spanish help and tried to persuade Franco to get involved. When Hitler and Mussolini were defeated, Franco survived and ruled Spain until his death in 1975. During the 1960s, he gradually relaxed the repressiveness of his regime, military courts were abolished, workers were allowed a limited right to strike, and elections were introduced for some members of Parliament, though political parties were still banned. Franco's regime after the 1960s also took steps to modernize Spanish agriculture, industry and evolved techniques to fully exploit the tourist potential of the country. Eventually Franco came to be regarded as standing above politics. Franco died in 1975 and Juan Carlos, the son of the former king, became the king and with this the all-party democracy once again returned to Spain and the first election took place in 1977.

---

## **6 MILITARY DICTATORSHIP IN TURKEY**

---

Turkey emerged as a modern nation under Mustafa Kemal Pasha (Ataturk) who is regarded as the Father of Modern Turkey. He was born in 1891 in an ordinary family.





and his father was a government servant. Since the beginning, Pasha was greatly impressed by the writings of Rousseau and Voltaire, and came to believe that Turkey could be brought on the path of progress only through revolutionary changes. He was imprisoned for his revolutionary ideas by the Government of Turkey. However, in 1911–12 he was set free, after which he took an active part in the Balkan War as a military officer. He demonstrated his remarkable qualities during the First World War and won the admiration of people by scoring victory over the British at the Battle of Gallipoli (1915–16).

The enormous losses suffered by Turkey during the War and the humiliating terms accepted by the Sultan of Turkey in the form of Treaty of Serves, greatly enraged Kemal Pasha. According to the Treaty, Turkey was left in possession of only one-fourth of its total area and many limitations were imposed on its sovereignty. It was not permitted any military, judicial, economic or financial independence. Though the terms of the Treaty were quite humiliating, the Sultan and his advisors believed that the only hope for salvation of Turkey lay in strict compliance with these terms.

Kemal Pasha was quite unhappy with the Treaty of Serves, so he assembled his Turkish followers to oppose the Allies. He launched a massive struggle in the remote areas of Anatolia and set up an independent government at Angora, and thus the authority of the Sultan was automatically restricted to the areas around his capital. In 1920, he freed Smyrna from the Greeks, and in 1921 he occupied western Anatolia. These victories provided a great boost to his prestige and greatly contributed to the revival of national spirit of Turkey. Pasha also won a series of victories against France, Italy and Great Britain. He then waged war against the Greeks and liberated Izmir on 9 September 1922. At the Mudanya Conference which took place in October 1922, he recovered Thrace from the Greeks without any bloodshed and even the Allies agreed to evacuate Istanbul and Straits. He thus, succeeded in achieving the goals of national integrity and independence, and virtually tore off the Treaty of Serves. The Allies began to treat Turkey with great respect and offered them a new treaty which was signed at Laussane on 24 July 1923. As a result of this Treaty, Turkey regained all the territories in Europe and Asia-Minor which it held in 1914.

### **Turkish Republic—A Modernized Nation**

The Turkish Republic was proclaimed on 29 October 1923 and Kemal Pasha became its first president. Though, in theory the new government was a Republic based on liberal principles, in actual practice it operated as a one party dictatorship under Kemal Pasha. However, he was determined to make Turkey a westernized power, and therefore carried out various reforms in a number of fields. Kemal's main principle was the complete independence of the country. He stated that, 'By complete independence, we mean of course complete economic, financial, juridical, military, cultural independence and freedom in all matters. Being deprived of independence in any of these is equivalent to the nation and country being deprived of all its independence.'<sup>9</sup> Pasha led wide-ranging reforms or changes in social, cultural, and economical aspects, and with this established the backbone of legislative, judicial, and economic structures in this new Republic.

### **Economic Reforms in Turkish Republic**

In the economic sphere, Kemal Pasha adopted a new policy and the government was called upon to play a leading role in the development of country's resources. He insisted that all the companies operating with foreign capital must have a national



capital to the extent of 50 per cent. He tried to encourage industrialization and encouraged the manufacturers to import duty-free machinery from the foreign countries. Vital industries were exempted from taxation for the first 10 years or given tax concessions. He set up a Supreme Economic Council at Angora consisting of economic experts to keep a watch on the execution of vast economic plans of reconstruction and to suggest necessary reforms. For the first time, he also set up national commercial banks in Turkey.

Kemal also tried to develop railways. He also paid attention to the construction and improvement of harbours and roads, and latest techniques were adopted for the construction and maintenance of roads. He also paid attention to the development of public works and for the first time built quarters, villas, and offices in large numbers. The building programme launched by him opened-up fresh avenues for employment and provided work to thousands of workers and labourers.

### **Agricultural Reforms in Turkish Republic**

Realizing the mediocre agricultural productivity, Kemal made efforts to improve the state of agriculture. To meet the requirements of the growing population, he introduced the use of modern techniques and encouraged cultivation of cash crops like tobacco, cotton, flux, opium and raisins as well as for an increase in the overall food production. He encouraged cattle breeding, sheep rearing, and dairy industry, and set-up various experimental agricultural stations, arranged for and promoted cooperative societies to prevent exploitation of peasants.

To exploit the natural resources, he allowed foreign investment and due to his efforts the rich chromium deposits of western Anatolia, copper mines of Arghana and coal fields and other mineral resources like silver, manganese and lead were exploited. Even oil explorations were undertaken during this period. As a result of his economic and agricultural reforms, Turkey made great economic progress under him.

### **Military Reforms in Turkish Republic**

Like other sectors, Kemal Pasha also tried to rebuild Turkey's military power. His main motive behind the military reforms was not his ambition to conquer new territories or to reconquer what had been lost, but he merely wanted to ensure that the other powers should not be encouraged to take advantage of the weak position of Turkey as they have done it in the past. Soon after the Treaty of Lausanne, he reorganized the Turkish army on modern lines. Pasha first changed their uniform and provided them with sophisticated equipments. He laid emphasis on the training and education of military officers and tried to inculcate qualities of initiative. They were provided technical instructions in railway, transport, wireless, telephone and telegraph.

To strengthen the defence of the country, Kemal Ataturk developed the air force and to protect the coastline he developed the navy. He took the help of foreign experts to train the general staff in supplying war materials in time of emergency. Through all these reforms he created an excellent Turkish force.

### **Reforms in the Judicial System in Turkish Republic**

The legal and judicial system of Turkey was defective and was based upon old traditions and, therefore, it was necessary to change this system thoroughly. Kemal Pasha was of the opinion that Turkey must rid herself of her old and inherited legal system in order to emerge as an advanced country of the world. It goes to the credit of Kemal that he moved away from tradition and based the administration of justice on Swiss and





German codes. The civil, penal and commercial codes were elaborated. He based the commercial laws of Turkey on the German code, the criminal law was based on Italian and French codes. He got certain decrees passed by the Great National Assembly in March 1929 regarding private debts which permitted their collection with great speed. He also passed bankruptcy laws and abolished the system of arrest and imprisonment of debtors. Kemal Ataturk adopted the Swiss system of registration for the protection of immovable property.

### **Reforms in Religion in Turkish Republic**

Kemal Pasha also made some new and revolutionary changes in the religious system of Turkey. He abolished the Caliphate in Turkey. Before his abolition, the Caliph made a statement to the effect that he would not interfere with the political affairs of the country. On 1 March 1924, at the Assembly, Mustafa Kemal said, 'The religion of Islam will be elevated if it will cease to be a political instrument, as had been the case in the past.'<sup>10</sup> On 3 March 1924, the Caliphate was officially abolished and its powers within Turkey were transferred. Other Muslim nations debated the validity of Turkey's unilateral abolition of the Caliphate as they decided whether they should confirm the Turkish action or appoint a new caliph.

A Caliphate Conference was held in Cairo in May 1926 and a resolution was passed declaring the Caliphate 'a necessity in Islam', but failed to be implemented. However, as a matter of fact, the abolition of the Caliphate was only a beginning in this field. The ultimate goal of Kemal Pasha was to bring about complete religious toleration. Accordingly, all religions were given an equal standing before the law. Now, the people were free to accept any religion according to their will. The fez and turban were outlawed in favour of hats and caps. Women were forbidden to wear veils; and the Turkish people were told to take surnames. At first Kemal Pasha himself took the name of 'Ataturk' or the Chief Turk.<sup>11</sup>

### **Reforms in Educational System in Turkish Republic**

Kemal Pasha was much eager to promote and change the system of education in Turkey according to the Western pattern. However, it was not an easy task to accomplish. A majority of the people living in Turkey were illiterate. There was an acute shortage of school buildings, teachers, funds to name only a few. Thus, it was very difficult to introduce a new system of education. However, he introduced radical reforms in education and laid down a comprehensive plan to achieve this goal.

He made the elementary education compulsory and provided books and equipments at the expenses of the state. Provisions were also made for the training of teachers according to the Western pattern of education. He established a law school in Angora and special attention was paid to technical and agricultural education. The government erected many new buildings to provide better infrastructure for education. The second attempt in this respect was made to abandon the intricate Arab alphabet. It was replaced by the Latin alphabet which affected complete cultural revolution. This difficult job was successfully accomplished by some experts of the government. The role of newspapers and every form of print media also proved helpful in this field.<sup>12</sup> Kemal encouraged the Turkish students to visit foreign countries to acquire higher education and scholarships were made available to brilliant students for higher education in Western countries.



## Emancipation of Women in Turkish Republic

The condition of women was highly deplorable in Turkey. Their social status was very low in comparison with the women of other countries of Europe. It was a characteristic oriental evil in the social life of Turkey. Pasha realized that the task of national reconstruction could not be accomplished unless the cooperation of women was secured. Kemal Pasha, therefore, decided to adopt some effective measures to uplift the social status of women. He abolished *Pardah*, and opened up all kinds of career for women, except admitting them to the parliament. Kemal did not introduce female suffrage because he felt that time was not ripe for that. He wanted to provide modern education to women before granting voting rights to them. Polygamy was abolished. Civil marriage was imposed in place of religious marriage. A significant change was also introduced in the dressing code of women. They were encouraged to adopt Western dress and to throw away the old, traditional dress, which was the symbol of cloistered womanhood. They were given freedom to choose their husband; the personal property they brought with them in marriage was secured to them and many other changes along these lines were introduced. As a result of the liberation of women, they came to play a prominent role in the country's art, literature and education.

### Reforms in Press in the Turkish Republic

Kemal also contributed to the development of a Turkish press which wielded great political powers and possessed great educational value. The press was organised along European lines and had its press correspondents in all the important European capitals to supply reliable information. A government telegraphic agency was also established to supply the press with the latest news. The introduction of Latin alphabets on 1 January 1929 also greatly contributed to the growth of Press by reducing the cost of printing. As a result of all these efforts, the number of newspapers and periodicals showed steady increase. The character of press also underwent great transformation. Whereas the earlier papers were devoted to literary criticism, the modern newspapers dealt with numerous aspects of the country such as science, art, social life and even political issues. Magazines for children were also introduced. As a result, the modern Turkish press came to play a great role as educator to modern society.

In this way, Kemal Pasha successfully introduced reforms in the economic, religious, judicial and political spheres of Turkey. He made his best efforts to transform the nation along Western lines and largely succeeded in establishing this. As a matter of fact, Turkey was regenerated after the First World War and the credit for this transformation goes to Kemal Pasha. His various reform measures succeeded in transforming Turkey into a modern nation and so he has rightly been described as the Father of Modern Turkey.

### ACTIVITY

1. Enlist the nations that are still under some form of dictatorship, and research the background of the dictators.
2. 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. Form two groups and prepare a list of pros and cons of this Twenty-five Point Programme.
3. Collect information on the present political scenario of Spain.
4. Conduct a research and elaborate more on Weimer Constitution.





## DID YOU KNOW?

Of the nine million Jews who had resided in Europe before the Holocaust, approximately two-thirds were killed.

## 7 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- In the post-First World War era democracy received a great boost in the world and in the European countries in particular. In most of these countries, monarchies were abolished and demand rose in favour of democracy, representative assemblies, universal suffrage and people friendly representative governments.
- The concept of modern totalitarianism arose in the 1920s and 1930s. It was a new kind of state. Even today many scholars have trouble defining it. According to the early writers it originated with the total war efforts of the First World War, and that the War called forth a tendency to subordinate all institutions and classes to the state so as to achieve the supreme objective—victory.
- Various factors were responsible for the rise of dictatorship or totalitarianism in Europe. In the first place, the democratic government established after the First World War proved to be a miserable failure as it failed to solve the social, economic and political problems facing countries in the post-war period. This failure was fully exploited to establish dictatorial regimes. Also, the worldwide Economic Depression of 1929 caused enormous hardships and sufferings to the people and gave rise to frustration, despondency and despair.
- Totalitarianism emerged in Italy in the shape of Fascism under the leadership of Benito Mussolini. The word Fascism had its origin in the Roman word *Fascio* which means a bundle of rods which was once the emblem of Roman authority.
- Mussolini was born in 1883 as the son of a blacksmith in the 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 fell out with the socialists because they were against Italian intervention in the War and started his own newspaper, *Popolo d'Italia*. Before the formation of the fascist party, he was not well known in Italy and outside Italy. During the First World War, he joined the army and took active part in it. The War greatly aroused his patriotic feelings.
- To change the fate of Italy, Mussolini carried out administrative reforms and balanced the national budget. He took measures to stall the further devaluation of the 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 power of other European countries and particularly of Germany and France. He set up hydro-electric power plants to overcome the shortage of coal. He tried to improve the condition of workers by nationalizing all factories and mills. He 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 self-sufficient.

- The leader of the Nazi party and 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 a 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 the fact that he was given 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.
- 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 emphasized the need of scraping the Treaty of Versailles which had been imposed on Germany, establishment of the vast German empire after bringing back the lost colonies of Germany, increase in the military power of the country, non-recognition of Jews as 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 were the main highlights of his dictatorship. In the economic sphere, the party stood for increasing incomes, limitation of profits from wholesale enterprise, land reform, nationalization of all trusts, departmental stores and ban on land speculation. Similarly, in the social sphere the party favoured increased old age and maternity benefits, reorganization of higher education and government control of press. 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 inexplicable agony.
- Spain formed a part of the Roman Empire before the barbarians conquered it in AD 406. In AD 720, it passed into the hands of Arab Muslims and remained under their domination until 1492. By the sixteenth century, it developed into a leading power and became a rival of Great Britain in the race of colonization. However, due to its internal conflicts the decline started and during the next 300 years Spain remained a relatively insignificant power. But, with the dawn of the twentieth century it began to consolidate itself though it remained neutral during the First World War.
- Turkey emerged as a modern nation under Mustafa Kemal Pasha (Ataturk) who is regarded as the Father of Modern Turkey. He was born in 1891 in an



ordinary family and his father was a government servant. From his early career he was greatly impressed by the writing of Rousseau and Voltaire, and came to believe that Turkey could be brought on the path of progress only through revolutionary changes. He was imprisoned for his revolutionary ideas by the Government of Turkey. However, in 1911–12 he was set free and took active part in the Balkan War as a military officer. He demonstrated his remarkable qualities during the First World War and won the admiration of people by scoring victory over the British at the Battle of Gallipoli.

## 8 KEY TERMS

- **Caudillo:** Simply means a leader and General Franco took the title
- **Ceda:** Right-wing party, which was formed to defend the Church and the landlords in Spain
- **Cortes:** Dominant groups in the Parliament of Spain
- **Fasci di combattimento:** The local party units in Italy were known as *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
- **Lateran Treaty:** In 1929, Mussolini concluded the Lateran Treaty with the Pope by which the Pope agreed to accept a subordinate position to Mussolini
- **Lira:** Currency of Italy
- **Radical Observer:** The Nazi party started its own paper entitled *Radical Observer*, which awakened the emotions of common people against Communism and the Treaty of Versailles
- **Totalitarianism:** The concept of modern totalitarianism arose in the 1920s and 1930s. It was a new kind of state. Even today many scholars have trouble defining it
- **Treaty of Laussane:** By the Treaty of Laussane in 1923, Italy got back the Dodacanse Islands, which it had surrendered to Greece in 1920
- **Treaty of Rapallo:** 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
- **Treaty of Rome:** 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
- **Treaty of Tirana:** 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

## 9 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. (a) League of Nations; (b) Fascists
2. (a) True; (b) True
3. (a) Enabling Act of 1923; (b) Bavarian





4. (a) True; (b) True
5. (a) democratic; (b) Popular Front
6. (a) True; (b) False
7. (a) Mustafa Kemal Pasha (Ataturk); (b) Treaty of Lausanne
8. (a) True; (b) True

---

## 10 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

---

### Short-Answer Questions

1. What was the main cause that led to the rise of dictatorship in Europe?
2. List the drawbacks of Fascist rule in Italy.
3. What were the achievements of Nazis in Germany?
4. What was the nature of reforms brought in the press during the military rule in Turkey?

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Explain the causes for the rise of dictatorship or totalitarianism in Europe.
2. Discuss Fascism in Italy.
3. Explain Nazism in Germany.
4. Describe dictatorship in Spain.
5. Describe modernization of Turkey.
6. Compare the ideologies of Benito Mussolini, Adolf Hitler and Mustafa Kemal Pasha.

---

## 11 FURTHER READING

---

Hayes, C.J.H.; *A Political and Social History of Modern Europe*, Kessinger Publishing, 2004.

Thompson, David; *Europe Since Napoleon*, Penguin Books, UK, 1990.

Hayes, C.J.H.; *Modern Europe to 1870*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1963.

Gottschalk, Louis and Donald Lach; *Europe and the Modern World Since 1870*, Scott, Foresman and Company, 1954.

Grant, Arthur James, Agatha Ramm, Harold William and Vazeille Temperley; *Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Volumes 1-2, 7th (ed.), Longman, the University of Wisconsin – Madison, 1984.

Dev, Arjun, Indira Arjun Dev; *History of the World: From the Late Nineteenth to the Early Twenty-First Century*, Orient Blackswan, 2009.

### Endnotes

1. J.H. Jackson, *The Post-War World: A Short Political History 1918-1934*, Boston, 1935, p. 80.
2. J.H. Jackson, *The Post-War World: A Short Political History 1918-1934*, Boston, 1935, p. 58.



3. N. Lowe, *Modern World History*, Chennai, 1982, p. 253.
4. J.H. Jackson, *The Post-War World: A Short Political History 1918-1934*, Boston, 1935, p. 58.
5. J Noakes, *The Nazi Party in Lower Saxony 1919–1933*, 1971, pp.1-5.
6. N. Lowe, *Mastering Modern World History*, 1982, Chennai, p.276.
7. W.C Langsam, *The World Since 1919*, 1954, p.13.
8. N. Lowe, *Mastering Modern World History*, 1982, Chennai, p.292.
9. G. Nonneman, *Analyzing Middle East Foreign Policies and the Relationship with Europe*, 2005, p. 204.
10. M. Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, 2006, pp. 290-91.
11. C.J.H Hayes, *Contemporary Europe Since 1870*, New York, 1981, p.490.
12. C.J.H Hayes, *Contemporary Europe Since 1870*, New York, 1981, p.490.



# UNIT 5 SECOND WORLD WAR AND UNO

## Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 From Munich Conference to the Second World War
- 3 Causes of the Second World War
- 4 UNO: Birth and Objectives
  - 4.1 Birth of UNO
  - 4.2 Commencement of UNO
  - 4.3 Objectives of UNO
- 5 Organization of the United Nations
  - 10.5.1 Emergence of Independent Nations
- 6 Summary
- 7 Key Terms
- 8 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 9 Questions and Exercises
- 10 Further Reading

## 0 INTRODUCTION

The First World War and the subsequent Economic Depression considerably weakened many erstwhile European powers but it also led to the rise of dictatorships in several countries. The tensions and resentments resulting from the First World War and the interwar period in Europe made a bigger conflict unavoidable. The culmination of all these events led to the outbreak of the Second World War. Unlike the 1914–18 (First World War), the Second World War was a much more complex affair with major campaigns taking place in the Pacific and the Far East, in North Africa and Russia as well as in Central and Western Europe and the Atlantic. This War later turned out to be even more horrific and disgraceful compared to its earlier version.

Many historians still believe that the Second World War was Hitler's personal war, and that he always intended to fight a war—as a re-run of the First World War. However, it is difficult to accept that the Second World War started only because of Hitler's assault on Poland. In fact, it was a continuation of the First World War and the chain of political crisis that followed from 1919 to 1939. The main cause of the two world wars was definitely the desire of Germany to become the greatest world power.

But the Second World War was also a war of revenge initiated by Germany. It cannot be denied that Germany stood first and foremost for revenge. It also stood first for rearmament and then for loot and German domination. But historians like AJP Taylor do not agree. According to them, Hitler never intended a major war, and at most was prepared only for a limited war against Poland.<sup>1</sup> However, many historians believe that the policy of appeasement adopted by England and France towards the dictatorial powers, largely contributed to the commencement of the War. From the mid 1920s until 1937 there was a mistaken notion that War must be avoided at all costs, and Great Britain and even France drifted along, accepting the various acts of aggression and



breaches of the Treaty of Versailles. In May 1937, when Chamberlain became the British Prime Minister, he gave a new drive to appeasement. He took the initiative to find out what Hitler wanted and further wanted to show him that reasonable claims could be met by negotiation rather than use of force. Chamberlain went to the extent of observing at the time of Locarno treaties that, 'no British government would ever risk the bones of a single British grenadier in defense of the Polish Corridor', the German's thought that Great Britain had turned her back on Eastern Europe. Appeasement reached its climax at Munich, where Britain and France were so determined to avoid war with Germany that they made Hitler a present of the Sudetenland, setting in motion the destruction of Czechoslovakia. This act of Britain and France emboldened Hitler even more who had decided to destroy Czechoslovakia as part of his Lebensraum (Living Space) policy as he hated the Czechs for their democracy as well as for the fact that their state had been established under the controversial Versailles settlement.

In this unit, we will be discussing the causes and the course of the Second World War in detail. In this unit, you will also be reading about the United Nations Organization (UNO) and the emergence of independent nations. The United States had a powerful navy in the Pacific, and it was friendly with some of the colonial powers based in Europe, including the Netherlands and Great Britain. After consecutive unilateral military actions, the United States, along with Australia, Great Britain, and the Dutch government in exile, boycotted Japan through a trade embargo. Thus, Japan resorted to military force to get the raw materials it required.

---

## 1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

---

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the causes of the Second World War
- Assess the significance of the Munich Conference, 1938
- Describe the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, 1939
- Explain how Axis Forces began to lose
- Discuss the Midway Island Attack, 1942, El Alamein, 1942, Stalingrad, 1943
- Describe the fall of Italy, Germany and Japan
- List the factors that led to the birth of the UNO
- List the causes of the emergence of Independent Nations

---

## 2 FROM MUNICH CONFERENCE TO THE SECOND WORLD WAR

---

It has already been made clear to the learner that 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 out his plans. But Great Britain and France wished to avoid a repeat of the First World War, 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 hence sent 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 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 failed to do. Part of this inaction can be attributed to the economic slump that most economies were facing at that 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 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 all Czechoslovaks living there. Soon, events turned in a different direction, and a four-power 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. However, contrary to his belief, a month later Czechoslovakia ceased to exist, and was divided among Germany, Hungary, Poland and an independent Slovakia. (refer Figure 10.1).



Fig. 10.1 Map of Sudetenland showing its Integration with Germany



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 gave Hitler an effortless way of furthering his policy of aggression through the 1930s. In his book *The Origins of the Second World War* (1961) AJP 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 discriminated against.

The Nazis organised massive protest demonstrations in the Sudetenland, and clashes occurred between the Czechs and the Germans. The Czech president, Benes, feared that Hitler was stirring up 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 the future of Sudetenland 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 orthodox Germans. These areas were of immense strategic importance to Czechoslovakia, as most of its border defenses and banks were situated or located there. When it seemed that war was inevitable, Chamberlain and Daladier were invited by Hitler to a Four-power 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 that 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 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 United Kingdom was not honoured. The Government of Czechoslovak realizing the hopelessness of fighting the Nazis alone reluctantly agreed to abide by the rules mentioned in the Agreement. According to the Settlement, Germany got the



Sudetenland starting 10 October 1938 and also had de-facto 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 the 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'.<sup>2</sup> 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 pressurized the Czechoslovakian President, Hacha, into requesting Germany for help to restore order. Consequently in March 1939 German 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 German 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-German 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**

Germany resented the loss of Danzig and the Polish Corridor at Versailles, and now that Czechoslovakia was safely out of the way, 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 German demands were only 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 the 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 Poland between Germany and the USSR. Hitler was convinced that with 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 German troops were withdrawn, a conference could be held, but Germany preferred to remain silent on this. Only when pressure mounted on him in parliament and in the country did Chamberlain send an ultimatum to Germany. When this expired on 3 September, Britain declared war with Germany. Soon afterwards, France also declared war.

### 3 CAUSES OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

World War II, which started in 1939, continued for a period of six years. The major European powers were involved in this War and there were battles taking place in all corners of the globe. This war spread far and wide involving over 100 million people. The countries participating in the war lent their support completely — economic, industrial, and scientific — to the war. Therefore, there was nothing to distinguish the civilian resources from the military ones. The War saw the mass death of civilians, including the holocaust and the only use of nuclear weapons in warfare. The War saw more than 70 million fatalities. This loss of lives led to the Second World War being referred to as one of the most deadly conflicts in history. Even though it was Polish invasion of Germany that led to the breaking out of War, the actual factors that led to the War varied and deep.

#### 1. Follies of Victors in the First World War

The Second World War originated from the First World War itself. When the First World War came to an end, not all the disagreements and differences of opinion had been settled. Following their surrender, the Germans harboured ill feelings for other countries for their intervention in their affairs. The rift that appeared between the Germany and the other countries became so wide that Germany did not get invited to take part in the peace treaties that were signed when the War ended. The Treaty of Versailles, which was particularly concerned with the future of Germany left no room for discussion on the part of Germany. The outcome was that the Germans ended up harbouring feelings of bitterness and were full of loathing for all those who tried to put it down. Hitler took it upon himself to avenge Germany's defeat. He was hungry for power and he justified this hunger by claiming that he wished to do away with the government that surrendered in the First World War. He wanted his own National Socialist German Workers' Party or the Nazi Party to form the government. This way, he thought of gaining complete control over the powers of Europe that had defeated Germany after 1918. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that the First World War was a prime factor responsible for the occurrence of the Second World War, because it the first in the series of events that ultimately culminated in the war being declared in 1939.

#### 2. The Treaty of Versailles

In 1919, the Treaty of Versailles came to an end just after the First World War. However, this enraged Germany for more reasons than one. The first reason was that Germany had no role to play in preparing the Treaty, which was a Diktat or the Dictated Peace settlement. Germany was forced to consent to the terms of this ruthless Treaty and the mass opinion which was not in its favour. Over a period of time, other European powers realized that the original terms had been very strict. The underlined basis of the Treaty was mainly the spirit of revenge. Germany was deprived of her colonies, territories and natural resources and was also burdened with reparations which were beyond its capacity



to honour. This humiliation led to the spirit of revenge. Germany started looking for a chance to disobey the Versailles treaty and finally when Hitler broke the Treaty after many years, it was taken as an indication that many people agreed with Hitler that the Treaty had been wrongly imposed on the Germans. The consequence of the Treaty of Versailles was that it did not settle any dispute; it created more conflicts between countries which were already restless and trying to recover from the previous war. Had the treaty of Versailles been less harsh on Germany, it may have been possible to avert the second world war.

### **3. Aggressive Nationalism of Germany**

Another reason was the desire of German leaders to see Germany as a world power and to take on the policy of militarization which greatly added to the Second World War. After Hitler's position was consolidated, he embarked on the path of the expansion of German empire. He occupied Rhineland, Czechoslovakia and annexed Austria. After this, Hitler focused on Danzig and Poland. Hitler could pursue aggressive policies due to an attitude of indifference on the part of Great Britain and France. This 'aggressive nationalism' of Germany ultimately led to the Second World War.

### **4. Rise of Fascism in Italy**

The growth of extreme nationalism in Italy in the form of Fascism was another factor responsible for the Second World War. Benito Mussolini, the Fascist leader glorified war. He said, 'war alone brings to their highest tension all human energies and puts the stamp of nobility upon people who have the courage to meet it'. It was under Mussolini that Italy began to think of restoring the glory of the Old Roman Empire. Italy annexed Abyssinia and in Spain the Italian volunteers were able to place General Franco in the saddle. In 1937 Italy joined the Anti-Comintern Pact to strengthen its position and concluded a 10 years alliance with Germany in 1939. It was agreed by both the countries to help each other if any of them was involved in war.

### **5. Japanese Imperialism**

Another cause of War was the Japanese imperialism. After the First World War, Japan obtained many concessions at the Peace Conference. However, these were to some extent taken away from Japan by the Washington Conference of 1921-22. But Japan had decided to dominate the Far East. In 1931, Japan intervened in Manchuria and in spite of opposition from the League occupied it. Japan started an undeclared war against China in 1937 and conquered many cities one after another. When the Second World War began the Chinese war was still going on. Japan had joined Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis, and this gave a further momentum to the Japanese programme of expansion and conquest. A war was inevitable under such circumstances.

### **6. The Great Economic Depression**

An economic strife throughout the world was caused due to the Economic Depression which was triggered by the stock market crash in America in the late 1920s. America could not finance Germany to meet the obligations of reparations, and instead they wanted the money back from Germany. As a result of this America went into isolation as it wanted to nurse its own economy and avoid being dragged into another costly European war. Economic crisis was being faced by countries all over the world, and distrust started to develop again between countries. There was unemployment all over the world, and this problem was solved by countries by creating large armies.



In Germany, Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party sought to establish a fascist government. With the beginning of the Great Depression, domestic support for the Nazis rose and, Hitler was appointed the Chancellor of Germany in 1933. In the aftermath of the Reichstag fire, a totalitarian single-party state was created by Hitler and it was led by the Nazis.<sup>3</sup> During that time in order to overcome the serious problem of unemployment some of the countries started arms manufacture, but this gave a serious setback to disarmament efforts and promoted military competition among the states. Therefore, the global Economic Depression which surrounded the world for some years after 1929 was also a contributing cause of the Second World War and this gave Germany an excuse to break away from the Treaty of Versailles and establish larger armed forces on their own turf.

## 7. Failure of the League of Nations

An international organization called the League of Nations was established in 1919, to ensure peace in the world and do away with war as an instrument of policy. The objective was to ensure that all countries became members of the League and in case disagreements arose between countries, they could opt to negotiate instead of using force. If this failed to work, the successful countries would refrain from indulging in trade with the invader country. If this too failed, then countries would employ their armies to fight. In theory, it was very sensible to have the League of Nations, which was successful too, initially. But finally, it turned out to be a failure. In the late 1920s, the entire world was affected by a depression.

Depression results from a fall of the economy of the country, which leads to fall in trade, loss of income by businesses, drop in prices, and rise in unemployment. Japan was affected seriously the Economic Depression of 1931. People lost faith in the government and look towards the army to resolve the situation. The mineral-rich area of China, called Manchuria, was attacked by the Japanese army. China turned to the League of Nations for aid and a way out of the problem. The League of Nations ordered the dictatorial Government of Japan to withdraw its army and leave Manchuria. However, the army did not heed the orders. Then the League asked all the other countries to stop trade dealings with Japan. However, the Economic Depression kept several countries from taking the risk of losing out on trade. Therefore, they did not respond positively to the call. Following this, the League again ordered Japan to move out of Manchuria, but Japan responded by leaving the League of Nations.

Italy attacked Abyssinia in October 1935. The Abyssinians were not able to fight the Italians and appealed to the League of Nations for support and a solution. The League condemned the invasion and requested the member states to restrict trade dealings with Italy. However, these restrictions were not carried out because they would not have affected Italy much. The Italians would still have been able to continue trading with the non-member states, especially America. In addition, The French and the British were in no mood to risk and attack from the Italians. A meeting was called by the French and British leaders to discuss how to check Italy's aggression. A decision was taken to allow Italy to possess land in Abyssinia on the condition that there would be no more attacks on the African country. Even though Benito Mussolini agreed to the plan, it had to be finally dropped because it had led to a public protest in Great Britain. In 1935 Italy occupied Ethiopia and Albania in 1936. Though economic sanctions were imposed by the League upon Italy yet the other members did not apply them.

Encouraged by these developments Germany defied the Treaty of Versailles in 1936 and rearmed itself. In 1938 Germany occupied Austria and Czechoslovakia by



using force. The League remained silent. In 1939, Russia attacked Finland, and this led to Russia's expulsion from the League.

There were many reasons for the failure of the League of Nations. These were as follows:

Firstly, though the idea of formation of the League of Nations came from the American President Woodrow Wilson, there was a change of government in the United States before the Treaty was signed and the new Republican government refused to join it. An early blow was suffered by the League when USA could not join it. Germany was not allowed to join the League as a punishment for having started the First World War and Russia was also not included due to a growing fear of Communism. Some of the other countries decided not to join and some joined but later left the membership. The main idea of collective security was that when one country attacked another, the aggressor would have sanctions imposed against it.

Firstly, there would be material sanctions and then military sanctions. The trading with that country would be stopped. This process was known as collective security, as all the other countries were supposed to support the League and contribute to stopping the aggressive country from waging a war. Even those states who accepted membership of the League showed indifference to this principle of collective security.

Secondly, the League of Nations was powerless. The main weapon or tool of the League was to ask member countries to stop trading with an aggressive country. However, this did not succeed as countries could still trade with non-member countries. When the Economic Depression in the late 1920s hit the world, countries were unwilling to lose trading partners to other non-member countries.

Thirdly, the League had no army of its own. Member states were to supply the soldiers. However, countries were reluctant to get involved and risk provoking an aggressive country into taking action directly against them and failed to provide troops.

Fourthly, the League was not able to act quickly. The Council of the League of Nations only met four times a year and its decisions had to be agreed by all nations. When countries called for the League to intervene or mediate, the League had to organize an emergency meeting, hold discussions and gain the agreement of all its members. This process meant that the League could not act quickly or rapidly to stop an act of aggression.

And finally, as the League of Nations was unable to maintain international peace, the European countries lost faith in its efficacy and entered into mutual political and military alliances. Therefore, the weakness of the League of Nations was a major cause for the outbreak of the Second World War because if it had worked, then there would have been peace within Europe, and there wouldn't have been a Second World War. However, as it was unable to fulfill its promise to protect member states, countries broke the rules to get what they wanted or desired.

## **8. Failure of Disarmament**

Another major cause, intimately connected with the League of Nations was the failure of disarmament. The Cold War between the United States of America and the Soviet Union led to the beginning of an arms race. America knew that it had become a superpower mainly because it was able to crush Japan's imperial designs by dropping an atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Moreover, the rising feeling of insecurity



among nations after World War II made them find new ways of establishing supremacy and avoid containment. The two World Wars had made it clear that annihilation of countries was possible with bombs, and so efforts were made to establish peace in the world by following the policy of disarmament. Thus, the Security Council was created in the United Nations.

The council tried to enforce the policy of nuclear disarmament. But the Soviets and the Americans did not trust each other, and entered an arms race. Article 8 of the Covenant had restricted the member states to take steps for the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety. But as the League members had no faith in the system of collective security guaranteed by the League they entered into a race of rearmament. Due to mutual distrust of the members the various conferences for disarmament failed to achieve much both within and outside the League. Apart from Germany, which was compulsorily disarmed, the other country to reduce arms was Great Britain. After 1935, even Germany introduced conscription in violation of the Treaty of Versailles. The other totalitarian states also followed the principle of 'guns before butter'. This race for armaments had disastrous results for the security of peace loving countries.

### **9. Ideological Conflict**

Another major cause of the Second World War was the ideological conflict between Dictatorial States of Germany, Italy, Japan and Democratic States like Great Britain, France and USA. Commenting on the ideological conflict Mussolini remarked, 'The struggle between the two worlds can permit no compromise—either We or They'. This conflict was inevitable due to the different approaches and worldviews clashing with each other and trying to outwit each other. While the democratic countries stood for maintenance of status quo, the Fascist countries were keen to expand. Japan was land hungry and was determined to establish its supremacy in the Far East. Germany and Italy also wanted to expand their territories. This inevitably invoked a clash with the powers who were not willing to sacrifice their colonial empires.

### **10. Attitude of the Western Powers towards Russia**

The Western powers continued to treat Russia as an outcast. They were scared of Bolshevism and encouraged the Fascist and the Pro-Fascist politicians in the West against Bolshevik expansion. The Western powers failed to realize that the Fascist aggression was directed not only against Russia but also against them. It was a folly on the part of the Western powers to have spurned the offers of friendship and truce made by Russia. Ultimately Russia got frustrated with the attitude of Western powers and concluded a no war pact with Germany.

### **11. Failure of the Policy of Appeasement**

The appeasement policy taken up by Great Britain and France towards the dictatorial states also contributed significantly to the outbreak of Second World War. In the 1930s, many of the makers of the appeasement policy as well as British and French politicians realized that that the terms of the Treaty of Versailles had imposed unfair restrictions on Germany. The dictators had a proper reason to grieve. Hitler's moves were considered justifiable. Even when the Germans started to rearm in 1934, there were many politicians who felt that Germany possessed the right to rearm for its own protection. The argument was that if Germany became stronger, it would be able to stop Communism from spreading



to the West. In 1936, Hitler's argument was that since the French had signed a new treaty with the Russians, the Germans felt threatened by both France and Russia. Therefore, it was essential for Germany to protect its forces deployed in the Rhineland. The French were not sufficiently strong to tackle the Germans on their own without the support of the British but Britain was not in favour of a war at that juncture. Also, most people were of the belief that since Rhineland was part of Germany, it was quite reasonable for the German troops to be stationed there.

Chamberlain was made the Prime Minister of Britain, in May, 1937. In his opinion, Germany stood to lose from the Treaty of Versailles and there were several issues pertaining to the Treaty that required rectification. Chamberlain felt that conceding to Hitler's demands would stop another war from breaking out. The policy adopted by Chamberlain's government was referred to as the Policy of Appeasement. A well known example of appeasement is the Munich Agreement of September 1938, which was signed by German, French, Italian and British leaders. They all agreed that the Germans would get back the Sudetenland, and Germany, in turn, would not try to claim any further territories.

The Government of Czech did not receive an invitation to the Conference. They protested over the Sudetenland loss. They felt cheated. According to them, the British and the French, with whom they had made alliances, had let them down. However, in general, the Munich Agreement was seen as a victory and a great opportunity to secure peace by negotiating rather than declaring war. In March 1939, Hitler broke the terms of the Munich Agreement when he attacked the rest of Czechoslovakia.

Though it was clear that the Policy of Appeasement had failed, Chamberlain did not wish to take the country to war, over a dispute that occurred in a distant nation between people who were not very well known to them. Instead, he guaranteed help to the Polish if they were attacked 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,<sup>4</sup> 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.

## 4 UNO: BIRTH AND OBJECTIVES

After the Pearl Harbour attack, in three separate areas of fighting, at the Midway Island attack in 1942, El Alamein in 1942, and Stalingrad in 1943, the Axis forces were defeated and began to lose ground.

### 1. The Midway Island Attack, 1942

At Midway Island in the Pacific the Americans beat off the powerful Japanese attack in June 1942, which included 5 aircraft carriers, nearly 400 aircrafts, 17 large warships and an invasion force of 5,000 troops. After heavier odds the Americans came out victorious because they had broken the Japanese radio code and knew exactly when and where the attack was to be launched. On the other hand the Japanese were overconfident and made some fatal mistakes. Midway proved to be a crucial turning point in the battle for the Pacific. The loss of their carriers and strike planes seriously weakened the Japanese and from then onwards the Americans maintained their lead. Gradually the Americans under General MacArthur began to recover the Pacific Islands, beginning in August 1942 with landing in the Solomon Island. The struggle was long and bitter, and continued through 1943 and 1944 by a process known as 'Island hopping'.

### 2. El Alamein, 1942

This great battle at El Alamein in Egypt was the culmination of several engagements fought in the El Alamein area. First, the Axis advance was temporarily checked; when Rommel tried to break through he was halted again at Alam Halfa in September 1942. But 7 weeks later in October battle of 1942 Alam Halfa was chased out of Egypt for good by the British and the New Zealanders. The Allies were successful partly because during the 7 week pause massive reinforcement had arrived, so that the Germans and the Italians were heavily outnumbered, 80,000 men and 540 tanks against 230,000 troops and 1,440 tanks. In addition the Allied air power also played a vital role by constantly attacking the Axis forces and sinking their supply ships crossing the Mediterranean, so that by October there were serious shortages of food, fuel oil, and ammunition.

At the same time, the air force was strong enough to protect the Eighth Army's own supply routes. Montgomery's skillful preparations probably clinched this issue, though he has been criticized for being over cautious and for allowing Rommel and half his forces to escape into Libya. However, there is no doubt that the El Alamein victory was another turning point in the Second World War. Firstly, it prevented Egypt and the Suez Canal from falling into the hands of Germany; secondly, it ended the possibility of a linkup between the Axis forces in the Middle East and those in the Ukraine. Thirdly, it led on to the complete expulsion of Axis forces from North Africa. It also encouraged landings of the British troops in the France territories of Morocco and Algeria to threaten the Germans and the Italians from the West, while the Eighth Army closed in on them from Libya. Trapped in Tunisia, 275,000 Germans and Italians were forced to surrender in May 1943 and the Allies were well placed for an invasion of Italy.



### 3. Stalingrad, 1943

To capture the Stalingrad in Russia in 1943 Germany had penetrated deeply through Crimea and captured Rostov, but at Rostov Germany was checked by Russia. The Germans had reached Stalingrad at the end of August 1942, and partially destroyed the city; however the Russians refused to surrender. In that same year in November the Russians counter attacked ferociously, trapping the Germans, whose supply lines were dangerously extended, in a large pincer movement. With his retreat cut off the Germans had no alternative but to surrender with about 1 lakh men on 2 February 1943. If Stalingrad had fallen the supply route for Russia's oil from the Caucasus would have been cut off, and the Germans had hoped to advance up the River Don to attack Moscow from the South east. The Germans had to abandon their plan but the defeat was a catastrophe for the Germans and boosted the Russian moral.

### Defeat of Axis Forces

#### 1. The Fall of Italy

This was the first stage in the Axis collapse. The British and the American troops landed in Sicily from the sea and air on 10 July 1943, and quickly captured the whole island. This caused the downfall of Mussolini in Italy, who was dismissed by the king. The Allied troops crossed to Salerno, Reggio, and Taranto on the mainland and captured Naples in October 1943. Marshall Badoglio, Mussolini's successor signed an armistice and brought Italy on to the Allied side. The elimination of Italy did contribute towards the final Allied victory. Because it provided air bases for bombing the Germans in Central Europe, and the Balkan and the German troops were kept occupied when they were needed to resist the Russians.

#### 2. The Fall of Germany

Though focused attack on Germany was started just after the fall of Italy, but the end was delayed by desperate German resistance and by disagreements between the Americans and the British. Montgomery wanted a rapid thrust to reach Berlin before the Russians, but the American General Eisenhower favoured a cautious advance along a broad front. The British failure at Arnhem in Holland in September 1944, further proved Eisenhower's view, though in fact the Arnhem operation might have worked if the troops had landed nearer the two bridges. Consequently Eisenhower had his way and Allied troops were dispersed over a 600 mile front, with unfortunate results.

Hitler was able to launch an offensive through the weakly defended Ardennes towards Antwerp and secondly, the Germans broke through the American lines and advanced 60 miles, causing a huge bulge in the front line in December 1944. However, determined British and American action stemmed the advance and pushed the Germans back to their original position. But the Battle of the Bulge was important because Hitler had risked everything on the attack, and had lost around 2.5 lakh men and 600 tanks which at this stage could not be replaced. Early in 1945 Germany was being invaded on both fronts, from east and west. The British still wanted to push ahead and take Berlin before the Russians, but the Supreme Commander Eisenhower refused to be hurried and Berlin fell to Stalin's forces in April 1945, and Hitler was so much disgusted that he committed suicide on 30 April 1945. Thereafter the Germans made an unconditional surrender to the Allies on 7 May 1945.



### 3. The Defeat of Japan

In the South East Asia, the Japanese had won amazing victories and occupied Malaya, Singapore, Hong Kong, Burma, the Philippine islands and parts of New Guinea, French Indo-China and Dutch East Indies (Indonesia). After the defeat of Germany, the Japanese were forced to evacuate all these territories. However, Japan continued the fight till the United States dropped atom bombs. On 6 August 1945, the Americans dropped an atom bomb on Hiroshima, killing around 84,000 people and leaving thousands more slowly dying of radiation poisoning. Three days later on 9 August 1945 America dropped another atom bomb on Nagasaki which killed around another 40,000 people; and after this the Japanese government surrendered and it signed the surrender documents on 2 September 1945 on the battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay. This marked the closer of the ghastly chapter of the Second World War.

#### 4.1 Birth of UNO

Many changes in the life of the people were brought about by the Industrial Revolution in Europe. Many big factories were established in Europe and America to produce goods on a large scale. These factories purchased raw materials at a very low price from their colonies and sold them the manufactured goods at a high price. With this the countries became very rich and powerful. They created all types of weapons but these powerful countries fought among themselves and these small battles led to big wars. There were two world wars in the early part of the twentieth century, which involved many countries of the world. 'The First World War was fought from 1914 to 1918, and the Second World War was fought from 1939 to 1945. Millions of people were killed and much property was destroyed during these major wars. Prior to that human beings had never seen wars of this magnitude. They were worried and terrified due to its terrible consequences.'

Countries like the United States, Great Britain, and other great powers after the First World War thought that there should be an international agency to maintain peace in the world. Therefore, the League of Nations was formed to stop another world war. But the League failed comprehensively and it was unable to stop the Second World War, which was even more destructive. The War caused the completely ruined cities, villages, industries and means of transport and communication. Towards the end of the Second World War, two atom bombs were dropped by the US on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. About 2 lakh people died and the two cities were reduced to ashes in minutes. It was because of this that many nations of the world wanted to have an organization that would work more effectively than the League of Nations and save the human race from wars. This feeling of the common people gave rise to the UNO, now popularly called the United Nations (UN).

The UNO came into existence officially in October 1945 after the Second World War ended. It arose on the ruins of the League of Nations. The failure of the League to prevent war and to promote peace, strengthen the conviction of the people that an effective system of collective security was absolutely essential. By this time, the United States of America was willing to enter a system of collective security. However, no effort was made to revive the League of Nations and it was decided to start all over again. The main reasons for this attitude were as follows:

- The psychology was that it would be better to establish a new organization than to try to revive the old one which was attached the stigma of failure.



- The covenant which was drafted in the first quarter of the twentieth century was in any case to be revised and it was felt easier to draft a new document than to drastically change the old one.
- The American President Roosevelt probably felt that the American people would be able to join a new world organization more easily than the League of Nations, which had raised a bitter political controversy in USA.
- The experience of the League of Nations had proved that no security organization could be effective unless all the great powers became its member. It was virtually impossible for Russia to join back the League from whose membership she had been expelled in 1939. Therefore, a new security organization had to be established.

However the dialogue for a new international organization in place of the League of Nations had started much earlier. The Atlantic Charter was signed by Winston Churchill, the British Prime Ministers, and Franklin D Roosevelt, the American President, in August 1941. This proposal for maintenance of peace through international collaboration was signed off the coast of Newfoundland, Canada. In addition to peace, it aimed to ensure security and economic stability.

In 1942, American President, Franklin Roosevelt, coined the phrase 'United Nations' while making a reference to the 26 Allied nations warring against the Axis powers, such as Germany, Japan and Italy. The nations who signed the Declaration were:

- The United States ✓
- The United Kingdom ✓
- The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ✓
- China ✓
- Australia ✓
- Belgium ✓
- Canada ✓
- Costa Rica ✓
- Cuba ✓
- Czechoslovakia ✓
- The Dominican Republic ✓
- El Salvador ✓
- Greece ✓
- Guatemala ✓
- Haiti ✓
- Honduras ✓
- India ✓
- Luxembourg ✓
- The Netherlands ✓
- New Zealand ✓
- Nicaragua ✓

Coined UN  
26 allied



- Norway
- Panama
- Poland
- South Africa
- Yugoslavia

As the Second World War progressed, people had to suffer the violence and carnage that ensued. The concept of the United Nations, as an international organization, began to grow and be accepted. On 30 October, 1943, at the Moscow Conference, a declaration was signed by the Soviet Union, the USSR, USA, China and Great Britain stating that these countries would together form an organization which would work towards maintaining peace and security. After a month, in Teheran (present-day Iran), these countries expressed their wish create such an organization, once again. But it was only in 1944, at Dumbarton Oaks, that the countries got down to actually discussing ways to create and operate such an institution, and outline the tasks it would perform. The participants were cautious about not repeating the mistakes made by the League of Nations but at the same time, adopted some of its positive points. For example, they were clear that only a two-thirds majority would be required to pass a resolution, which was not the case with the League of Nations. In this manner, the United Nations could avoid being impacted even if there were disagreements between the countries due to contrasting policies, as the League of Nations had encountered.

For maintenance of the world's powerful nations in the United Nations, the US, the USSR, China and Great Britain were granted veto power. The features with respect to each of these countries that led to this were:

- USA - strong economy and powerful military
- USSR - military strength
- China - huge population
- Great Britain - widespread colonial interests

These four powers were given permanent membership of the Security Council. Simply put, it would not be possible for the UN to decide on anything without receiving a unanimous approval from all four. At that time, France was occupied by Germany. Therefore, it did not get permanent membership of the Security Council, despite its large colonies in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Caribbean. Later, post-War, France became free and managed to obtain the same powers as the other four countries.

## 4.2 Commencement of UNO

World War II came to an end on 2 September 1945. This happened after the Japanese surrendered aboard the American ship, USS Missouri, in Tokyo Bay.

There arose many issues that needed to be resolved by the international organization. A large part of Japan, sections of China and most of Europe were devastated. Several cities, especially Tokyo, London and Berlin were destroyed in the carpet-bombings and millions of people were rendered homeless and displaced due to the genocide. The scale of the Second World War was so big and widespread that it was impossible to get the exact death toll. However, it is estimated that more than 50 million people lost their lives. Famine and epidemics also took their toll during the War. When the US used the atomic bomb usage, on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan, it became quite clear that



with such weapons of mass destruction, a Third World War could turn out to be an even bigger disaster. Thus, the necessity for an international organization became even more strong so that violence should never happen again. The objective was to restore peace and order in the world.

On 25 April, 1945, the United Nations Charter was signed by 50 countries in San Francisco, USA. These countries were the founder members of the UNO. A little later, Poland became the 51st founding member. At first, certain misunderstandings did crop up among the countries. The Soviet Union and the US were afraid that the organization had the potential to overpower them. One reason why San Francisco was selected as the venue for the event was to remove these fears and suspicions from the hearts of the Americans. Their backing was crucial for the American government to give its consent to join the UN. And without the US, the UN would have failed like the League. Some sections of Great Britain were also reluctant to join fearing that the United Nations may lead to Great Britain losing control over its colonies.

Most importantly, the smaller countries believed that they may not get treatment equal to the powerful nations, and rightfully so. But several small nations consented to join the Charter seeing it as an opportunity to make their voices heard across the world.

On 24 October 1945 the United Nations was finally created, with the Charter receiving approval from the governments of the founder members.

On 10 January 1946, the first General Assembly got together in London, England. Then, the Security Council met on 17 January 1946 for the first time. On 24 January 1946, the UNO's first resolution was passed. The objective was to check weapons of mass destruction, the atomic bomb in particular. The foundation stone of the UN's headquarters was laid in New York City on 24 October 1949. Since then the UN has had a permanent location.

### 4.3 Objectives of UNO

The main objectives of the UNO are:

- To ensure peace in the world
- To develop friendly relations among countries
- To resolve economic, social, cultural and humanitarian issues
- To promote respect and dignity for human rights and freedom

A war is a result of the rivalry among the big powers. Therefore, it is necessary for all the powers to unanimously carry out the policies mentioned. Therefore, it was decided that the Security Council's five permanent members would veto, that is, annul any step, if they do not approve of it. In addition to the political aims, the UNO also put forward a plan to promote the welfare of the people through its subsidiary bodies including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), the United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Atomic Commission. The United Nations Charter's Constitution stated the primary objectives of the UNO as security and development. The UNO was to promote the following:

1. Peace and security for all countries of the world
2. Friendly relations among the member countries



3. Human freedom and rights: The United Nations drew up a list of human rights, known as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was adopted on 10 December 1948, a day celebrated as the Human Rights Day across the world.

Some of the important rights are as follows:

- The right to live as free citizens of a country
- Equality before the law
- The right of free speech and writing
- The right to education
- The right to employment
- The right to freedom of religion
- The right to freedom from discrimination based on religion or sex
- The right to equal pay for equal work
- The right to freedom to travel from one place to another

The United Nations is putting in all efforts to make these rights a reality in all the countries of the world.

4. Development of member states by producing more food, providing medical facilities and resolving the problems of children and refugees
5. Removal of the causes of conflict by encouraging economic, social, educational, scientific and cultural progress all over the world, particularly in the underdeveloped countries.

---

## 5 ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

---

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, the United Nations Charter provided some organs or bodies. The UNO has six main organs. These are as follows:

1. The General Assembly
2. The Security Council
3. The Secretariat
4. The International Court of Justice
5. The Trusteeship Council, and
6. The Economic and Social Council

Out of these six organs four were developed by the League of Nations, and were adopted by the UN Charter with certain changes. These four organs are: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Secretariat, and the International Court of Justice. The other two organs of the UN, viz., the Trusteeship Council, and the Economic and Social Council are newly created.

The General Assembly: This is the meeting place of the representatives from all the member nations. Though there is a rule of one vote per member nation but each member nation can send up to five representatives. The General Assembly meets once a year, which starts in September and remaining in session for about 3 months. However, special sessions can be organized in time of crisis by the member states themselves or by the Security Council.

The General Assembly's aim is to discuss and make decisions about international problems, to consider the UN budget, and what amount each member state should pay,



to elect the Security Council members and to supervise the work of the many other UN bodies.

Decisions of the Assembly do not need a unanimous vote as they did in the League of Nations Assembly. Sometimes a simple majority is enough, though on issues which the Assembly thinks are very important, a two-thirds majority is needed. These include decisions about admitting new members or expelling any existing members and about actions to be taken to maintain peace. All speeches and debates are translated into the six official UN languages that are English, French, Russian, Chinese, Spanish, and Arabic.

For the performance of its extensive duties the General Assembly has created committees and subsidiary organs. The prominent among these committees are the Political and Security Committee, the Economic and Financial Committee, the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee, the Trusteeship Committee, the Administrative and Budgetary Committee, the Legal Committee, the General Committee, and the Credentials Committee. In addition, the General Assembly can set up ad hoc committees to handle specific problems. Thus, the General Assembly has been assigned both political and legal authority.

### **The Security Council**

It is the enforcement wing of the United Nations. It is continuously in session and takes prompt action to ensure international peace and security. The Security Council is a much smaller body than the General Assembly. Earlier it consisted of 11 members, among them 5 are permanent which included the UK, USA, the USSR, France and China, and included 6 non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly for a term of 2 years. The non-permanent members are not eligible for immediate re-election. In 1965, the number of non-permanent members was increased to 10. Decisions need at least 9 of the 15 members to vote in favour but these must include all 5 permanent members. This means that any one of permanent members can veto a decision and prevent any action being taken. In practice it has gradually been accepted that abstention by a permanent member does not count as a veto but this has been written in to the Charter.

In order to secure some action in case of a veto by one of the permanent members, the General Assembly introduced the 'Uniting for Peace' resolution. This states that if the Security Council's proposals were vetoed the General Assembly could meet within 24 hours and decide what action is to be taken, even military intervention if required. In this case a decision by the General Assembly would only need a two-thirds majority.

Unlike the General Assembly, each member of the Security Council can send a representative. It also ensures that different geographical regions get equal distribution. The Presidency of the Security Council is held by all the members of the Security Council in alphabetical order for a period of one calendar month. The Security Council also participates in the election of judges of the International Court of Justice. Similarly, its recommendations are necessary for the appointment of the Secretary General.

### **The Secretariat**

This is the office staff of the United Nations and it consists of over 50,000 employees. They look after the administrative work preparing minutes of meetings, translations and information. The Secretary General is a chief administrative officer of the secretariat. He is appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security



Council. The Council holds a private session to find out a candidate for the office who is acceptable to all the permanent members. Though the General Assembly reserves the right to reject the name recommended by the Security Council, it can't make its own choice. In such a case the Assembly has to wait until another candidate is recommended by the Council. The UN Charter is silent about the term of the office of the Secretary General but as per the decision in 1946 the Secretary General has come to assume a term of 5 years in office which can be renewed and extended. In order to ensure some degree of impartiality the Secretary General is not expected from one of the major powers. The Secretary General acts as the main spokesperson for the UN and is always at the forefront of international affairs trying to sort out the world's problems.

The Secretary General of the UN is more influential and powerful than his counterpart under the League of Nations. The Secretary General performs important functions in the political sphere which greatly influence the formulation of the policies. As per the Article 99 of the Charter, 'the Secretary General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matters which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security'. He is the chief representative of the UN in negotiations with other agencies and governments. He also represents the interests of the UN before the International Court of Justice. Though the Secretary General was not given very extensive powers by the UN Charter he has come to assume wide-ranging powers. While the First Secretary General took the interest in political affairs and neglected the administrative aspect, the subsequent Secretary Generals have devoted much attention to the administration. In the political sphere they preferred to follow quite diplomacy and therefore enhanced the prestige of the UN secretariat and made it less controversial.

### **The International Court of Justice**

The principal judicial organ of the United Nations is the International Court of Justice at Hague in Holland. It was set up by a statute which is based on the Permanent Court of Justice statute. All members of the United Nations are also members of the Court. A state which is a non-member of the United Nations can also become a party of the Statute of the International Court of Justice on conditions which are to be determined in each case by the General Assembly up on the Security Council's recommendation.

According to the Statute the International Court of Justice shall consist of fifteen judges elected regardless of their nationality from among persons who are of high moral character, who have the qualifications need in their respective countries of appointment to the higher judicial office or are jurist consultants of recognized competence in international law. Although the court judges are to be elected regardless of their nationality, no two of them can be nationals of the same state. These judges are elected for a term of 9 years (five judges retiring every third year) by the Assembly and the Security Council jointly.

The International Court of Justice has dealt successfully with number of disputes including a frontier dispute between Holland and Belgium and a disagreement between Britain and Norway over fishing limits but in many other cases it was not so successful. Although in theory the Security Council has the power to take appropriate measures to enforce the Court's decision it has never done so. In spite of various limitations it cannot be denied that the International Court of Justice has contributed significantly in the maintenance of international peace through resolution of transnational disputes.



## **The Trusteeship Council**

This replaced the League of Nations Mandates Commission which had originally come into existence in 1919 to keep an eye on the territories taken away from Germany and Turkey at the end of the First World War. Some of these territories, known as mandated territories or mandates, had been handed over to the victorious power, and their job was to govern the territories and prepare them for independence.

The Mandates Commission which was later replaced by the Trusteeship Council did its job successfully and by 1970 most of the mandates territory had gained their independence. However, Namibia remained a problem, since South Africa refused to give the territory of Namibia independence. South Africa, ruled by a government representing the white minority of the population, was unwilling to give independence to a state right on its own frontier which would be ruled by a government representing its black African majority. The United Nations on its part repeatedly condemned South Africa for its attitude and after the United Nations intervention the International Court of Justice in 1971 ruled that South Africa's occupation of Namibia was a breach of international law and that South Africa must withdraw immediately. South Africa ignored the verdict of United Nations, but as the other states of Africa gradually gained independence under black governments, it became more difficult for the South Africa to maintain both its position in Namibia and its own white minority rule. At last the pressure of black African nationalism and world opinion forced South Africa to release its grip on Namibia in 1990.

## **The Economic and Social Council**

This Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. It operates under the authority of the General Assembly. Article 55 of the Charter enjoins on the United Nations to create conditions of stability and well being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self determinations of the people by promoting:

1. Higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development,
2. Solutions of international economy, social, health and related problems and in international cultural and educational co-operation, and
3. Universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedom for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

The Economic and Social Council at present consists of 54 members of the United Nations, elected by the General Assembly for a term of 3 years, but initially there were 18 members and subsequently it was raised to 27. One-third members of the Economic and Social Council are replaced every year. A retiring member is eligible for immediate reelection. Each member of the Council has one representative. No criterions have been laid down by the General Assembly regarding the qualifications, etc., for the election of members of the Economic and Social Council. However, in actual practice an attempt is made to represent a variety of social, economic, cultural and geographical interests.

The Economic and Social Council generally meets twice a year. However, when necessary, special sessions can be convened by the Council. All the decisions are taken by the Economic and Social Council by the majority vote. It organizes projects concerned



with health, education, and other social and economic matters. It has appointed four regional commissions; that are Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Far East, as well as commissions on population problems, drug problems, human rights and the status of women. The Economic and Social Council also co-ordinates the work of an astonishing array of other commissions and specialized agencies. At present the following specialized agencies work under the broad supervision of the Economic and Social Council:

1. International Labour Organization (ILO)
2. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)
3. International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
4. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
5. International Monetary Fund (IMF)
6. World Health Organization (WHO)
7. Universal Postal Union (UPU)
8. International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
9. World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
10. International Finance Corporation (IFC)
11. Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO)
12. International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)
13. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
14. United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)

Each of these specialized agencies of the United Nations has its own constitution, sphere of action, budget and staff in accordance with the principle of functional organization. Though each of the agencies has a separate and distinct identity, they are not completely autonomous and unrelated to each other.

The scope of the Economic and Social Council expanded in such a remarkable way that by 1980 more than 90 per cent of the UN's annual expenditure was devoted to the Economic and Social Council activities. The actual working of the Council for all these years has fully demonstrated that the Council has done a commendable job through its agencies, as per the original planning of the UN. So, during the time of drafting of the Charter of the UN, Chairman Settinius of US said, 'The battle of peace has to be fought in two fronts. The first is the security front where victory spells freedom from fear. The second is the economic and the social front where victory means freedom from wants. Victory on both fronts can definitely assure the world of a lasting peace'.

### **10.5.1 Emergence of Independent Nations**

One of the outstanding events of the mid-twentieth century after the culmination of the Second World War and the formation of the UNOs has been the emergence of independent nations in Asia and Africa. The countries in these two continents emerged from the clutches of colonial rule and the obscurity inflicted by the foreign rulers. Between 1945 and 1960 almost one quarter of the world's population won political independence in these two continents. The collapse of colonialism marked the dawn of a new era. Commenting on the significance of this development G. Barraclough observed, 'Never before in the whole of human history had so revolutionary a reversal occurred with such rapidity'.



Even in the post Second World War period the nations of Europe continued to claim ownership of vast areas of the rest of the world, particularly in Asia and Africa. Great Britain's empire was the largest in area consisting of India, Burma, Ceylon, Malaya, enormous tracts of Africa and many islands such as Cyprus, Hong Kong, the West Indies, the Falklands and Gibraltar. Likewise, France had the second largest empire, with territories in Africa, Indo-China and the West Indies. In addition, Britain and France held land in the Middle East taken from Turkey at the end of the First World War. Britain held Transjordan and Palestine, and France held Syria. They were known as 'mandated' territories, which meant that Britain and France were intended to look after them and prepare them for independence. Other important empires were those of Holland (Dutch East Indies), Belgium (Congo and Ruanda Urundi), Portugal (Angola, Mozambique and Guinea), Spain (Spanish Sahara, Ifni, Spanish Morocco and Spanish Guinea) and Italy (Libya, Somalia and Eritrea).

Over the next 30 years of the establishment of the UNO remarkable changes took place. By 1975 most of these colonies had gained their independence. In some cases, as in the Dutch and France colonies, they had to fight for it against the determined European resistance. The problems involved were often complex. Most of the Afro-Asian countries on the eve of their independence were poor, lacked infrastructure, communication, people were generally illiterate and their banking systems were very poor. Therefore, after their independence most of the Afro-Asian countries embarked on the path of achieving democracy and liberation in their economy and social spheres.

Majority of the countries like India, Burma and Sri Lanka in Asia and Guinea, Mali, Congo, Tanzania and the UAR in Africa planned their development on socialistic lines, some other countries also stood against socialism. Thus, the Asian and the African continents witnessed a contest between socialism and capitalism. But these countries got maximum support from various agencies of the UN in their development. While in India there were bitter religious differences to resolve, in some areas like Algeria, Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda and Rhodesia, etc., a large numbers of whites had settled and they were relentlessly hostile to independence which would place them under black rule. But Britain was prepared to grant independence when it felt that individual territories were ready for it. The other colonial powers were at first determined to hold on to their empires by military force. However, they all gave way in the end.

## **Colonies that gained independence after 1945**

### **British Colonies**

The main British colonies which gained independence after the establishment of the UNO were 6: India and Pakistan in 1947, Burma and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in 1948, Transjordan (Jordan) and Palestine in 1948, Malaysia and Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1957, Nigeria, Somaliland and Cyprus in 1960, Tanganyika and Zanzibar (together forming Tanzania) in 1961, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda in 1962, Kenya in 1964, British Guiana (Guyana), Barbados and Bechuanaland (Botswana) in 1966, Aden (South Yemen) in 1967, Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) in 1980, and British Honduras (Belize) in 1981.

### **French Colonies**

Syria got independence in 1946, Indo-China in 1954, Morocco and Tunisia in 1956, Guinea in 1958, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Mauretania, Niger, Upper Volta, Chad, Madagascar



(Malagasy), Gabon, Sudan (Mali), Cameroun, Congo, Oubangui-Shari (Central Africa), Togo and Dahomey (Benin) got independence from France in 1960.

### **Dutch Colonies**

East Indies (Indonesia) got independence from the Dutch control in 1949 and Surinam in 1975.

### **Belgian Colonies**

Congo in 1960, Ruanda-Urundi in 1962 became free from Belgian control.

### **Spanish Colonies**

Spanish Morocco in 1956, Guinea in 1968, Ifni later became part of Morocco in 1969 and Spanish Sahara later divided between Morocco and Mauretania became free in 1975 from the Spanish control.

### **Portuguese Colonies**

Guinea in 1974, Angola and Mozambique in 1975, and East Timor in 1975 got independence from Portugal.

### **Italian Colonies**

Ethiopia in 1947, Libya in 1951, Eritrea later became part of Ethiopia in 1952, and Italian Somaliland later became part of Somalia and got independence in 1960 from Italian control.

### **Emergence of Israel**

In 1948 the creation of the State of Israel was preceded by struggle of more than five decades to set up a sovereign state as a homeland for Jews. Theodore Herzl, founder of the Zionist movement initiated these efforts, and these were given added impetus by the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which declared the British government's support for the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

With the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, the British assumed control of Palestine. The British government issued the Balfour Declaration in November 1917, announcing its intention to facilitate the 'establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people'. In 1922, a mandate was granted to Britain over Palestine by the League of Nations which included, among other things, provisions calling for the establishment of homeland for Jews, facilitating Jewish immigration and encouraging their settlement on the land.

The Arabs opposed Jewish immigration to Palestine and increased their attacks against the Jews. Following this, in 1936 the British appointed a royal commission to investigate the Palestine situation and circumstances. According to the Peel Commission partition of the country should be made between Arabs and Jews. This idea was rejected by the Arabs while the Jews accepted the principle of partition.

At the end of the Second World War, 'the British persisted in their immigration restrictions and Jewish survivors of the Holocaust were violently turned away from the shores of Palestine. Underground cells of Jews, most notably the Irgun and Lehi, engaged in open warfare against the British and their installations. The British realized that they



could no longer manage Palestine and handed the issue over to the United Nations.' On 29 November 1947, after much debate and discussion, the UN recommended for Palestine partition into two states—one Jewish and one Arab. The UN resolution was accepted by the Jews while the Arabs rejected it.

In the meantime, since the time of the British Mandate, the political, social and economic institutions that governed daily life in Palestine was formed by the Jewish community in Palestine and served as a pre-state infrastructure. Zionist leader David Ben-Gurion worked as head of the pre-state government. On 14 May 1948, the British mandate over Palestine officially terminated and David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the formation of the State of Israel, and became its first prime minister. On 15 May, the United States recognised the State of Israel and the Soviet Union soon followed it. Soon after the State of Israel was proclaimed, armies from neighbouring Arab states who had not accepted the UN partition plan invaded it. In 1949 this conflict, Israel's War of Independence, was concluded by an armistice between Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

### **Causes of the Emergence of Independent Nations**

Although the European powers claimed to have brought the benefits of Western civilization and culture to their colonies, there was a general feeling among the colonies that the European colonial powers were exploiting them for their benefits, who took most of the profits from their partnership.

- (i) The development and prosperity of the colonies were being held back in the interests of Europe and most of the colonial people continued to live in poverty and deprivation. So, nationalist movements started in various colonies. In India the Indian National Congress started agitation against the British rule since its inception in 1885 and in South East Asia, the Vietnamese began to campaign against France authority during the 1920s.
- (ii) Before the Second World War, people in the colonies believed that it would be impossible to defeat the colonial powers who were superior militarily. Japanese successes in the early part of the War showed that it was not impossible for non Europeans to defeat the European powers and this led to movements against colonial powers in Indo-China, the Dutch East Indies, Malaya, and Burma.
- (iii) The Asian and the Africans became more conscious and aware about the social and political matters as a result of their involvement in the Second World War.
- (iv) Some European policies during the War period encouraged colonial people to expect independence as soon as the War was over. In 1941, the Atlantic Charter set out joint Anglo-American thinking suggested that, nations should not expand by taking territory from other nations and all people should have the right to choose their own form of government. Though Churchill later said that this only applied to victims of Hitler's aggression, the hope and expectation of other Asian and African colonial states had been raised.
- (v) The most important development was the establishment of UNO which came out firmly against imperialism and demanded a step-by-step programme for decolonization. The US and the USSR also added their voice to the chorus and constantly denounced imperialism. By putting pressure on the European states, they encouraged nationalists all over the world to intensify their campaign against colonial powers.



## ACTIVITY

1. Find out what were the terms and conditions that were agreed upon in the Munich Agreement.
2. '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.' What were the terms that were agreed upon between France and Russia? Make a list of these terms and compare these with the Munich Agreement.
3. Make a list of the judges of the International Court of Justice.
4. Make a list of the current and permanent members of the Security Council.

## DID YOU KNOW?

At its founding, the UNO had 51 member states, there are now 193.

## 6 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- The First World War and the subsequent Great Depression considerably weakened many erstwhile European powers but it also led to the rise of dictatorships in several countries. The tensions and resentments resulting from the First World War and the interwar period in Europe made a bigger conflict unavoidable. The culmination of all these events led to the outbreak of the Second World War.
- The main cause of the two world wars was definitely the desire of Germany to become the greatest world power. But the Second World War was also a war of revenge initiated by Germany. It cannot be denied that Germany stood first foremost for revenge. It also stood first for rearmament and revenge and then for loot and German domination.
- 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.
- 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 pressurized 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.



- 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.
- 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. Like the follies of victors in the First World War, the Treaty of Versailles, aggressive Nationalism of Germany, rise of Fascism in Italy, Japanese imperialism, the Great Economic Depression, failure of the League of Nations, failure of disarmament, ideological conflict, attitude of the Western powers towards Russia, failure of the Policy of Appeasement.
- The British and the American troops landed in Sicily from the sea and air on 10 July 1943, and quickly captured the whole island. This caused the downfall of Mussolini in Italy, who was dismissed by the king.
- The Battle of the Bulge was important because Hitler had risked everything on the attack, and had lost around 2.5 lakh men and 600 tanks which at this stage could not be replaced.
- Berlin fell to Stalin's forces in April 1945 and Hitler was so much disgusted that he committed suicide on 30 April 1945. Thereafter, the Germans made an unconditional surrender to the Allies on 7 May 1945.
- After the defeat of Germany, the Japanese were forced to evacuate all these territories.
- On 6 August 1945 the Americans dropped an atom bomb on Hiroshima, killing around 84,000 people and leaving thousands more slowly dying of radiation poisoning.
- On 9 August 1945 America dropped another atom bomb on Nagasaki which killed around another 40,000 people; and after this the Japanese government surrendered.
- The UNO came into existence officially in October 1945 after the Second World War ended. It arose on the ruins of the League of Nations.
- The Second World War officially ended on 2 September 1945, when Japan surrendered on board the American ship, USS Missouri, in Tokyo Bay.
- On 24 October 1945 the United Nations was finally created, when the Charter was approved by the governments of the founding nations. On 10 January 1946, the first General Assembly took place in London, England.
- The UNOs primary objective is to maintain world peace, to develop friendly relations among nations, to solve economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems, and to promote respect and dignity for human rights and freedom.



- One of the outstanding events of the mid-twentieth century after the culmination of the Second World War and the formation of the UNOs has been the emergence of independent nations in Asia and Africa.
- Although the European powers claimed to have brought the benefits of Western civilization and culture to their colonies, there was a general feeling among the colonies that the European colonial powers were exploiting them for their benefits.
- The establishment of UNO came out firmly against imperialism and demanded a step-by-step programme for decolonization.

---

## 7 KEY TERMS

---

- **Collective security:** All the other countries were supposed to support the League of Nations and contribute to stopping the aggressive country from waging a war; this was known as collective security
- **Dictat:** An order imposed by a powerful authority without popular consent
- **Fascist:** A radical authoritarian nationalist political ideology. Fascists demand elevation of their nation on the basis of a commitment to an organic national community where its people are bound together as one through national identity
- **Imperialism:** Policy of extending a country's power and influence through diplomacy or military force
- **Mandate:** An official order or commission to perform a task
- **Munich Dictate:** The state of Czechoslovakia which was not even invited to the Conference felt betrayed by the 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 United Kingdom was not honoured
- **Pincer movement:** A military manoeuvre characterized by double envelopment of enemy forces
- **Statute:** A rule of an organization or written law passed by a legislative body

---

## 8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

---

1. (a) *The Origins of the Second World War* (1961); (b) Munich Betrayal
2. (a) False; (b) True
3. (a) 1939; (b) Munich Betrayal
4. (a) True; (b) True
5. (a) (iii); (b) (ii); (c) (i); (d) (iv)
6. (i) East Timor; (ii) Belgian; (iii) Trusteeship; (iv) General Assembly  
(v) Security
7. (a) True; (b) True



## 9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

### Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a note on the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, 1939.
2. Write a note on Hitler's demand for the return of Danzig.
3. List the causes of the Second World War.
4. State the factors that led to the failure of the Policy of Appeasement.
5. Explain Midway Island Attack, 1942.

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the propaganda campaign in the Sudetenland.
2. Discuss the Munich Conference, 1938.
3. Describe the fall of Italy, Germany and Japan.
4. Discuss the birth and commencement of the UNO.
5. Explain the organization and objectives of the UNO.
6. Discuss the emergence and causes of emergence of Independent Nations.

## 10 FURTHER READING

Hayes, C.J.H.; *A Political and Social History of Modern Europe*, Kessinger Publishing, 2004.

Thompson, David; *Europe Since Napoleon*, Penguin Books, UK, 1990.

Hayes, C.J.H.; *Modern Europe to 1870*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1963.

Gottschalk, Louis and Donald Lach; *Europe and the Modern World Since 1870*, Scott, Foresman and Company, 1954.

Grant, Arthur James, Agatha Ramm, Harold William and Vazeille Temperley; *Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Volumes 1-2, 7th (ed.), Longman, the University of Wisconsin – Madison, 1984.

Dev, Arjun, Indira Arjun Dev; *History of the World: From the Late Nineteenth to the Early Twenty-First Century*, Orient Blackswan, 2009.

### Endnotes

1. N. Lowe, *Mastering Modern World History*, 1982, Chennai, p.76.
2. I. Kirkpatrick, *The Inner Circle*, 1959, p. 135.
3. A. Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*, London, 1962, p. 265.
4. D. Barrett, *China in the Anti-Japanese War, 1937–1945: Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol. 1, New York, 2001, p. 6.





INSTITUTE  
OF DISTANCE  
EDUCATION **IDE**  
Rajiv Gandhi University

## **Institute of Distance Education**

### **Rajiv Gandhi University**

*A Central University*

Rono Hills, Arunachal Pradesh

Contact us:



+91-98638 68890



Ide Rgu



Ide Rgu



helpdesk.ide@rgu.ac.in





**INSTITUTE  
OF DISTANCE  
EDUCATION** **IDE**  
Rajiv Gandhi University

# Institute of Distance Education Rajiv Gandhi University

A Central University

Rono Hills, Arunachal Pradesh

## Contact us:

 +91-98638 68890

 Ide Rgu

 Ide Rgu

 helpdesk.ide@rgu.ac.in