

BLOCK-II
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

As many as four units (Units 3 to 6) in this block give a **historical perspective** on IR. The World War I (1914-18), the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the rise of Fascism and Nazism in the 1930s, and the World War II (1939-45) indisputably were the four decisive events in the first half of the 20th century; these events greatly impacted the world order that we know it as of today. By going through the Unit-3 on First World War, you will discover that conflict was inherent in the way international relations worked since the 19th century. Aggression, military alliances, balance of power, secret pacts, territorial ambitions and creation of zones of economic and geopolitical influence were the dominant norms in IR. The result was often war; peace was only a brief interlude between two wars. The imperialist ambitions of the European powers would conflagrate as colonial masters would also drag the colonial people in their conflicts.

The age of liberal internationalism dawned with the 14-points of the US president Woodrow Wilson in 1919. An international organization, League of Nations was established; principle of collective security was incorporated; and right to self-determination was recognized. The interwar period of 1919-1945 saw great focus on codification of customary international law and creation of variety of international organization. The sense of IR was that some order needed to be brought in the behaviour of the states. This was the period of Wilsonian idealism; the focus on legal-institutionalism clarified and gave strong currency to many of the norms of IR. Impact of First World War on the study of International Relations was very strong. After the War, teaching of the subject of International Relations was initiated in the various universities in Europe and United States.

The outbreak of socialist revolution in Russia was a landmark event in the history of mankind. At the level of discipline of IR, the Soviet socialist revolution dramatically enhanced the possibility of an alternative system of IR: Look at IR 'from below'; and not from above – the perspective of the world's colonial and capitalist powers. Soviet Russia rejected all secret pacts, supported the right to self-determination of people in the colonies and the minorities living in European countries, called for solidarity of the workers, peasants and all the exploited people of the world. Two developments are noteworthy: Soviet revolution very strongly raised the prospects of socialist revolutions and greatly energized anti-colonial movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Secondly, it impressed upon the international system the importance of social justice and equity – the need to have international labour standards and labour rights such as right to strike; land redistribution, and gender equality. In addition to war and peace, development became a concern of IR.

Fascism and Nazism in Europe were short lived but had a devastating impact on the whole world. A militaristic nationalism, war and aggression, racism and belief in racial superiority and the idea that nation is a living entity whose existence is above everything else were the chief features of these ideologies. Fascism and Nazism lived between the two world wars in Italy and Germany respectively but these ideologies have the tendencies to resurface in Europe and elsewhere too. During their heyday, they left a strong impression and inspired many political movements in other parts of the world – Latin America and Asia.

The Second World War was even more destructive than the first one. Apart from the heavy cost of war in terms of man and material, the conflict saw the use of nuclear weapons for the first time. It was clear that nuclear weapons assured mutual destruction; there are no victors and vanquished in a nuclear war. When the Second World War ended, the international political and economic landscape had transformed. Also, IR as a discipline was faced with several immediate challenges. Few significant developments were: empires died; scores of new nations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America were born. The legacies of colonialism, racism and underdevelopment emerged as new issues to be dealt with in the discipline of IR. Further, the world found itself divided into two blocs – a capitalist bloc headed by US and a socialist bloc led by Soviet Union. Ideological competition, spheres of influence, arms race, development of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems marked the International System. It is in this context that the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) emerged as the voice of reason, peaceful dialogue and rejection of bloc politics. United Nations was formed which provided for the Security Council; it meant that for the first time, decision of an international organization could be implemented, if need be by using military force. The five great powers arrogated to themselves the ‘veto’ power; they became the global policemen. Bretton Woods institutions emerged and GATT came in for negotiations so as to have rules for international trade. A new and powerful international economic actor emerged and spread in the form the MNCs.



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UNIT 3 WORLD WAR I: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES*

Structure

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

The War that broke out in Europe in 1914 and soon engulfed almost the entire world is described as the First World War both because of its unprecedented extent of its spread and its total nature. In this unit, we will examine its causes and consequences. After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- The circumstances which led to the First World War
- Causes of the First World War
- Sequences of events of the War
- Consequences of the War
- Impact of the War
- Understanding of Inter-war dynamics of the European Powers
- New Beginning in the World Politics

* Originally written for EPS 07 International Relations

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The First World War broke out in the third quarter of 1914. The war began in Europe but soon engulfed almost the entire world. The damage caused by this war had no precedent in history. In the earlier wars, the civilian populations were not generally involved and the casualties were generally confined to the warring armies. The war which began in 1914 was a total war; the casualties suffered by the civilian population from bombing of the civilian areas were huge in numbers. The world experienced an unprecedented holocaust. The war affected the economy of the entire world. Again, a total war in which all the resources of the warring states were mobilized. It continued for more than four years. It marked a turning point in world history. The battles of the war were fought in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Pacific. Because of the unprecedented extent of its spread and its total nature, it is known as the First World War. Established dynasties collapsed, Europe began to decline and America started to dominate. The war generated new ideologies such as those of socialism; founded new institutions e.g the League of Nations; and gave birth to new leaderships that sought to build cooperation in the world. The world, indeed, stood transformed at the termination of the war.

3.2 CAUSES OF THE WAR

The war broke out in the wake of the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the heir apparent to the Hapsburg throne. He was assassinated by a group of Bosnian radical nationalists on 28th June 1914. The assassination however was not the real cause of the war. It was just the pretext. The causes of the war may be found in the politico-economic developments that had been taking place in the international arena since the Franco-German War of 1870. There arose economic rivalries; disputes over colonies; and the conflicting alliance system in Europe. The growing nationalist aspirations in the subject peoples in Europe added fuel to the fire and further intensified the complex dynamics.

3.2.1 Economic Rivalries

Throughout the last quarter of the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century, most of the European powers had been locked in tariff wars and had been engaged in competition for overseas markets. There had been tariff wars between Italy and France, Russia and Germany, Austria and Serbia and so on. Besides these tariff wars, there arose stiff competition among the powers in general, and between Germany and Great Britain for overseas markets. Throughout the 19th century, Britain had been the supreme economic power, backed by a powerful navy and army. Germany suddenly emerged as a competing great economic power in Europe after its principalities unified as a nation-state. Germany's emergence as the economic super power made it a stiff competitor for overseas markets too, where other European powers including Britain had great stakes. This competition had far-reaching political repercussions. It created an unending tension in the relations between these states. These relations got further embittered when the competing countries started building up strong navies for safeguarding trade routes and merchant shipping. Germany which already had a big army, devoted its full energies for building a large navy and achieved the goal within a short span. Germany's emergence as an economic power backed by a strong navy and an army became intolerant for Britain and the other powers hostile to it. Hence rivalries intensified and a flare up became inevitable.

3.2.2 Colonial Disputes

The European powers in order to ensure protected markets for their surplus capital and industrial products got involved in conflicts for overseas colonies. Germany was the youngest in the race for colonies. With its emergence as an economic power, it became very aggressive in the demand for the overseas colonies which could provide markets for its growing economy. It was a general cry in Germany that the country must have a “place in the sun”. In its struggle for acquiring colonies, Germany found Britain as the stumbling block. Britain was condemned as a selfish, “dog in the manger”. The disputes for a “place in the sun” were not confined to Germany and Britain alone. All major powers were engaged in the scramble for dependencies in the years preceding the First World War. There were collisions in Africa and in Asia between the European powers for colonies. These contradictions intensified and made relations between European states hostile towards each other.

3.2.3 Conflicting Alliance Systems

The struggle for colonies in different parts of the world between antagonistic powers led to the formation of conflicting alliances. Germany showed the way. It signed the Dual Alliance with Austria-Hungary (1879). This Alliance aimed at strengthening Germany against a possible French attack for recovering Alsace-Lorraine. The Alliance was also designed to protect Austria-Hungary against Russia with which the former had protracted clashes in the Balkan region. The alliance became the Triple Alliance in 1882. Italy joined Austria-Hungary and Germany, seeking their support in her struggle for colonies against France.

The partners of the Triple Alliance attempted to maintain the status quo in the continent. Others, however, saw this as an attempt to dominate Europe and to isolate other states from each other. They, therefore, took steps to form counter alliances. France and Russia entered an entente (1893). This entente was aimed at countering the Triple Alliance and containing Britain, against whom both France and Russia had outstanding disputes over the colonies. In the course of time, however, the disputes between France, Russia and Britain were resolved peacefully. They now entered into alliances. First, the Anglo-French entente (1904) was signed and then the Anglo-Russian entente (1907) was formalized. These two ententes were transformed into the Triple Entente. Europe was thus divided into two conflicting alliances viz. Triple Alliance and Triple Entente, which added fuel to the already embittered international relations which were aggravated by economic and colonial rivalries.

3.2.4 Rising Nationalist Aspirations

There were subject minorities in different regions of Europe. These subject minorities remained hostile towards their respective imperial rulers. The growing nationalism of these peoples made them restless against foreign rule. They were demanding the right of self-determination. The French people in Alsace-Lorraine were hostile to German rule over their territory. The Hapsburg Empire, ruled by the Austrians and the Hungarians, had been facing growing discontent by the subject peoples. Italian, Romanian, and the Slavic peoples living within the Austro-Hungarian Empire awakened and initiated demands for self-determination or unification with their brethren in the neighbouring states. The rulers however

tried to suppress the nationalist awakenings. The nationalist movements within empires transformed into military revolutionary movements. Secret radical and militant organizations sprang up in different places in the Balkan region. Belgrade, the Serbian capital, in 1911, hatched the conspiracy to kill Archduke Francis Ferdinand while he was on an official tour in Sarajevo, and assigned the job of assassinating him to Gavrilo Princip and his comrades. Princip carried out the assassination.

3.2.5 The Outbreak of War

At the assassination of the Archduke, Austria issued a stiff ultimatum to Serbia on 23 July 1914. Serbia had little knowledge about the conspiracy to kill the Duke. Serbia, however, politely replied to the ultimatum agreeing to comply with all but one of the demands. The ultimatum included, among others, the demands for apologies, suppression of anti-Austrian movements, and participation of Austrian officials in the enquiry for fixing responsibility for the murder. Serbia refused to include Austrian officials in conducting the inquiry. Austria declined to accept the Serbian reply and declared war against Serbia on 28th July 1914. Russia joined the fray in favour of Serbia on 30th July. Russia's involvement brought Germany into the war. Germany declared war against Russia and France on 1st and 3rd August respectively. The German strategy to attack France by vanquishing Belgium annoyed Britain. Britain declared war on 4th August. Thus, the war broke out in full scale between the two blocks, consisting of Austria-Hungary and Germany on one side and France, Britain and Russia on another. The former bloc came to be known as Central Powers and the latter became famous as the Allies.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) List the politico-economic developments leading to the First World War.

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3.3 SEQUENCE OF EVENTS OF THE WAR

At the outbreak of the war, it was presumed that the war would be a brief encounter and there would be a victorious party. These presumptions proved to be wrong. The war was prolonged for more than four years and caused an unprecedented toll of men and material. Both the winners and the losers suffered almost equally from the war. Though the Allies won, but it cost them far dearly.

3.3.1 European Phase of the War

The war continued till the beginning of 1917 and was essentially a European affair. War was being fought over European issues and their control over the colonies. Europe had been the main theatre of the war. The German strategy was to end the war in a month or so. German forces, accordingly, attacked France by overrunning Belgium. German soldiers, within a few days, reached the vicinity of Paris. The Germans, however, failed to sustain this victory. The French army forced them to retreat to the Aisne River bank, which was considered the natural defence line. The warring parties failed to make much headway in either direction during the next three years. A deadlock resulted. The war took heavy casualties at this front. The casualties during the first four months alone were 700,000 Germans, 850,000 French and 90,000 Britishers.

On the Russian and Balkan fronts, however, there had been decisive battles. On the Russian front, the Russian soldiers could not invade East Prussia and on the Balkan front, Austria faced humiliating defeats. The Serbians drove away the Austrians. Turkey joined the Central Powers in November 1914. Turkey closed the supply line and attempted to stop the Allies from sending supplies to Russia through sea routes.

Consequently, the combined Austro-German armies inflicted humiliating defeats upon the Russian forces in the middle of 1915. With these defeats, the decline of Tsarist Empire began. Meanwhile, Bulgaria joined the Central Powers and enhanced their strength and striking capabilities. Now, Serbia fell to the Central Powers. At this juncture, Italy was persuaded to intervene in favour of the Allies. Italy's intervention however failed to influence the course of the war. The Central Powers won important victories and the whole area from Hamburg to the Persian Gulf came under their control.

In February 1916 the Central Powers launched an all-out attack against the Allies. Their strategy was to inflict a decisive defeat on the Allies and to dictate peace terms for terminating the war. This strategy failed. Germany suffered from heavy losses both in men and material. Russia defeated the Austrians. Now Romania joined the Allies and soon Greece broke her neutrality and intervened in favour of the Allies. Now the joint offensive in the Balkan front against the Central Powers knocked Bulgaria out of the war. The Germans were defeated on several fronts. They opened unrestricted submarine warfare at sea to block the ships carrying supplies to Britain. Though this strategy paid off handsomely, it forced America to intervene in the war in favour of the Allies. The war thus entered a global phase.

The war now entered the fourth year. Europe incurred heavy losses both in terms of human life and in terms of wealth. Europe was on the verge of collapse. Now peace became a general demand. The German Reichstag passed a peace resolution in July 1917. Many important personalities appealed for peace to save European civilization. But worse was still to come.

3.3.2 Global Phase of the War

The intervention of the USA in the war and the successful conclusion of the Russian Revolution in 1917 completely changed the complexion of the war, which was now transformed from being a European affair into a world affair. The US

intervention and the Russian revolution also brought into force differing ideologies. While the Russian revolution unleashed revolutionary ideologies, the USA sought to make the world safe for democracy and peace. President Woodrow Wilson of the USA came out with his famous Fourteen Point Programme.

The war contributed largely to the downfall of the Tsarist regime in Russia. The Bolshevik government, installed in power after the fall of Tsar, signed the Brest-Litovsk Treaty in March 1918 with Germany and opted out of the war. Thus, war between Germany and Russia ended. The USA had maintained strict neutrality since the beginning of the war. She broke this neutrality for several reasons which included amongst others, Germany's unrestricted submarine attacks on merchant ships, America's huge economic involvement in the war and the military preparedness within the USA.

In April 1917 the USA intervened in the war in support of the Allies. After joining the war President Wilson declared his famous Fourteen Point Programme which was proclaimed as the war aims of the US. The 14-Points included amongst others, open covenants of peace instead of secret pacts, freedom of the seas, removal of barriers to international trade, reduction of arrangements, justice to colonial peoples, rights to self-determination to the various subject minorities of Europe and the establishment of an international body to maintain peace in the world.

3.3.3 End of the War

The participation of America enhanced the striking power of the Allies. The USA sent both men and materials. By July 1918 the number of American soldiers in the different fronts rose to more than 300,000. The Central Powers had no hope of getting fresh supplies. So they failed to bear the Allies' offensive. Consequently, they surrendered during the latter half of 1918, one by one. Bulgaria surrendered in September and Turkey in October. The Hapsburg Empire disintegrated and Emperor Charles abdicated in November. The Germans had now no way out. Emperor Kaiser William II abdicated and Germany surrendered in early November. The war thus ended with the victory of the Allies.

The war had continued for four years and three months. Thirty states from Europe, America, Asia and Africa were entangled in the war which overthrew four dynasties and brought into existence seven new states. The war killed more than 18 million people and the total cost was nearly \$ 333 billion.

3.3.4 India's Contribution to the British War Efforts

An often unrepresented and un-cited truth of the First World War is India's contribution to Britain's war efforts. As war broke out, Britain called upon help from her imperial troops. Indian Army contingents arrived in September 1914; that is, within a month of Britain declaring war on Germany. The first Indian contingent reached Marseilles on 26 September 1914; these were soldiers from Lahore and Meerut Division and the Secunderabad Cavalry. In October 1914, Indian troops were fed into some of the fiercest fighting at Ypres; and in March 1915, Indian soldiers provided half of the attacking force at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, which was the costliest in terms of human lives.

India's contribution and the sacrifice of its soldiers were equal to that of any large European power. When the war ended, almost 1.5 million Indian soldiers, from regions such as Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Bihar, had seen action in the Western Front, in East Africa, Mesopotamia, Egypt and Gallipoli. Estimates vary: 50,000 to 62,000 died, 65,000 to 67,000 were wounded, and 10,000 were reported missing, while 98 Indian army nurses were killed. The country also supplied 170,000 animals, 3.7 million tonnes of supplies, jute for sandbags, and a large loan to the British government. Amiya Kumar Bagchi noted that the drain on the Indian economy in the form of cash, kind and loans to the British government came to about 367 million pounds. While several divisions were sent overseas, others had to remain in India, guarding the North-West Frontier and on internal security and training duties. Field-Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from 1942 asserted that the British "couldn't have come through both wars (World War I & II) if they hadn't the Indian Army."

Mahatma Gandhi and Kasturba Gandhi were in Britain when the war broke out. Both volunteered as auxiliary hospital workers. In 1914-15, Kasturba Gandhi worked in Indian Army hospitals – on England's southern coast – set up for some 16,000 Indian soldiers who had been wounded in France and Belgium.

The origins of Indian independence can be traced back to the events of the First World War. The war set in motion forces that developed into India's independence movement. Having made huge sacrifices, leaders of India's freedom movement expected a transition to self-government. These expectations were shared by nationalist leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi and all others, but were dashed by the extension of martial law at the end of the war. In 1917, Mahatma Gandhi launched his first satyagraha at Champaran against the harsh policies imposed on indigo farmers. Champaran revealed Gandhian political strategy of attacking the existing power structure using constitutional space available within the structure while retaining all the while the moral upper hand. Following this, Gandhi launched his first India-wide campaign of civil disobedience against British authority in February 1919. The intensity and popular participation in the freedom struggle was not driven by anti-Western or anti-British sentiment per se, but by the pursuit of self-determination.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

1) Examine India's contribution to the British war efforts.

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3.4 CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR

The war consumed an unprecedented number of men and materials. Europe's supremacy in the world began to decline and the USA began to emerge as a superpower. Japan established its supremacy in the East. The war was terminated through a series of five separate treaties between the Allies and the individual states of the Central Powers. These treaties were the Versailles Treaty with Germany, St. Germain Treaty with Austria, Neuilly Treaty with Bulgaria, Trianon Treaty with Hungary and Sevres Treaty with Turkey. While the first four were signed in 1919, the last one was signed into 1920. The salient features of these treaties included amongst others the foundation of the League of Nations; the application of the right of self-determination in Europe only, and the non-application of the doctrine in the colonies of the European powers in Asia and Africa.

3.4.1 Paris Peace Conference

Wars are normally terminated and peace is restored after the signing of peace treaties between warring states. The First World War was also terminated through peace treaties, mentioned earlier. When the war entered the decisive phase, the Allied powers started considering the plans and proposals put forward by different quarters for a lasting peace in the world. At Germany's surrendering and signing of the instruments of Armistice, the Allies took effective steps for holding a peace conference. The conference was ultimately called in Paris in January 1919. It continued for about six months. Thirty-two countries consisting primarily of the Allies, participated in this conference. The gathering was impressive, because most of the world leaders were present. This was the first time, in a conference like this that non-European powers — the USA, Japan, etc. attended. Russia did not attend because it had earlier withdrawn from the war. None of the Central Powers was invited to participate in the deliberations. The conference was mainly conducted by the Big Three - the USA, Great Britain and France. But they could not totally ignore the others. However, the conflicting and narrow national interests, petty and unjust claims, and tendencies of scrabbling colonies dominated the proceedings of the conference and overshadowed President Wilson's idealism, enshrined in his Fourteen Points.

The conference was called upon to tackle many complex issues which included among others the growing national aspirations of the erstwhile subject nations in Europe, the secret pacts signed during the war, the demands for compensation for the losses suffered by the European Allied powers and the redressal of the wrongs committed by Germany during the war. Germany was held responsible for the declaration of the war and the huge destruction of lives and property.

The peace conference in Paris after its formal inauguration appointed committees of experts and diplomats to study the different problems and issues and to make suitable recommendations to deal with them. In the context of the conflicting demands, aims and objectives of the participating countries, it was not easy for the conference to arrive at an objective and rational conclusion. President Wilson had to yield to the pressure of the European powers who were bent upon taking revenge on Germany. After protracted deliberations, the conference came out with the peace Treaty containing very stiff terms and conditions it offered to Germany for acceptance. Germany was forced to sign the humiliating treaty

explained under the 14 point. Further the treaty created a stage for future conflict which led to the Second World War.

3.4.2 The Treaty of Versailles

The Versailles Treaty was signed between the Allies and Germany. It was the most important one in the five treaty series. The treaty contained 440 articles. It dealt comprehensively with the territorial, military and war guilts of the Central Powers and the economic, political and other related aspects of peace settlement. Germany which was accused for initiating the war was dealt with severely. Emperor Kaiser William II was accused of having committed crimes against humanity and was blamed for the Holocaust caused by the war. Germany was asked to surrender nearly 40,000 square kilometres of territory with more than 7 million people. With the loss of three territories, Germany was deprived of the natural resources which are essential for its economic development. In addition, Germany was told to pay war reparations, which after prolonged negotiation were fixed at dollar 33,000 million. German colonies were taken away and were described as “Mandated Territories of the League” which France, Britain and Japan distributed among themselves. Germany was militarily weakened by cutting down the size of its army and navy. It was not allowed to raise an air force or to have a modern Merchant Navy. The Rhine was demilitarized for 50 kilometres east of the river and the Allied Commission was appointed to supervise the execution of the process. Germany and Austria were barred from uniting. In sum, the Treaty was designed to cripple Germany and perpetuate its subordination to the Allied powers. Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary etc were recognized as independent states. The treaty of Brest-Litvosk signed between Germany and Russia was rendered irrelevant.

The Treaty of Versailles created for the first time in the world an international organization called the League of Nations intending to maintain peace in the world. The treaty also founded for the first time in the world another international body known as the International Labour Organization to look after the welfare of the labouring people. The treaty evolved a system of government for the mandated territories.

3.4.3 Minor Treaties

The Versailles Treaty was followed by four minor treaties. The St. German Treaty was signed between the Allies and Austria. It recognized the independence of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia. Austria had ceded a large chunk of its territories. The Neuilly treaty was signed between the Allies and Bulgaria. Bulgaria had to cede part of her coast to Greece. The Trianon Treaty was signed between the Allies and Hungary. As per the terms of the treaty, Hungary was reduced in size and population. The Sevres Treaty was signed between the Allies and Turkey in August 1920. The treaty stripped Turkey of her Ottoman empire.

3.4.4 Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire

Ottoman empire, until its dissolution amidst the First World War, lasted some 600 years. At its height in the 16th century, it was one of the largest empires ever; and encompassed most of south-eastern Europe to the gates of Vienna, including present-day Hungary, the Balkan region, Greece, and parts of Ukraine; portions

of the Middle East now occupied by Iraq, Syria, Israel, and Egypt; North Africa as far west as Algeria; and large parts of the Arabian Peninsula. Towards the end of the 17th century, the internal and external situations had become desperate.

In 19th century, the authority of the Khalifa within the empire was minimal. Control of North Africa had long since faded; provinces of Egypt and Syria defied the empire; and Wahhabis dominated Arabia. Likewise, European provinces and regions – Albania, Bulgaria and Serbia – had declared their autonomy. On the external front, Russia and Austria-Hungary were the permanent source of war. By the beginning of the 20th century, the Ottoman empire was subjugated through many treaties and Capitulations which it had signed with the European powers. This was the imperialist processes of “peaceful penetration” of the Ottoman empire.

There were secret pacts and mutually agreed plans among European powers to divide up the empire even before the outbreak of the First World War. The process of nibbling at Ottoman territories had been going on for almost a century: Algeria and Tunisia had gone their own way; and Britain had made Egypt its protectorate in 1882. Ottomans had lost large territories in eastern and southern Europe under various wars and peace treaties with Russia and Austria-Hungary. At the Congress of Berlin in 1878, European powers declared Ottoman provinces of Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and Romania as independent states. Austria-Hungary was given control of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Britain extended its control over Cyprus; and Russia was awarded several Ottoman territories. New financial controls were established to recover the debts the Ottoman empire owed to Europeans.

The “sick man of Europe” was internationally weak and isolated at the turn of the 20th century. More was to come: the empire had a revolution in 1908 which brought the ‘young Turks’ to power. Taking advantage of the domestic instability, Italy seized Tripolitania (Libya) and occupied the Dodecanese, a group of islands in the Aegean Sea in 1911. The two Balkan Wars (1912–13) nearly destroyed the Ottoman empire in Europe. In the first Balkan war (October 1912–May 1913) the Ottomans lost almost all their European possessions, including Crete, to Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, Montenegro, and the newly created state of Albania. The Ottomans had lost more than four-fifths of the territory and more than two-thirds of the population of their European provinces before the start of the First World War.

The spectre of its dissolution loomed large before the outbreak of the war. There were secret agreements and mutually agreed plans involving Britain, France, Germany and Russia to divide up the empire into areas of their economic and geopolitical interests. In a defensive move to thwart the European designs, Ottoman empire joined the First World War on the side of Germany. On 29 October 1914, Ottoman navy bombed the Russian Black Sea port of Odessa; declaration of war by the Entente against the Ottoman empire followed suit.

In 1915, Turkish resisted and reversed the British and Allies attack in the battle of Gallipoli. The Ottomans made a substantial contribution to the Central Powers’ war effort. Their forces fought in eastern Asia Minor (Anatolia), Azerbaijan, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine, and the Dardanelles, as well as on European fronts. However, after 1916, the Ottoman empire found it difficult to sustain the war. An appeal in the name of Islamic solidarity failed to gather popular support

in the Arab provinces of the Middle East. Rather Britain deftly used Arab anger against the Ottomans; the result was the loss of control over the holy city of Mecca in 1916. Entente proposals for the partition of Ottoman territories were formulated in several wartime agreements. By the Istanbul Agreements (March–April 1915), Russia was promised Istanbul and the Dardanelles straits; France was to receive a sphere of influence in Syria and Cilicia. By the Anglo-French Sykes-Picot Agreement (January 3, 1916), the French sphere was confirmed and extended eastward to Mosul in Iraq. By the London Agreement (April 26, 1915), Italy was promised the Dodecanese and a possible share of Asia Minor. By the Agreement of St.-Jean-de-Maurienne (April 1917), Italy was promised a large area of southwestern Anatolia, including İzmir and an additional sphere to the north. The Russian Revolution of 1917 and Turkish nationalist resistance made these agreements to undergo modification after the end of the conflict.

In 1917, Britain conquered the provinces of Mesopotamia and Palestine; and announced that Palestine would be placed under an international regime. A British sphere of influence in Mesopotamia extended as far north as Baghdad, and Britain was given control of Haifa and Akko and of territory linking the Mesopotamian and Haifa-Akko spheres. Britain made various promises of independence to Arab leaders. In November 1917, Britain came with the Balfour Declaration which promised establishment of a national homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine. On 14 May 1948, a day before the British ‘Mandate’, under the League of Nations system, was to expire, the state of Israel was established.

In 1918 the Ottoman government surrendered to the Allies and Britain occupied Constantinople. At the Versailles peace settlement, the Ottoman empire lost most of its territory, with swathes of Asia Minor ceded to Greece. Strict European control of Ottoman finances was established. A tripartite agreement between Britain, France, and Italy defined extensive spheres of influence for the latter two powers. There was internal political turmoil and the force of Turkish nationalism prevented more divisions. Turkish nationalists led by Kemal Atatürk successfully resisted the partition of the Turkish heartlands and established a secular republic on the ruins of the Ottoman empire. As part of his programme, Atatürk abolished the office of Khalifa in 1924.

Many of the problems generating political instability and conflict in the Middle East and the south east Europe, importantly Balkans, reverberate back to what had happened to the Ottoman empire during and after the First World War.

3.5 IMPACT OF THE WAR

The impact of the war is categorized into different parts: Europe and the World. Since it started in Europe so it galvanized almost all the European countries; gradually it inflamed into different parts of the world. The following two segments will analyse the sequence of events and its subsequent impact.

3.5.1 Impact on Europe

The war had weakened Europe so much that it could not re-emerge as an economic and political force. It lost ground to the United States of America. Europe faced economic decline, suffered from political crises one after another, and lost her

prestige in the eyes of the colonial peoples. Europe had been the leading economic power in the world. The source of Europe's economic prosperity was her vast colonies. She depended largely upon the huge income which was being earned from her massive overseas investments. The war had cut off this source considerably. Britain lost more than 25% of her pre-war foreign investment, France nearly 34% and Germany lost almost all Europe yielded much of her ground to the USA, with which her economic relationship reversed from a creditor to a debtor. Europe no longer remained the banker and the workshop of the world which she enjoyed till the beginning of the war.

The political impact of the war on Europe was also far-reaching. President Wilson's 14 points and the successful conclusion of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia unleashed new revolutionary ideas. Russia and adjoining states emerged as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR or commonly called Soviet Union) under a socialist model guided by Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Consequently, everywhere in the continent, the world order came under severe attack. In Europe, even the known democratic states had been continuing with restricted franchise. The war changed the scenario. Women who had so far no voting rights in many countries got the right to vote. The war initiated the process for the emancipation of women. Several kingdoms were wiped out from the map of Europe. The basic rights of the working people began to be included in the statute books of different countries. Last but not the least, was the loss of prestige of Europe in the colonies. Intra-European contradictions and cleavages got exposed. The block pitted one against another and damaged their prestige irreparably.

3.5.2 Impact on the World

The impact of the war on the world was all-pervading. One of the most significant effects of the war was the emergence of the USA as the superpower. The war gutted Europe. America emerged as the hub of the global capital. The period after the war saw the beginning of the end of the European supremacy in the world. Economically and militarily, Europe was surpassed by the United States which emerged from the war as a world power. The Soviet Union was also to soon come up as a major world power. The period after the war also saw the strengthening of the freedom movements in Asia and Africa. The weakening of Europe and the emergence of the Soviet Union which declared her support to the struggles for national independence contributed to the growing strength of these struggles. The Allied propaganda during the war to defend democracy, and the participation of Asian and African soldiers in the battles in Europe also helped in arousing the peoples of Asia and Africa. The European countries had utilized the resources of their colonies in the war. The forced recruitment of soldiers and labourers for war, and the exploitation of resources of the colonies for war by the imperialist countries had created resentment among the people of the colonies. The population of the colonial countries had been nurtured on the myth that the peoples of Asia and Africa were inferior to the Europeans. The role played by the soldiers from Asia and Africa in winning the war for one group of nations of Europe against another shattered this myth. Many Asian leaders had supported the war effort in the hope that, once the war was over, their countries would be given freedom. These hopes were, however, belied. While the European nations won the right to self-determination, colonial rule and exploitation continued in the countries of Asia and Africa.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

1) What were the main provisions of the Treaty of Versailles?

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Important Facts of the First World War

A handful of journalists risked their lives to report on the realities of war. As the Government sought to control the flow of information from the frontline at the start of the war, journalists were banned. Reporting on the conflict was, in the opinion of the War Office, helping the enemy. If caught, they faced the death penalty.

Sparked the Invention of Plastic Surgery

Shrapnel was the cause of many facial injuries in WW1 and unlike the straight-line wounds inflicted by bullets, the twisted metal shards produced from a shrapnel blast could easily rip a face off. Horrified by the injuries he saw, surgeon Harold Gillies, took on the task of helping victims and pioneered early techniques of facial reconstruction in the process.

The Youngest British Soldier Was 12 Years Old

Sidney Lewis was just 12 years old when he lied about his age and joined the army during World War One. He was one of thousands of eager underage boys who enlisted and ended up fighting alongside their adult counterparts on the front. Some were motivated by patriotism, but for others it was an escape from their dreary lives.

Blood Banks Were Developed During WW1

The British Army began the routine use of blood transfusion in treating wounded soldiers. Blood was transferred directly from one person to another. A US Army doctor, Captain Oswald Robertson, established the first blood bank on the Western Front in 1917, using sodium citrate to prevent the blood from coagulating and becoming unusable. Blood was kept on ice for up to 28 days and then transported to casualty clearing stations for use in life-saving surgery where it was needed most.

3.6 LET US SUM UP

The First World War broke out in 1914 and continued upon the last quarter of 1918. The First World War had been believed to be ‘a War to end all wars’. However, the Peace Treaties had failed to ensure this. On the contrary, the treaties

contained certain provisions which were extremely harsh on the defeated countries and thus they sowed the seeds of further conflicts. Similarly, some victorious countries also felt cheated because all their hopes had not been fulfilled. Imperialism was not destroyed as a result of the war. The victorious powers had in fact enlarged their possessions. Europe got splintered and declined as a great power. Ottoman empire was dissolved: Turkey was modernised and was declared a republic; other parts of the Ottoman empire were handed over to the Allies under the 'mandate' system of the League of Nations. The factors which had caused rivalries and conflicts between imperialist countries leading to the war still existed. Therefore, the danger that more wars would be fought for another 'redivision' of the world remained lurking. The emergence of the Soviet Union was considered a danger to the existing social and economic system in many countries. The desire to destroy it influenced the policies of those countries. These factors, combined with certain developments that took place in the next twenty years, created conditions for another world war.

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3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Economic rivalries, disputes over colonies, alliance systems and rising nationalism in Europe.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) Indian army was pressed into the some of the difficult theatres of war. India also contributed to the war effort by supplying health workers and other logistics. Over 1.5 million Indian army men took part in the war and over one third of them lost their lives

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) The Versailles Treaty dealt comprehensively with the territorial, military and war guilts of the Central Powers. Blaming Germany for starting the war, it asked Germany to surrender territory, pay war reparations, and surrender its colonies. Germany was also demilitarised. The Treaty also established the first international organization called the League of Nations for maintain peace in the world. Another international body created by the Treaty was the International Labour Organization to look after the welfare of the labouring people. The treaty also evolved a system of government for the mandated territories.



UNIT 4 **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION***

Structure

4.0 Objectives

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Bolsheviks and a New System of International Relations

4.2.1 Peace Initiatives of the Bolshevik Government

4.2.2 Bolsheviks Renunciation of Special Privileges in the Neighbouring Countries

4.3 Bolsheviks and Anti-colonial Struggles

4.4.1 Spread of Socialist ideas in the East

4.4.2 Unity of nationalist and socialist forces in the East

4.4.3 Intensification of national liberation movements

4.3.4 Communist International

4.4 Rise and Growth of Communist and Workers Movements

4.5 Let Us Sum Up

4.6 References

4.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

4.0 **OBJECTIVES**

The Unit deals with the Bolshevik revolution – the world's first socialist revolution inspired by the ideology of Marxism. After going through this Unit, you should be able to understand and comprehend the following:

- Nature of the Bolshevik revolution and its impact on international relations
- Measures taken by the new Soviet state to create a new system of international relations based on peace and non-aggression, free of exploitation and colonization.
- Impact of the Bolshevik revolution on anti-colonial struggles, and
- Contribution of the Bolshevik revolution to international communist and workers movements.

4.1 **INTRODUCTION**

Capitalism and industrialization rapidly advanced in Russia after the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 and the defeat of Russia in the Crimea war (1856-59). The need of sustaining itself as a strong continental power prompted Russia to undertake industrialization on a large scale. This was accomplished by the state playing a major role in economic activities, and with the advancement of capitalism, there arose the need for raw material and markets. In the third quarter of the 19th century, Russian imperialism had already colonized Central Asia and was competing with other imperialist powers for concessions in the Balkans and the Far East. Russia, by the end of the century, was an imperialist power with a semi-feudal system of agriculture and an authoritarian state system. There was

* Originally written for EPS 07 International Relations

no popular government, no elected organ with real powers to make laws, and a total lack of civil rights and political freedom. The liberal groups were weak and compromised too frequently with the ruling Tsarist autocracy. Marxism was becoming popular and was entrusted with the historic task of combining both the anti-feudal and anti-capitalist struggles.

The Marxists, or Social Democrats as they were known then, were divided into various groups and the ideological heterogeneity was too strong to be overcome. The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP), established in 1898, was split into two major groups who wanted a socialist revolution in Russia to be preceded by a democratic anti-feudal revolution. The former (Bolsheviks) wanted the working class to lead this democratic phase of the revolution. The Mensheviks, instead, wanted the bourgeoisie, i.e., the capitalists to lead it. The Bolsheviks under Lenin's leadership finally emerged as leaders of the revolution in October 1917, with a successful strategy of the workers-peasants alliance to head state power after the revolution. The Mensheviks, who supported the bourgeois government and participated in it after the overthrow of the Tsar in February 1917, had lost the support of the workers and peasants by October. On 7th November (25 October according to the old Russian Calendar) the Bolsheviks were triumphant after three days of the armed uprising which led to the surrender of the provisional government set up in February 1917.

It was the First World War which finally sealed the fate of the Tsarist autocracy. The war exacerbated the crisis that had gripped the Russian state. Russian society was an ensemble of contradictions when the war began – contradictions between feudals and peasants, between peasants and capitalist farmers (known also as kulaks), between kulaks and landless labour, between factory owners and workers, between the big bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie, and so on. Once the war came, all these contradictions sharpened. The enormous cost of the war was too heavy for Russia, which still was relatively backward as compared to other imperialist powers. The state could not sustain such an expensive war and the burden was borne by the working people and the peasants. Workers and even soldiers were up in arms against the State. A socialist revolution materialized for the first time in history and there was no better country than Russia, which was the weakest link in the imperialist chain, for the revolution to succeed.

The October Revolution heralded a new era by creating a state of the workers and poor peasants whose interests were opposed to economic exploitation, wars, aggressions, colonization and racial discrimination. The revolution brought into existence a socialist state that would work as a bulwark against war and imperialism. It also began a process of creation of an alternative world socialist system based on equality, freedom from exploitation, and which renounced all forms of aggression, colonization and racial prejudice.

4.2 BOLSHEVIKS AND A NEW SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The October revolution spread a new message of hope and liberation for the toiling peoples all over the world and the peoples of the colonies. It was a message of liberation from all forms of Exploitation - national, social, economic, and political. This was reflected in a series of declarations, legal pronouncements, and diplomatic initiatives of the new Bolshevik government.

The Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People adopted in the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets (the supreme governing body) in January 1918, reaffirmed an inflexible determination to deliver mankind from wars and to achieve at all costs a democratic peace among Nations without annexation or indemnities, on the principle of self-determination of nations. The Declaration proclaimed Soviet State's "complete break with the barbarous policy of bourgeois Civilization, which has built the prosperity of the exploiters belonging to a few chosen nations on the enslavement of hundreds of millions of working people in Asia, in the colonies in general, and in the small countries."

The new Soviet state took a determined stand against the prevailing system of International Relations in which war and colonization were organic components. Instead, the idea of just and democratic peace and the establishment of a system of international relations based on general democratic principles was advocated. The renunciation of secret diplomacy was a necessary corollary of Soviet international diplomacy.

4.2.1 Peace Initiative of the Bolshevik Government

The Decree on Peace, one of the first major acts of the new Soviet state, proclaimed the abolition of secret diplomacy and in accordance with this law, the Soviet foreign ministry published the previous secret treaties signed by the Tsarist state (Russian emperors were called Tsars), including importantly the Anglo-Russian secret treaty and convention of 1907 on "demarcation" of spheres of interests of England and Russia in the Ottoman empire's provinces in the Middle East; and the 1916 tripartite secret pact to carve up Turkey between England, France and Russia, etc.

The refusal of the Entente Powers (the ultimate victorious powers in the First World War) to negotiate a general peace settlement, forced Soviet Russia to enter into peace talks with the Central Powers viz. Germany, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria. The Soviet proposal included six points: no forcible annexation of territories occupied during the war; restoration of political Independence to nations vanquished during the war; freedom of choice to the national minorities to either remain within a state or become independent through a referendum; safeguarding of the rights of the national minorities in a state by special legislation protecting their national culture and, whenever possible, administrative autonomy; renunciation of War indemnities: and solution of colonial problems in accordance with the first four principles. Though imperialist Germany rejected the Soviet proposals and imposed humiliating peace on the latter, Lenin still agreed to sign the peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (1918) on Germany's terms despite strong opposition within the Bolshevik party and government. Lenin firmly believed that war is detrimental to the interests of the toiling people.

4.2.2 Bolshevik Renunciation of Special Privileges in the Neighbouring Countries

The idea of national sovereignty and equality ran through the theory and practice of the Soviet foreign policy, which aimed at reshaping International Relations on socialist principles. The emergence of the first socialist state produced strong inspiration and idealism among formally independent small states, colonies, and semi-colonies to struggle for freedom and defend their sovereignty against

oppression and encroachment by imperialist powers. In the process of evolving a new system of International Relations, the Soviets attached special significance to relations with the Eastern countries based on the principles of equality, mutual respect and friendship. The Soviet state was willing to give them friendly assistance in their struggle against imperialism and colonial domination. Despite its difficult economic situation, the new socialist state rendered not only political and moral but also great material support to countries such as Turkey, Afghanistan, Iran, and others. In June 1919, the Soviet government abolished all special privileges for Russian nationals in Iran, renounced all concessions and control over Iran's revenue, and handed over to Iran without demanding any compensation, the banks, the railways, highways and port facilities on Iran's Caspian coast and other property which had belonged to Tsarist Russia. A Treaty of friendship with Iran was signed in February 1921 (the first equal treaty between Iran and an European power), guaranteeing Iran's independence and security of her borders with the Soviet state. Similarly, a treaty of friendship and alliance was signed with Turkey, which received generous economic, financial, and military aid from the Soviet state. A Soviet-Afghan treaty was signed in spring of 1921 by which interest-free loans were given to the latter and Soviet specialists were assigned to work there.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) List the key initiatives of Soviet government for new International Relations.

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4.3 BOLSHEVIKS AND ANTI-COLONIAL STRUGGLES

More lasting, however, was the inspiration provided by the establishment of the first socialist state which till then was regarded by many as a distant dream. The success of Revolutionary ideas influenced the thoughts and actions of generations of freedom fighters in the colonised countries. It also provided great impetus for the growth of radical movements of the toiling peoples in the underdeveloped world. The victory of Russian workers over feudal and capitalist forces convinced many in the colonies that the European imperialists and their local surrogates were not invincible against the combined strength of the oppressed. In the new socialist state's Appeal to the Toilers of Russia and the East, a direct call was given to "Persians, Turks, Arabs and Hindus" to lose no time in throwing off the yoke of their oppressors and making themselves the masters of their lands. The Appeal made a pointed reference to the rising tide of nationalism in India. Such

declarations by the new revolutionary state further convinced the colonised peoples that they now had a powerful ally in the revolutionary government of Russia whose support they could count upon in their struggle against imperialists.

4.3.1 Spread of Socialist Idea in the East

Under the impact of the October revolution, socialist ideas became widespread. These ideas influenced the view of many leaders of the national liberation struggle. In India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was particularly influenced by Bolshevik idea of scientific socialism and wrote in his *Discovery of India* that Marx's general analysis of social development seems to have been remarkably correct. Lenin successfully adapted the Marxian thesis to some of these subsequent developments. Acquaintance with scientific socialism provided a better understanding to the national intelligentsia about the political and social forces in their countries and outside that could be relied upon in the struggle for political independence and social progress. It also helped them to determine the ideology best suited to solve the pressing problem of national revival.

4.3.2 Unity of Nationalist and Socialist Forces in the East

Under the impact of the October revolution, socialist ideas spread that witnessed the creation of revolutionary groups and communist parties whose activities raised the consciousness of the working people and organized them against oppression - be it from imperialists or local oppressors. These revolutionary socialists and communist groups were also active in arousing the masses to political activity and in preparing for conditions that would combine the struggle of the workers and peasants with that of national liberation and anti-imperialism. The October revolution showed the necessity of an alliance between the worker's movement and the anti-colonial freedom movements to defeat imperialism. With the success of socialism in Russia and a setback to Western colonialism, the national liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America assumed greater scope and intensity, embracing more countries and greater masses of people. The national liberation movements became more profound and radical in their content and goals, and more importantly, became more and more successful. This was to a large measure due to the Revolutionising effect of the new Soviet state's successful handling of the national and social question. In short, the October revolution blazed the trail of Socialist national liberation all over the world. It stimulated the consciousness of the people in the colonies, widened the basis of the national movements and finally, hastened the process of growth of the left movements in the colonies and semi-colonies.

Inspired by the success of revolutionaries in Russia, the Indian Revolutionary Nationalists, operating from abroad, formed contacts with Lenin and the Bolshevik leadership. Mahendra Pratap, Barkatullah, Obaidullah Sindhi, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, Bhupendranath Datta, Hardayal and M. N. Roy were the prominent names who went to Moscow to seek cooperation and guidance for India's Liberation. Two great sons of India, Pandit Nehru and Rabindranath Tagore were greatly influenced by events in Russia and remained till the end of their lives most committed friends of the Soviet Union. Many of the Indian revolutionaries working abroad drew inspiration from the October revolution and adopted socialism as their programmatic goal. The nascent working-class

movement in India led to the emergence of Communist groups and the formal launching of Communist Party of India in 1925. Shaheed Bhagat Singh was being attracted towards socialism during his term in jail and one of his last political acts in prison was celebrating the Lenin Day.

4.3.3 Intensification of National Liberation Movements

The October revolution contributed to the quickening of the pace of national liberation movements by inspiring broader sections of the population in the colonies. In India, the closing month of 1918 and early 1919 witnessed a series of strikes by working people on a scale never known in India. The Bombay textile workers strike involved 125,000 workers. The strike movement reached its peak in the first six months of 1920 with about 200 strikes involving one and a half million workers. It was in this situation that Gandhi and the Congress decided to launch the “non-violent non-cooperation” movement, which marked a big step forward in mass mobilisation.

Some other countries also witnessed intensified struggles against imperialism. Irish militants under the leadership of Michael Collins continued to fight the British while the Sinn Fein Party proclaimed the creation of the Irish Republic. In Egypt, the nationalist party of Zaghlul Pasha was seriously challenging British rule. The Egyptian uprising was savagely put down by British rulers. Independence of Egypt was declared in 1920. In Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Pasha declared war against the Allied occupations. He resisted the partition of the Turkish mainland and set up a provisional government. China, not only refused to sign the Treaty of Versailles but also witnessed a new phase in its struggle against imperialism. The May Fourth movement of 1919, signalled this transition. It led to mass participation of intellectuals and students, frontal assault on Confucianism and boycott of Japanese goods.

The Nationalist leaders of the East responded positively to the message of the October revolution. Bal Gangadhar Tilak hailed the victory of Bolsheviks in his newspaper *Kesari*, Bipin Chandra Pal, another prominent leader of Indian national movement, was greatly inspired by the October revolution and its call against all the forms of exploitation. Lala Lajpat Rai was all praise for the success of the revolution in Russia and its policy towards the East. The Russian Revolution and its socialist achievements had a lasting impact on the political thinking of Jawaharlal Nehru and this led to a radical shift in the thinking of Indian National Congress.

Sun Yat Sen was the first of China’s public leaders to call for the recognition of Soviet Russia by Asian states. This was also a response to the policies of a new revolutionary state towards China despite the hostility of the then Chinese government towards the Soviet Republic. In 1918, Soviet Russia publicly renounced all treaties, agreements and loans that were imposed on China by the Tsarist government. The best minds of China saw the historical relevance of the October revolution for China’s future. Li Dazhao and Lu Xin, the moving spirits behind the May Fourth Movement, which soon became the nucleus of China’s communist movement, hailed the October revolution as the dawning of a new era.

4.3.4 Communist International

Communist International (Comintern) was an organization of fraternal communist parties devoted to hastening socialist revolutions over the world. Comintern worked under the overall ideological and political guidance of the Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU). CPSU leaders prepared many of the Comintern's major decisions and often decided strategies and tactics to be followed by the Comintern.

The founding congress of the Comintern in 1919 was the first step toward realizing Lenin's dream of uniting the world's workers for socialism. The Congress declared Comintern "a unified world Communist Party, specific sections of which were parties active in each country". The Second Congress of Comintern was held in 1920; it adopted 21-Points which called upon all affiliated parties to organize themselves on the principle of democratic centralism – the same as the CPSU.

The Comintern existed in two worlds: in the USSR, the socialist world; and in the international arena, the capitalist world. Within the USSR, its roles were to elaborate policies to strengthen the international communist movement and to defend Soviet policies. In the outside capitalist world, the Comintern guided, directed communist parties, laid down their line of political action and demanded that affiliated communist parties defend Soviet leaders and their actions.

There were twists and turns in the ideological trajectory of the Comintern. Until 1921, it followed a hard line: communist parties should not ally with social democrats and others; they must wean away workers from social democrats and other radical parties, and seize power in their respective countries through an armed revolution. Historically, the victory of socialism is inevitable. After 1921, as the prospects of socialist revolution ebbed, Comintern became flexible: it now advocated the formation of broad fronts of communists, social democrats and other popular forces to bring about revolution. When Nazism and fascism arose in Germany and Italy in the 1930s, Comintern called for the formation of anti-fascist Popular Fronts. The idea of Popular Front brought communists, socialists, and liberals of various political hues together. Many communist parties importantly in Spain, forged Popular Fronts; the idea of the popular front also got a resonance in countries like India which were fighting for their national freedom from colonial rule. In 1943, Joseph Stalin ordered the disbandment of the Comintern.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

1) What is Comintern?

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4.4 RISE AND GROWTH OF COMMUNIST AND WORKERS' MOVEMENTS

The October revolution not only had a great impact on the liberation movements in the colonies, but it also paved the way for the rise and growth of the communist and workers' movement in the East. To unite various communist groups, parties and movements, to popularise Marxist-Leninist theory and to discuss and debate the strategies and tactics of uniting with other nationalist non-communist forces against imperialism, a Communist International (also known as the Third International or Comintern) was formed in Moscow in 1919. The ideal that was embodied in the formation of the Communist International was the unity of the working class in the developed West and the oppressed peoples of the colonies in their common struggle against imperialism. The Communist International became the coordinating centre of revolutionaries the world over. The problem of a united anti-imperialist front occupied a central place in the Comintern's theoretical and practical activities on the national and colonial question. The idea of uniting all anti-imperialist forces – the national liberation movements and the socialist movements of workers and peasantry – occupied the attention at the second congress of the Comintern in 1920.

Given the repressive nature of the colonial regimes, many communist parties of the Eastern countries were formed in Soviet Russia under the auspices of the Comintern. Turkish communists were the first to organise a communist party in Soviet Russia, followed by Iranians, Chinese and Koreans. The first group of Indian communists was formed in October 1920 following the arrival in Tashkent of Indians who had attended the second congress of the Comintern. On the initiative of M. N. Roy and H. Mukherjee, this group of seven people proclaimed itself the Communist Party of India.

Most industry and banks were nationalised in November 1917. This meant that the government took over ownership and management. The land was declared social property and peasants were allowed to seize the land of the nobility. In cities, Bolsheviks enforced the partition of large houses according to family requirements. They banned the use of the old titles of the aristocracy. To assert the change, new uniforms were designed for the army and officials. The Bolshevik Party was renamed the Russian Communist Party. Non-Bolshevik socialists, liberals and supporters of autocracy condemned the Bolshevik uprising. Their leaders moved to south Russia and organised troops to fight the Bolsheviks, (the red). During 1918 and 1919, the 'greens' (Socialists Revolutionaries) and 'Whites' (Pro-Tsarists) controlled most of the Russian empire. They were backed by French, American, British, and Japanese troops- all those forces were worried at the growth of socialism in Russia.

4.5 LET US SUM UP

The Bolshevik victory and its support to the liberation movements created favourable conditions for the intensification of anti-imperialist struggles in the colonies. It not only inspired nationalists and communists all over the world but also helped to bring them together on the common platform of anti-colonialism. The Bolshevik policy of peace and renunciation of special privileges and secret diplomacy created an alternative system of international relations. The structure

of International Relations changed drastically. Existing socialist parties in Europe did not wholly approve of the way the Bolsheviks took power and kept it. In many countries, communist parties were formed - like the Communist Party of Britain. The Bolsheviks encouraged colonial peoples to follow their experiment. By the time of the outbreak of the Second World War, the USSR had given socialism a global face and world stature.

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4.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) The new Soviet state took a determined stand for democratic peace among nations. To achieve this, it i) rejected secret alliance and made public all treaties signed by the Tsarist state, ii) supported the self-determination of national minorities, iii) renounced special privileges, iv) and failing to achieve general peace settlement, negotiated peace treaties with Central powers.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2.

- 1) The Comintern was an organisation of fraternal communist parties which worked under the ideological and political guidance of the Soviet Union. It was intended to hasten socialist revolutions across the world.

UNIT 5 RISE OF FASCISM AND NAZISM*

Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Italy: The Prisoner of the Mediterranean
 - 5.2.1 Rise of Mussolini and Fascist Party
 - 5.2.2 Causes for the Rise of Fascism in Italy
 - 5.2.3 Impact of Fascism in Italy
 - 5.2.4 Fascist Doctrine
- 5.3 Rise of Hitler and Nazi Party
 - 5.3.1 Causes of the Rise of Nazism in Germany
 - 5.3.2 Impact of Nazism
 - 5.3.3 Nazi's Doctrine
- 5.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.5 References
- 5.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

5.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, you will be studying the rise of fascism and Nazism in Europe and their impact on International Relations. After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the reason for the rise of fascism and Nazism
- Describe the foreign policy and international outlook of fascism and Nazism
- The outbreak of the Second World War, and
- Describe the core features of the doctrine of Fascism and Nazism.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Fascism and Nazism though ideologically similar emerged in Italy and Germany respectively during the inter-war period and turned out to be the harbinger of the Second World War. A Fascist State was established in Italy in 1922. Nazis came into power in Germany in 1933. The term Fascist was derived from the Italian word *fascio* which meant 'bundle' and figuratively, a bundle of rods and an axe, a symbol for the party flag. To the Italians 'Fascisti' suggested national unity and strength. Benito Mussolini had formed his Fascist party in 1919. Nazi was a term associated with the members of the National Socialist German Worker's Party of Adolf Hitler. (To be called a Nazi was not a derogatory term at that time; rather it was used for a person who was fanatically dedicated to or sought to seek control over some activity/ practice).

Italy in 1919 was politically disgruntled and economically shattered. She suffered from the post-war neurasthenia and could fall easy prey to an aggressive and ambitious political programme. Italy had joined First World War (1914-18) with

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hopes and ambitions of having plenty after the war for its poor peasants and workers. However, the war rendered Italy great illusions, disappointment and unemployment. The Peace Settlement of 1919 better known as Treaty of Versailles too turned out to be dissatisfactory to Italy. On the other hand, the defeat of Germany in the First World War had witnessed important developments such as the Treaty of Versailles; continuation of the age-old rivalry between France and Germany; the emergence of the first communist state in Russia; and the economic depression in the 1930s.

These developments were directly or indirectly responsible for the rise of Fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany. Fascism and Nazism, in turn, were primarily responsible for the commencement of the Second World War in 1939.

5.2 ITALY: THE PRISONER OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

Situated in the southern part of Europe, Italy's geographical position is one of the strongest determinants of its external policies. Italy's mainland is a narrow peninsula and the distance from the sea coast is not more than seventy-five miles. It is so situated that it can easily be subjected to blockade from the sea. That is why it has been described as the "prisoner of the Mediterranean." It means if the Mediterranean was controlled by an enemy, Italy had no choice but to go to war. Accordingly, Italy has always nursed an ambition to become a Mediterranean power and establish its supremacy to safeguard its commercial and maritime interests. It was this pride and aspirations that have been a strong motivating factor for strong nationalistic fervour among the Italians. Benito Mussolini was intelligent enough to comprehend this nationalistic feeling and capitalised on the same to capture the power and institute a dictatorial Italy.

5.2.1 Rise of Mussolini and Fascist Party

Economic distress facilitated the rise of socialists and revolutionaries in Italy. Workers and agricultural labourers were often on the streets of countryside protesting against the misdoings of the State. Factory owners and landlords were being forced to grant higher wages and shorter work-hours for the workers. The establishment of Communist International (Comintern) inspired the Italian Socialist Party (ISP) and it got affiliated to the same. ISP gave a call for the establishment of "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" in Italy. It also contested the elections of November 1919 and secured one-third of the votes cast thereby emerging as the single largest party in the Chamber of Deputies – the lower house. Soon the Catholic peasants, inspired by religious orthodoxy, seized the lands of the landlords in central and southern Italy. Socialist workers seized and controlled the factories of northern Italian cities in September 1920.

The Liberal Government of Prime Minister Francesco Nitti (1919-20) and then of Giovanni Giolitti (a five-time prime minister during 1892 and 1921) became helpless and refrained from taking any action for fear of an upsurge of violent revolution. However, the ranks of Socialists witnessed a split with consequent decline. The revolutionary Socialists formed a separate Communist Party in January 1921. Socialist upsurge alarmed the landlords and industrialists. Consequently, they found refuge in a patriotic and nationalist movement which was rising under the leadership of Benito Mussolini. The nationalists promised

to restore the lost prestige and rightful respect for Italy among the comity of nations. It was in this backdrop that Fascism emerged in Italy under the leadership of Benito Mussolini.

Benito Mussolini, born in 1883, the son of a blacksmith with socialist-leaning, became the creator, soul and guide of this movement and subsequently the Fascist party. Mussolini began his political career as a socialist agitator and was exiled to Switzerland. In 1912, he opposed the Italian aggressiveness, was against Turkey, and was captivated. He agitated for Italian participation on the side of the Allies when the First World War started in 1914. He was finally made to leave the Socialist party on account of supporting the war. He later participated in the war by joining the army. He got wounded in action in 1917. Subsequently, he became a staunch enemy of Russian Communism and throughout the rest of his life, he battled against it.

The conditions and circumstances that existed in Italy during and in the immediate aftermath of the First World War were highly conducive to the rise of fascist dictatorship under Benito Mussolini. He founded the first *Fasci* or club of patriots and intellectuals in March 1919 and thus started the Fascist movement in Italy. He became the rallying centre for the unemployed youth and ex-soldiers. He received funds from the industrialists and landlords. He took cudgels against the socialists on behalf of these people. The army officers provided arms and ammunition to Mussolini with which his followers broke the meetings of the political opponents. Followers and workers of the party were enthused with discipline. Volunteers were known as 'Black Shirts' for their attire and were to salute their *Duce* (leader) with their hands stretched in the old Roman fashion. Fascists were thus reduced to the semi-military organization. Ever growing aggressiveness of the Fascists led to the subsequent decline of other parties. The Communists became special targets.

The Fascists mustered 35 seats in the elections of 1921 against 122 of the Socialists and Communists in the Chamber of Deputies. Mussolini held a National Fascist Congress at Naples on 28th October 1922 and threatened to "March on Rome" with his men unless the reign of Government was entrusted to him. Following the delivery of a threatening speech, he entrained for Milan while thousands of armed Fascist militiamen began to concentrate on Rome. Thus, in October 1922 the Fascists felt strong enough to attempt the overthrow of the government by force. Meanwhile, the government decided to declare martial law. But King Victor Emmanuel III refused to sign the declaration. The liberal Government resigned on 27th October 1922 and on 29th October 1922, the King invited Mussolini to form the government. Mussolini at once left for Rome announcing "Tomorrow Italy will have not a ministry, but a government." The Parliament entrusted dictatorial powers to Mussolini and thus a Fascist dictatorship had begun in Italy.

Mussolini's Coalition Government was approved by the Chamber of Deputies by a vote of 306 to 116. The Italians too gave their approval to the Fascist revolution and expected a firm and strong government as was promised to them. From 1922 to 1943 the Fascist Party, under the dictatorship of Mussolini, was in power. The twenty-one years of rule by Mussolini gave the nation the appearance of being converted to the Fascist ideology, though in reality a small minority of confirmed Fascists—20,000,000 strong—alone were active while most people simply submitted by accepting the new regime. Mussolini joined Hitler and

entered the war in 1940. Italy was, however, defeated in 1943 and Mussolini's regime was overthrown.

5.2.2 Causes for the Rise of Fascism in Italy

Treaty of Versailles: Versailles Peace Treaty had disappointed the Italians since it could not obtain any share in the German overseas territories which the other allied powers had secured. Italy had joined the Allies after the secret treaty of London of 1915. The Allies had agreed to give Italy certain areas like Eritrea and Trieste and later backed out. This gave a justification to Italy's grievance against the Allies. The military leaders in Italy were disappointed as the victory had not benefitted their country in any way.

Socio-economic conditions of Italy: There was terrible confusion in the political, social and economic life of Italy in 1919. The economic structure had collapsed due to war and natural resources were scarce. It was argued by the supporters of Fascism that Italy, under such terrible conditions, will be saved by the Fascist revolution. However, a group of scholars have argued that the economic condition of Italy after the War, i.e., between the years 1919-1922, had improved considerably. They dispute the contention that the post-war conditions alone were responsible for the rise of Fascism in Italy. Notwithstanding the short-lived post-war economic prosperity, the economic conditions in Italy, on the whole, were not satisfactory and there existed considerable unemployment. This resulted in strengthening the revolutionary movements, especially in increasing the influence of the revolutionary movements and the communist party. There were strikes, lockouts and closure of industrial establishments. At the political level, the government was not able to save the situation as there existed chaos and corruption, loss of faith in the parliamentary institutions due to administrative inefficiency and disorder. Such a situation alarmed the middle classes and the well-to-do, who were haunted by the spectre of Bolshevism. The success of the Russian revolution was another factor in making them suspicious about the intentions of the Communists at home.

Socialism and Nationalism: These two forces were particularly more prominent in Italy than in any other country in Europe. Italians were disgruntled elements for loss of spoils of victory compared to France and England which made them feel poor relatives among the rich Western allies. This provided the ground to opposing forces like Nationalists and Socialists from 1920 onwards to discredit Prime Minister Giolitti's government for his inability to solve the mounting socio-economic problems of post-war Italy. These two parties were also fighting against each other amidst an atmosphere of violence and rebellion. At this juncture, Mussolini appeared on the scene with claims to reconcile the seemingly conflicting forces of socialism and nationalism. His new political party suggested a happy union of nationalism and socialism.

Rise of Communism: Mussolini claimed that the post-war labour unrest and discontent in Italy were leading the country towards communism and his party, *Fascisti*, alone could save the society from the danger of communism. The Fascist activists, the Black Shirts opened a violent campaign against the Socialists and the Communists. Consequently, in 1921 the coalition government of Giolitti was defeated and the Fascists entered the Chamber of Deputies with 35 seats.

False Aspirations of Italians: The feeling of disappointment owing to the marginalization and subsequent loss in the Peace Settlement of 1919 left a feeling among Italians that though Italy had won the war, it had lost the peace. The disappointments and frustrations of the Italians were fully exploited by Mussolini. He succeeded not only in uniting the people under his leadership but also in increasing his hold over Italy. The people had this feeling that their high ambitions which could not be achieved under a democratic Italy would be realised under Fascist Italy.

5.2.3 Impact of Fascism in Italy

Rise of Totalitarianism: Mussolini changed the laws to suit his interests of dominating the Parliament. He dissolved all political parties except his own. Fascists started terrorizing opponents making most of them to flee Italy. Giacomo Matteotti, the socialist leader was killed mysteriously. He abolished the Chamber of Deputies in 1929. Fascist Grand Council was established as an apex body to make laws with *Duce* (leader) at its top, with most of the important portfolio with him like Foreign Affairs, Interior, Colonies, War, Air, and Marine. Strikes and lockouts were declared illegal to enhance agricultural and industrial productions. Almost all walks of Italy's life were being controlled by the State.

Territorial Expansion: Mussolini gradually transformed the weak foreign policy of the previous government and tried to make Italy a world power. Increase in population, need for raw material for industrial development, making it imperative for Italy to have territorial expansion. Italy thus adopted the policy of setting England against France; France and England against Germany; England, France and Germany against the Soviet Union. Thus, through a systematic policy of dividing the major European powers and through invasion and conquest, Mussolini succeeded in expanding Italian territories.

Aggressive Foreign Policy: Mussolini adopted ambitious foreign policy and persuaded Yugoslavia to handover the port of Fiume and acquired it in 1924. He established a protectorate over Albania in 1926 and subsequently annexed it in 1939. He also acquired some territory in East Africa and near Libya through negotiations with England and France. He conquered Abyssinia in 1936, which sounded a death-knell of the League of Nations.

Led to Second World War: Mussolini joined the Anti-Communist Pact of Germany and Japan in 1937. Thus came into being the Berlin-Tokyo-Rome Axis. During the Spanish Civil War, Italy helped General Franco. The victory of the General in the Civil War strengthened the position of Italy in the western Mediterranean. Italy was now in the German camp. Subsequently, Italy denounced in 1938 the treaty made with France in 1935. Italy was right on the warpath when in May 1939 she concluded a formal military pact with Germany.

Economic Reconstruction of Italy was a Success: Italian industries and agriculture made great progress under the Fascist regime. He developed hydropower projects and facilitated industries to raise their productions. Automobile industries made rapid advances. Means of communication were also improved. Railways were modernised. Marine and merchant navy were developed with more induction of ships. Armed forces of Italy were also modernized with more weapons and ammunition. Mussolini was quite successful in striving home the majesty, might and military glory of ancient Rome into the minds of Italians.

5.2.4 Fascist Doctrine

Giovanni Gentile (1875-1944) was the chief exponent of the fascist doctrine and was a disciple of Hegel as well as a great admirer of Benito Mussolini. He had described the core elements of his philosophy as anti-intellectualism; the total submission to authority; and contempt for reason. He believed that there was no contradiction between individual and the state and that “maximum of liberty coincides with the maximum force of the state.” Gentile became the official philosopher of Fascism and described it “as a total conception of life.” He further explained in 1928 that Fascism was not a philosophical system but a plan of action.

Mussolini claimed that Fascist state was to create a new socio-economic and a political system as all other forms—liberal, democratic, and socialist or communist system were defective. It advocated strongly about the duties of citizens rather than their rights.

Fascists were opposed to democracy, liberalism and all forms of socialism, be it revolutionary or evolutionary. Democracy was decried as stupid, corrupt, slow-moving and the worst form of government—‘a decaying corpse’. Parliament was ridiculed as a useless talking shop. He rejected the Marxist’s advocacy that everything in life was determined by economic factors and went on to say “economic well-being would reduce man to the level of animals.” Fascists also rejected the idea of class war and stood for cooperation between all sectors of society in the glory of the state.

Fascism was based on narrow and extreme nationalism. Total commitment to the state was the utmost duty of citizens. Fascism was also opposed to international peace and harmony and advocated war as a national policy, as it alone provides an opportunity to demonstrate the strength of the nation. He said, “War is to man what maternity is to women.” Hence, territorial expansionism was the avowed policy of Fascism.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) What conditions in post-war Italy favoured the rise of Fascism?

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- 2) What were the main elements of fascist philosophy?

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5.3 RISE OF HITLER AND NAZI PARTY

“Periods of collapse are marked by the predominant activity of the worst elements”, writes Adolf Hitler in his *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle). It was exactly under these circumstances that his party arose in Germany. Several parties and their factions emerged on the ruins of the German Empire, each with a strong will to capture power. The communists tried to achieve this end by revolutionary methods. The reactionary elements took advantage of the failure of the Weimar Republic and stirred up hostile propaganda against the Socialists. In their bid to capture power they blamed the Socialists, Catholics, and the Jews who they said had “stabbed Germany in the back” during the War of 1914-18. This propaganda became very effective for the millions of middle-class Germans who were on the verge of becoming paupers on account of the economic crisis (1921-23). They began to join the ranks of the National Socialists. These National Socialists were being backed by the landed aristocracy of Germany which were aghast at the instance of ever-expanding socialists. Adolf Hitler, the leader of the National Socialists, tried to capture power in 1923 by *coup d’etat* but failed. Hitler was arrested and jailed, and his party was proscribed and dissolved. It was during this imprisonment that he wrote the *Mein Kampf*, which was published in 1926.

Adolf Hitler: Born in 1889, he was an Austrian and had joined the German army and had fought in the trenches on the ‘Western Front’ as an ordinary soldier. Hitler joined a group organised by Anton Drexler, which started the Nazi movement. Hitler was an influential member of the group which told the German people that Germany was not defeated in the war but was let down. This group infused a new spirit among the Germans and made the Nazi movement revolutionary and militant. Hitler said, “What we have to fight for is security, for our race and our nation, nourishment of its children and purity of its blood, freedom and independence for the Fatherland.” He appealed to the tender sentiments of the Germans and told them that “the German Reich, as a State, should include all Germans.” He declared the aim of National Socialists must be to secure for the German people an extension of the space in which our people must live. He had major hatred for France which he considered an eternal and mortal enemy of the German nation. He denounced the Treaty of Versailles and advocated for its revision.

The Nazi Party: The National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NAZIs) assumed an aggressive role from 1926 and its following began to rise readily. The unemployed workers and poverty-stricken middle-class Germans were greatly affected by the hypnotic orations of the party leader and they were won over to the party by its promises of future greatness for Germany. Consequently, in the national elections of 1930, the National Socialists won 107 seats in a *Reichstag* which had a total strength of 576 seats. An elated Hitler burst with the words: “Heads will roll in this struggle.” Hitler contested the Presidency in 1932 against the grand old man, Hindenburg, and secured 37 per cent of the German votes. Though he lost the election it convinced him that he was the man of the future in Germany. The *Reichstag* elections of 1932 gave him 230 seats out of a total of

608 and emerged as the single largest party. The Government ordered re-elections in which National Socialists won 196 seats in a House of 584. Though their votes and strength were reduced yet they remained the single largest party. Hitler was now invited by the President to become the Chancellor; when Hitler demanded powers to rule the country without the help of Parliament, it was denied to him. Hitler ultimately formed a coalition Government in January 1933. He soon ordered new elections to the *Reichstag*. The *Reichstag* building was put on fire on the eve of elections by some miscreants. Hitler blamed it on the Communists and pressurised the President to sign a declaration of Emergency. The constitution along with fundamental and all other relevant rights was suspended. He then let loose his storm troops on his political opponents. The Communist party was declared illegal and banned along with many other parties. The reign of terror was organised by Hitler and the Nationalists. When President Hindenburg died in 1934, Hitler combined the office of the President with that of the Chancellor and himself became the *Fuehrer* (Leader) of Germany.

5.3.1 Causes of the Rise of Nazism in Germany

Following were the main causes of the rise of Nazism in Germany: (1) The war and the Peace Settlement left Germany disillusioned and crushed spiritually and materially. (2) The continuing hostile attitude of France, the quarrels over the Ruhr, the Rhineland occupation, the Saar, and the reparation it was made to pay. (3) The ceaseless wrangling over security and disarmament, all these fed the indignation and anger of many Germans. (4) The Republic's acceptance of unfair disabilities, its policy of reconciliation and its inability to assert itself more strongly in international affairs rankled in the hearts of many Germans. (5) During the period of temporary economic revival (1924 to 1929) these factors remained in the background. It required a few years of hard times and increasing unemployment to bring them out in full force.

These circumstances were capitalized by the Nazis through propaganda methods, oratory, posters, banners, songs, uniforms, ceremonies, rituals, discipline, historic traditions, theories of racial superiority of Germans, anti-Semitism, enthusiasm, the dynamic personality of Hitler etc. were the major points of attractions for millions of Germans. Germans were strongly convinced that they needed a 'strong man' who would restore the peace, prestige and prosperity of Germany.

5.3.2 Impact of Nazism

The impact of the Nazi rule was direct and severe on the people of Germany, indirect and yet paralysing on Europe and the rest of the world. The Nazis adopted unscrupulous, ruthless and terrorist methods – all in the garb of serving the nation and racial superiority of the German race. They had no regard for life and property. They had no political morals and adopted incendiary methods for the growth of their party. Terrorization was writ large which presented a sort of miniature civil war within Germany. People had only to join the party and that prosperity would be theirs. Such were the themes of the Hitlerite propaganda. Nazi adopted a twenty-five-point program with a major focus on forming a 'Greater Germany' by the union of all Germans in a single State.

Germany becomes a Totalitarian State: Hitler decided to crush all opposition after assuming supreme powers both within and outside his party. Like the Fascist state of Italy and the Soviet State of Russia, Germany under Hitler became a totalitarian state. Hitler declared in one of his first decrees: “There is only one political party in Germany, and that is the Nationalist Socialist Workers’ Party. Trade Unions of the Communists and Socialists were dissolved, their offices were sealed and funds were confiscated. Criticisms of government in any form and on any forum were not to be tolerated. *Reichstag* meetings were just to applaud the *Fuehrer*. Hitler’s will was the will of the party and that of the nation. Hitler became dictator and proceeded to direct Germany’s ‘national resurgence’ in the political, economic, and cultural life of the country. The Gestapo or the German Secret Police Service wiped out of existence all opposition to the Fuehrer. Individual liberty of any kind ceased to exist. Newspapers were either Nazified or abolished.

Practising Nihilism: Reason is Impotent. Values are baseless. Morals are invented. Nihilism can be described as an idea that life, or the world, has no distinct meaning or purpose. There is no objective order or structure in the world except what we give it. Nihilism came out clearly in the terror and the murder of the innocents, the concentration camps and the gas chambers. Nihilism was the essence of Nazi process which manifested itself through the organised killings of millions of people by destroying the individual as a moral being. The purpose of Nazi nihilism was “to transfer a human being into a non-human and to restrict the quality of being human to those who were acceptable to the Nazi rulers.”

Rearmament of Germany: Germany began rearming itself. Heavy armaments, particularly armoured cars, tanks and aeroplanes began to be made in huge quantities. Herman Goering, a close associate of Hitler and an ace pilot, was appointed the commander of the German Air Force. Nazis adopted the slogan “Guns not Butter”. Compulsory military training was introduced in Germany in 1935 and Hitler blatantly repudiated the provisions of the Peace Settlement which placed limitations on its arms. Nazis were proceeding on the path of war to wash away the stains of humiliation and tear up the Treaty of Versailles.

Racism and anti-Semitism: Nazi racism and antisemitism are traced to the teachings of Rosenberg, who held the superiority of the Nordic race as responsible for the great cultures of Greece and Rome in ancient times. The decline of the German race was advocated on account of its intermingling with inferior races. The Jews were held primarily responsible for decadence and looked upon as the chief conspirators against Nordic purity. Hitler had also believed in such ideas as ‘Lebensraum’, living space for a nation. No nation could be strong unless its land was fertile and the peasantry contented. Hitler had classified people as ‘culture-creators’, ‘culture-bearers’ and ‘culture-destroyers’. The Aryans were the culture-creators which included the Germans, the Dutch and the British. Hitler regarded the Jews as enemies of the Aryans supremacy since they were an embodiment of ‘culture decadence’ a gang of international bankers more interested in money and profits than the well-being of the German people.

Schools became Propaganda Machine: The purpose of Nazi education was to shape young minds into good Nazis. Therefore, schools were transformed into propaganda machines. School curriculum was rearranged to include subjects

like race studies and genetics. Books which were not supposed to be read by good Nazis were burnt publicly. Liberal writers were black-listed and forced to stop writing. Thus, the thinking and writing too were controlled.

Economic Growth: When Hitler assumed power in 1934 there was improvement in the economic situation and the credit for the ‘economic miracle’ was claimed by Hitler. Hitler began a series of four-year plans and centralization of industries in the hands of corporations such as Krupps, to establish control over the economy. Owing to massive rearmament plans after 1935 Germany’s economy was geared-up and there was a boom in the heavy industry providing ample employment opportunities to Germans. Consequently, workers were willingly parting with their freedom and liberty and the labour unions lost their independence by becoming the Front organization of the Nazi party in exchange for employment and social security. Almost all stakeholders in the process of economic reconstruction lent their support to the Nazi party.

Expansion of Germany: The influence of Nazism was not limited to Germany only but its expansionist policy affected many other countries. It led to the denial of basic human equality and persecution of the Jews. The expansionist military policy of Hitler led to military conscription in 1935, the militarization of Rhineland in 1936, the annexation of Austria in 1938, of Czechoslovakia in 1939, and the beginning of the Second World War by the invasion of Poland in September 1939. France was vanquished in 1940. The Nazis, while in possession of large parts of Europe, attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, and declared war on the United States of America in December 1941.

5.3.3 Nazi Doctrine

Nazism was greatly influenced by the teachings of Nietzsche, Hegel and Rosenberg. Hegel gave the ideas of extreme militarism and narrow nationalism. Nietzsche’s nihilism rejected the western ideas of morality and dignity of men, the consequences of which have been discussed above.

First was their method of ruthless attack on opponents. The second was for repudiation and abrogation of the hated ‘Treaty of Versailles’ and St. Germain. The third was for the restoration of the German colonies to maintain German people and provide a settlement to their surplus population. Fourthly, it also stood for a strong central authority and a national army. Fifthly, they wanted to abolish all unearned incomes. They pretended to give all things to all Germans.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

1) What were conditions which led to the rise of Nazism?

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5.4 LET US SUM UP

Both the rise of Fascism and Nazism were a temporary phenomenon but had devastating and some lasting impact. Both emerged on the international horizon during the inter-war period. Both took entire Europe in their strides resorting to authoritarianism and leading to the Second World War. They deified the nation; thought of the nation as a living being whose purpose was supreme to the purpose and well-being of an individual. More important than rights are the duties which individuals owe to the nation. A muscular and militaristic nationalism, preparedness for war for territorial expansion, innate belief in racism and doctrine of racial superiority, and hatred and destruction of the 'other' (Jews in the case of Nazi Germany) were the hallmarks of both fascism and Nazism. The end of the Second World War was the final death-nail into their coffins. The World heaved a sigh of relief, "Never Again".

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5.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Deteriorating social and economic conditions, the growing influence of the communists, the weak democratic government combined with the widespread belief that Italy and won the war but lost the peace created conditions for the rise of fascism in Italy.

- 2) Core elements of fascist philosophy are i) anti-intellectualism, ii) total submission to authority, and iii) contempt for reason.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) Your answers should include i) The conditions of the treaty of Versailles crushed Germany both spiritually and materially, ii) the Weimar republic's inability to assert in international relations and iii) the social and economic crisis due to the Great Depression.



UNIT 6 WORLD WAR II: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES*

Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Causes and Outbreak of World War II
 - 6.2.1 The War Begins
 - 6.2.2 USA and USSR become Allies
- 6.3 Defeat of the Axis Powers
 - 6.3.1 Defeat of Italy and Germany
 - 6.3.2 Defeat of Japan
- 6.4 Peacemaking after the Second World War
 - 6.4.1 The Potsdam Conference
 - 6.4.2 Treaties of Peace
- 6.5 India's Contribution to the Second World War
- 6.6 Emergence of Super Powers
 - 6.6.1 The United States became a Nuclear Power
 - 6.6.2 Soviet Union's Challenge to the United States
- 6.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 6.8 References
- 6.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

6.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, you will be reading about World War II that started in September 1939 and ended only in August 1945. By going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the causes for the outbreak of World War II
- Describe how the USA and USSR became allies
- Discuss the outcome of the war and peace treaties signed at the end of the war, and
- Describe the rise of USA and USSR as two superpowers.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

World War II began in 1939 with German aggression on Poland on 1st September. Earlier, two erstwhile enemies namely Germany and the Soviet Union had signed a non-aggression pact making way for Polish partition between two of them. All efforts to reach an understanding between the Soviet Union on the one hand and Britain and France on the other hand proved fruitless. International Relations were still characterized by the same evil practices that had led to the outbreak of the First World War – aggression for territorial expansion and secret pacts among European great powers. In fact, secret negotiations were being simultaneously

* Originally written for EPS 07 International Relations

carried on between the Soviet Union and Germany and between Britain and Germany. Britain and France took the Soviet Union for granted and did not bother to conclude a military alliance with the latter. This paved the way for Soviet-German non-aggression pact and the German attack on Poland.

A few months before the outbreak of World War II, both Britain and France had given guarantees to Poland assuring that in case of aggression on it, they would provide her with all possible assistance. When all attempts to avoid war and protecting Poland had failed, Britain and France declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939. Italy remained neutral in the war for some time but finally joined the war on the side of Germany in June 1940. After Germany had won decisive victories against several countries in Europe, it waged a war against the Soviet Union also on June 22, 1941. This brought USSR into the Allied Camp. With the Japanese bombardment of Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941, the United States finally entered the war. The war was fought between the Allies (Britain, France, Soviet Union, USA and their friends) on the one side and the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy and Japan) on the other. The War ended in the unconditional surrender of Italy, Germany and Japan in that order.

6.2 CAUSES AND OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR II

You have read about World War II that broke out in September 1939 after the German attack on Poland, and consequent declaration of war by Britain and France against Germany. This gives the impression that the war was caused by the Polish dispute. This is partly true. Polish problem was indeed the immediate cause of the war, but many other reasons created the situation in which war became unavoidable. Let us briefly discuss all the distant as well as immediate causes of the War.

Treaty of Versailles: An attempt was made in Paris Peace Conference, held after the First World War, in 1919 to establish an ideal world order based on justice, peace and disarmament. But what finally emerged in the shape of Treaty of Versailles was a dictated treaty of peace imposed upon Germany. The victorious participants lacked sincerity of purpose.

The Paris Peace Conference lasted five months and was dominated by the 'four big' victorious powers (Britain, France, Italy and the US). None of the defeated powers were part of the peace process. Even smaller countries who had fought on the side of Allies were left out. Normal courtesies expected by the representatives of a sovereign country were not extended to Germany. The Treaty of Peace was drafted by Allies without any negotiations with defeated Germany. On May 7, 1919, Germany was given the draft treaty for its suggestion to be given in writing within three weeks. The announcement of terms of the treaty resulted in a fierce outburst of resentment in Germany. Germany denied that it alone was responsible for the war. Germany raised many objections and suggested modifications but, except for one modification, all the objections were brushed aside. Finally, Germany was made to sign the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919. Germans called it a "diktat", and could not bear this insult and humiliation. The Allies also signed separate treaties with Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary and Turkey. The formal peacemaking process wasn't concluded until the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923.

Treaty of Versailles was a punishing treaty imposed on Germany (i) Article 231 held Germany guilty of war crimes. (ii) It was forced to give up territory to Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Poland, return Alsace and Lorraine to France and cede all of its overseas colonies in China, Pacific and Africa to the Allied nations. (iii) Germany was asked to drastically reduce its armed forces, and not to have its air force. It was made to accept the demilitarization and Allied occupation of the region around the Rhine River. (iv) The Versailles Treaty redrew the borders of Europe. It created an increasingly unstable collection of smaller nations by carving up the former Austro-Hungarian Empire into states like Yugoslavia, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Of the Ottoman Empire, only the Turkish heartland was left intact; its remaining European peripheries were undone and Middle Eastern provinces were carved as European 'Mandate' under the League of Nations. Europeans powers still practised balance of powers; now keeping a balance of power became more unstable with so many small states. (v) Germany was asked to pay several billion in reparations for causing "civilian damages". The total reparations: "About 269 bn gold marks, to be exact – the equivalent of around 100,000 tonnes of gold" (BBC: October 2, 2010).

France and Britain were largely responsible for the punitive treaty and the unstable peace that ensued in Europe. France had wanted to disarm Germany, clip its military capability, humiliate it, and take revenge for all its past defeats at the hands of Germany. War had given Britain an opportunity to dominate Europe and remake it. It did not want to lose its domination over Europe; and looked at the US and President Wilson's 14-Point programme with suspicion.

British economist John Maynard Keynes had found that Germany could not possibly pay so much in reparations without severe risks to the entire European economy. US President Herbert Hoover blamed reparations for causing the Great Depression of 1929. Many realized that Germany could not pay all the reparations. The 1924 Dawes Plan and the 1929 Young Plan reduced the debt to 112 billion gold marks; Germany was granted loans to meet its payment schedule. The 1929 world depression sent all European economies into a long tailspin. The US then proposed a one-year moratorium on German payments. Germany had paid only about one-eighth of what it owed when Hitler came to power and refused to pay any more of the reparations. The act of defiance greatly appealed to the nationalist pride of Germans. The European Allied powers, however, won't give up. After the Second World War, Germany was divided into states – the capitalist Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the socialist German Democratic Republic (GDR). Who was the successor state that would now pay the reparations? The 1953 London Treaty agreed to suspend the payment of reparations till the two Germanys united. The question of debt recovery arose in 1990 with German reunification. It was then agreed that in the altered international circumstances, payment of reparations should be written off once and for all. However, it was only in 2010 that Germany made the final payment of 70 million Euros to pay the interest on loans it had taken to pay the reparations.

The Treaty of Versailles mutilated and humiliated Germany. Twenty years later, it was the turn of Germany to take revenge. Hitler had come on the centre stage, led his proud people to avenge their humiliation and thus paved the way for the Second World War.

Failure of Collective Security System: Collective security system was a noteworthy ideal the world leaders had pledged at the end of the First World

War. Providing security collectively to the victim of international aggression was its aim. The Covenant of the League of Nations provided that in case of aggression, members of the League, by their collective action, would compel the aggressor to withdraw. This collective action could either be in the form of economic sanctions against the aggressor, or military support to the victim of aggression or both.

During the inter-war years, it was, however, proved that the League was an ineffective organisation in respect of a big power if the latter decided to wage a war against, or annexe, a small country. In 1931, Japan committed aggression against China and by early 1932, managed to conquer Manchuria – a province of China. Japan very cleverly kept on telling the League that her action in Manchuria was in self-defence i.e. (protecting life and property of Japanese in Manchuria, and only a police action not aggression). Japan, a permanent member of the League, forged ahead to establish a puppet Manchukuo regime in Manchuria. When the League asked member-nations not to recognise Manchukuo, Japan left the League but retained control on the conquered territory.

Later, in 1935 Italy waged a war against Abyssinia and in May 1936 formally annexed that country into Italian Empire. The League tried to enforce collective security system, declared Italy an aggressor and clamped economic sanctions. All this was of no avail as no military action was taken against Italy who was also a big power and permanent member of the League Council. Similarly, no action was taken by a weak League of Nations against Germany. When she repudiated the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty (1935) and the freely negotiated Locarno pact, remilitarized Rhineland (1936), annexed Austria (1938) and dismembered Czechoslovakia (1938-39). Thus, failure of the collective security system turned out to be a major cause of World War II.

Failure of Disarmament: It was agreed at the Paris Peace Conference that world peace could be ensured only if nations reduced their armaments to a point consistent with their domestic safety or defence. That means all the weapons of offensive nature were to be destroyed. The task of preparing a plan for the reduction of armaments was entrusted to the League of Nations. The League appointed temporary Mixed Commission in 1920 which however could not do any substantial work because France insisted on security before this disarmament. In 1925 Preparatory Commission was instituted. Due to divergent views of nations that mattered, it could not identify offensive weapons. Finally, without much preparatory work, a Disarmament Conference met at Geneva in February 1932. Once against mutual distrust and suspicion led to the failure of the Conference, after protracted negotiations.

Germany had been disarmed by the Treaty of Versailles. Victor nations were to disarm later. They, however, never really wanted to disarm. Therefore, in October 1933 Germany declared that she was leaving both the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations. Later in 1935 Germany formally declared that she was no more bound by the military or disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. Other countries were already in possession of large quantities of armaments and big armed forces. German decision heralded a massive armament race which led to an armed conflict. The failure of disarmament became yet another major cause of Second World War.

World Economic Crisis: World economic crisis began in 1929 with sudden stoppage of loans by the American financial houses to the European countries. Many of them, particularly Germany, were making rapid industrial progress mostly with the borrowed American money. The economic crisis had its severe impact during 1930-32. It adversely affected the economics of most countries either directly or indirectly. Germany proved to be the worst affected country where nearly 700,000 people were rendered jobless. It was forced to declare that it would not make any more payment of reparations. Out of the economic crisis of Germany emerged Nazi dictatorship of Adolf Hitler. He became Chancellor of Germany in 1933, but soon destroyed democracy and established his dictatorship. Meanwhile, even England had to take some harsh measures like abandoning the gold standard. Germany, Japan and Italy took advantage of this economic crisis and separately embarked upon aggressive designs. They set up their Fascist Bloc which became largely responsible for the Second World War.

Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis: On the eve of the First World War, Europe was divided into two hostile camps. The same process was once again repeated with the formation of an alliance of Germany, Japan and Italy. It was concluded through the Anti-Comintern pact during 1936-37. This combination of Fascist powers generally called the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis was aimed at imperialist expansion. They glorified war, and openly denounced peaceful settlement of disputes. They bullied Western countries and victimised weaker nations like China, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Albania and Poland. Their war-like acts and aggression though noticed, yet went unpunished. Alarmed at the conduct of Axis powers, England and France came closer to each other and an unsuccessful attempt was made at the formation of an Anglo-French-Soviet Front. Although France and the Soviet Union had an alliance, yet in their desire to appease Hitler, France and England ignored the Soviet Union and when Stalin wanted a military pact between three non-Fascist powers they took it easy. The Soviet Union became suspicious and surprised the world by signing the non-aggression pact with Germany. This directly cleared the way for the German attack on Poland which led to the outbreak of the Second World War. While the Soviet Union also invaded Poland, England and France declared war on Germany.

The Problem of National Minorities: Peace settlement after the First World War had resulted in the formation of new nation-states in Europe, with large national minorities left behind uncared for. President Woodrow Wilson of the United States had advocated the principle of self-determination. But on account of various strategic considerations, this principle was never properly implemented. Thus, for example, large German minorities found themselves in the company of non-Germans in Poland and Czechoslovakia. There were Russian minorities in Poland and Rumania; and even after the Minority Treaties were concluded after the Paris conference, about 750,000 Germans were under foreign rule. Hitler exploited the situation and in the name of denial of rights to German minorities in Czechoslovakia and Poland prepared to attack these countries. He annexed Austria, destroyed and dismembered Czechoslovakia and finally invaded Poland. Thus, the problem of minorities became an important issue and major excuse for the war.

Appeasement by Britain and France: Foreign policy based on appeasement of Nazi-Fascist dictators turned out to be a major cause of the Second World War. After the First World War, there appeared a rift in the policies of Britain and

France. Balance of power had always been the cornerstone of the British foreign policy. Britain feared that a very powerful France would disturb the balance of power in Europe. Hence, it helped Germany against France in the inter-war years. Once Hitler came to power in Germany and Italy became an ally of the Nazi dictator, Britain quickly moved closer to France who badly needed British assistance against a very hostile Germany. After 1933, France's foreign policy virtually became an extension of British foreign policy. Britain was worried about the growing influence of Communism. Not only the Soviet Union had to be effectively challenged, but the so-called popular fronts in France and Spain had also to be destroyed. With this objective in view, Britain adopted the policy of appeasement towards Hitler and Mussolini. France soon followed suit. Appeasement was started by Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin but vigorously pursued by Neville Chamberlain in 1938. Anglo-French desire to help Mussolini during the Abyssinian War, while maintaining support for League efforts, their virtual surrender to Hitler at the Munich Conference, and their inability to protect weaker nations like Austria and Albania were clear evidence of Anglo-French weakness and this prepared the ground for the War.

German Attack on Poland: The apparent and immediate cause of the war was the German attack on Poland on September 1, 1939. Earlier, when all attempts at an Anglo-French alliance with the Soviet Union had failed, Hitler entered a non-aggression pact with Stalin. This was most unexpected, as, for several years, only hatred had existed between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. Now, keen to partition off Poland between themselves, Germany and the Soviet Union signed the pact not to wage war against each other. Yet, as events turned out, the pact was called by its critics as "simple aggression pact against Poland". In a secret pact, which emerged only in 1945, the two countries had resolved to divide Eastern Europe into their spheres on September 1, 1939, England and France had already assured Poland of their help in case of an invasion. They kept their word and declared war on Germany. While Germany invaded Poland in the west, Soviet troops moved into Poland from the east on September 17-18, 1939. Poland was divided between Germany and the Soviet Union by the Soviet-German Frontier and Friendship Treaty of 28 September 1939. Meanwhile, many other countries have also declared war on Germany, though these were symbolic declarations as even France and Britain were still busy preparing for war, while Poland was being destroyed.

6.2.1 The War Begins

Poland, as we have seen above, became the immediate cause of the War. On March 23, 1939 German troops had quietly occupied Memel (a German city under Lithuanian sovereignty) after Hitler had asked Lithuania to surrender it. On the same day, German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop called Polish Ambassador and dictated to him terms that Germany would like to impose upon Poland. He demanded that Danzig (which had already been Nazified) should be returned to Germany, and an east-west highway and rail-link across the Polish Corridor may be allowed so that East Prussia could be directly linked with Germany. This virtually meant a corridor across a corridor. Hitler, however, was calculating repeat of another Munich mistake by Britain which did not take place. Prime Minister Chamberlain announced unequivocally British guarantees to Poland. Later, when Italy invaded and annexed Albania (7th April), Britain gave similar guarantees to Greece and Rumania. France followed Britain in announcing

conscription. Hitler retaliated on the next day and repudiated the Polish-German non-aggression pact of 1934 and Anglo-German Naval Treaty of 1935.

The Anti-Comintern Pact was signed by Germany and Japan in November 1936 and, a year later, Italy too joined. Thus, the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis represented three countries determination to liquidate world communism was formed. It was, in fact, an alliance against the Soviet Union. By August 1939 Hitler was prepared to settle the Polish issue on his terms; however, he was on the lookout for a plausible pretext. He got the arms of (an otherwise determined) Britain diplomatically twisted when Hitler agreed to have direct negotiations with Poland on Danzig issue. Hitler asked Britain, through its Ambassador in Berlin on August 29, 1939, to arrange a Polish delegation, to reach Berlin the next day, fully empowered to negotiate and conclude an agreement with the Germans. This was the most unusual demand. Normally, international negotiations take a lot of time to begin. In any case, formal proposals are first sent through diplomatic means before inviting foreign delegation, who could not arrive on August 30. Germany closed all doors for negotiation. This gave Hitler the much-awaited pretext for the planned invasion of Poland. The war broke out early in the morning of September 1, 1939, when German troops invaded Poland. England and France declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939. On 18 September the Soviet Union also invaded Poland, but neither Italy nor the United States entered the war for some time. Meanwhile, England and other allies were already in a war, yet attempts were still on for some solution. But Germany was determined for a full-fledged war.

6.2.2 USA and USSR Become Allies

When the war began, Germany and Italy were political allies, but Soviet-German non-aggression pact disappointed Mussolini. Italy did not enter the war till June 1940. Then, as France was on the verge of defeat and surrender, Italy joined the war on the side of Germany against France and the Allies. The Soviet Union did not join the war but was helping Germany by invading Poland. She later attacked Finland and was expelled from the membership of League of Nations. Stalin continued to trust Hitler until the Nazi dictator had defeated most European neighbours and attacked the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. Meanwhile, Stalin had coerced three Baltic nations - Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia - to join the Soviet Union as its Union Republics. They lost their independence as Stalin told their leaders that if they refused to join USSR, they would be ruined by Germany.

The Soviet Union had also dictated terms to Rumania and recovered Bessarabia and Bukovina from it. Thus, by mid-1941 Soviet Union was busy collecting war gains without being in the war. Hitler had secured French surrender in June 1940. But Hitler was not so lucky where Spain was concerned. General Franco kept his country out of the war. Since it was being fought by Hitler in association with Stalin, Spain remained neutral throughout the war.

Public opinion in the United States was overwhelmingly opposed to being drawn into the war. In 1937, the US Congress had passed the Neutrality Act which also prohibited the sale of armaments in a future war. When the war broke out and Germany started bombing and destroying western democracies, Americans began weakening their neutrality stance. Cash and Carry Act was passed in November 1939, permitting countries at war to buy American weapons provided they paid

cash and carried them in their ships. When the war reached a crucial stage, the Lend-Lease Act was passed in March 1941. It allowed the President to sell, exchange, end the lease or otherwise dispose off any defence article. Thus, the US began supplying armaments to friendly countries such as Britain and China. Three months later when Soviet Union was attacked by Germany, she was also covered by the Lend-Lease Act.

The Soviet-German non-aggression pact signed in 1939 had been designed by Hitler to keep the Soviet Union in the dark about his actual intentions. As soon as Germany had defeated her enemies on the European continent, it began preparing for the invasion of the Soviet Union itself. But Stalin remained convinced that Hitler would not attack the Soviet Union. Everyone had warned Stalin of Nazi attack—Churchill, American Embassy and Stalin’s men in Tokyo. But Stalin refused to listen till 22 June 1941 when Germany launched the attack on the Soviet Union. Stalin was stunned at this and the Soviet Union sought Allied assistance. Britain accepted the Soviet Union into the Allied camp. In July, London and Moscow signed a military pact.

When the Soviet Union was facing a devastating war, the United States was forced to enter the war in December 1941, when Japan attacked its naval base in Pearl Harbour. American relations with Japan were never cordial. Japanese assets in America were already frozen. In August 1941 the United States had announced that any Japanese action against Thailand would cause her grave concern. Unsuccessful attempts were made for a meeting between US President Roosevelt and Japanese Prime Minister Kono in September. In October, Kono resigned and General Tojo became the Prime Minister of Japan. He openly encouraged conflict. In November, Britain had promised to declare war on Japan if the United States became involved in a war with that country. Tension was building up rapidly and war appeared imminent. On 6 December 1941 President Roosevelt made a personal request to the Japanese Emperor for help in maintaining peace. Instead, on December 7, 1941, Japan bombarded American Naval fleet based at Pearl Harbour (Hawaii Islands). A few hours later, Japan declared war “on the United States of America and the British Empire”. On December 11, both Germany and Italy declared war on the United States. The war thus became global.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

1) What was the immediate cause for the Second World War?

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- 2) Write a note on the concept of collective security.

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6.3 DEFEAT OF THE AXIS POWERS

6.3.1 Defeat of Italy and Germany

The two European Fascist Powers had conquered most of the countries on the continent. Britain was under constant attack, and large parts of the Soviet Union including the three Baltic Republics had been overrun by the Germans. In 1943 the Allied powers decided to launch an offensive against the Axis by liquidating Italian Empire in Africa. This objective was achieved by May 1943. The Italians were disturbed and Fascist structure gave signs of cracking. The Allies decided on “Operation Hugky” to start Italian invasion through Sicily. It was not an all-out effort because the idea was to use Italy as a base to be able to bomb Germany and the Balkans. In July 1943, following heavy air attacks, a large number of Italians surrendered in Sicily. Mussolini visited Hitler and asked for more German assistance, but was turned down. Mussolini summoned a meeting of Fascist Grand Council which asked the King to take direct command. On July 25, 1943, King Victor Emmanuel III dismissed Mussolini and appointed Marshal Badoglio to head the new government. Mussolini was arrested. Italy finally surrendered unconditionally on September 3, 1943. On the same day, however, Germans entered Rome and kept it under their occupation for several months. Allied forces could capture Rome only on June 4, 1944.

The Allied powers decided to defeat Germany by opening two fronts against her. From the east, the Soviet Union was pushing her out: in West England, America and its Allies launched an attack on Normandy to liberate France. By March 1944, the Axis forces were expelled from most of Ukraine and other parts of the Soviet Union. Soviet soil was cleared of German armies before the year ended. The West Front against Germany was opened on June 6, 1944. It began from the English Channel, and for this purpose, 150,000 American soldiers were transported every month.

Allied forces liberated France and entered Germany on September 11, 1944—ninety-seven days after their invasion. Immediately afterwards Hitler’s air force began a massive bombardment of London which continued till early 1945. As Germans began to be defeated, conspiracies were hatched to eliminate Hitler. The final assault on Germany was planned at the Yalta Conference in February 1945. All-round offensive was begun against Germany by the British, Canadian, French and the Americans forces. Meanwhile, the Soviet offensive was continuing unabated. The fighting was most fierce at the German Chancellery in whose underground defences Hitler had set up his last headquarters. When everything was lost, the Nazi dictator, who was once dreaming of ruling over the entire

world, committed suicide on April 30, 1945. Hitler had nominated Dönnitz as his successor but he could do nothing to save the country. On May 5, 1945, German commanders in northeast Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark surrendered unconditionally; Nazi forces in Austria surrendered the next day. Finally, on the May 7, Dönnitz Government (of Germany) surrendered unconditionally “all land, sea and air forces of the Reich”. The war in Europe was over on May 8, 1945.

6.3.2 Defeat of Japan

The Allies were fighting hard for victory against Japan in the Far East. Hence the main responsibility fell on the United States, who was assisted by Britain, China, the Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand. Allied invasion of Japan was organised with China as the base. US General Douglas MacArthur directed these operations. Two allied campaigns were launched in the autumn of 1944. The one under Lord Mountbatten was aimed at the reconquest of Burma. The other, under Gen. MacArthur, involved the liberation of the Philippine Islands. Both the missions were completed by June 1945. The Potsdam conference which was meeting to decide the future of defeated Germany and other related issues gave a call to Japan in July 1945 “to proclaim now the unconditional surrender of all Japanese armed forces”. The ultimatum was ignored by the Japanese who continued to fight. At this stage, America decided to use the atom bomb and secure Japan’s unconditional surrender. On August 6, 1945, the American Air Force dropped the first-ever atom bomb on the important Japanese City of Hiroshima and wiped out more than half of the target area. Two days later (August 8), the Soviet Union declared war on Japan and began an offensive in Manchuria and Southern Sakhalin (both were then under Japanese control). Progress of the Soviet troops was swift. On August 9, 1945, a second atom bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, unleashing unprecedented destruction. The next day, Japan sued for peace. Fighting stopped but surrender documents were signed only on September 2, 1945, onboard the US battleship *Missouri*. The Second World War finally ended with Japan coming under the American occupation.

The consequence of war was the total defeat of three Axis powers and the victory of the Allies. This also meant the victory of democracy and the defeat of Fascism and dictatorship.

6.4 PEACEMAKING AFTER SECOND WORLD WAR

The conclusion of peace treaties after the Second World War proved to be a very difficult task. After two years of termination of hostilities, treaties were concluded only with five of the defeated powers. They were Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland. The Treaty of peace with Austria could be concluded only in 1955 and with Japan in 1952. Germany could not be reunited. It remained divided between pro-west Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and the Democratic German Republic under the influence of the Soviet Union. Since Germany was not reunited, no treaty with Germany as such was ever concluded. Two Germanys were finally united in 1990 into one Germany. We shall briefly deal with the Potsdam Conference and then the peace treaties concluded with other defeated powers.

6.4.1 The Potsdam Conference

The Potsdam (Berlin) Conference was held during July-August 1945. Germany had unconditionally surrendered to the Allies. Several decisions had been taken during different wartime conferences regarding the future of Germany and the East European countries. A formal arrangement had now to be made in the light of these decisions. The Potsdam Conference was attended by Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill, Chiang Kai-Shek and the US President Harry Truman. They were assisted by high powered delegations. The Conference took important decisions regarding the future set up in Germany pending the conclusion of a formal treaty of peace. Preparations were also begun for the signing of peace treaties to be concluded with other defeated powers. Japan was yet to be defeated. Pending the final demarcation of the western borders of Poland, south-eastern Prussia and the areas to the east of rivers Oder and Neisse would constitute the western parts of Poland. It was also agreed that as soon as possible, free and fair democratic elections would be held in Poland. Potsdam Conference decided the Allied forces would be immediately withdrawn from Iran and Tangier was to be declared an international area. No reparation was to be taken from Austria.

The conference took decisions regarding the basis of surrender by Japan. Imperialistic elements would be eliminated and Japan would be disarmed. The war criminals of Japan would be punished. Immediately after her surrender, Allied military control would be established in Japan and eventually a democratic government would be set up. The sovereignty of Japan would be limited to her four major and a few smaller Islands. All foreign territories occupied by Japan before or during the Second World War would be liberated and transferred to the countries where they lawfully belonged.

The conditions as spelt out at the Potsdam Conference for the Japanese surrender were not accepted by Japan. The United States of America, without taking the Soviet Union into confidence, dropped atom bombs on two of the Japanese cities early in August 1945 compelling her to surrender unconditionally on August 10, 1945. Thus, the Second World War came to an end. The fact is that the United States developed and used atom bomb without the knowledge of the Soviet Union became one of the causes that gave birth to the Cold War immediately after the Second World War.

6.4.2 Treaties of Peace

The victorious powers had learned but not much from their experiences with the peace treaties concluded after the First World War. Peace treaties concluded after the end of Second World War once again brought territorial divisions and adjustments among European states; occupation of territories and overseas colonies of the vanquished and imposition of reparations.

Unlike the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, only a Foreign Ministers meeting took place in London from September 11 to October 3, 1945. By that time serious differences had developed between the Western powers on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other. Very little progress could be made in the London Conference, nor could any progress be achieved in the subsequent three meetings. The draft-treaties were prepared in these meetings, to be concluded with five powers—Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland. Thereafter, the Paris Conference was held from July 29 to October 15, 1946. This was followed by

the other meetings of the Foreign Ministers Committee and the treaties were finally approved by the Committee at New York on December 12, 1946. Finally, these treaties were signed by the Allies on the one side and the five above mentioned defeated powers on the other. Separate treaties were concluded with each of them.

The main provisions of these peace treaties may be briefly mentioned here. (i) The Treaty concluded with Italy deprived her of several territories. France, Greece and Yugoslavia gained territories at the cost of Italy. (ii) Trieste became an independent Port under the charge of a Governor appointed by the Security Council of the United Nations. (iii) Albania and Ethiopia regained their Independence and became sovereign states. (iv) Italy was considerably reduced and she was required to pay a big amount of money as reparation within seven years. (v) The Romania Treaty provided for the transfer of the provinces of Bessarabia, and Bukovina from Romania to the Soviet Union and Dobruja to Bulgaria. She was to pay reparation to the Soviet Union and limits were imposed on the strength of its military forces. (vi) Hungary was made to return to Czechoslovakia some of the villages situated to the south of River Danube which she had occupied in 1938. (vii) The Province of Transylvania was returned by Hungary to Romania. She was also required to pay reparation and was disarmed. Bulgaria did not lose any territory. It gained the territory of Dobruja from Romania. But like others, Bulgaria was asked to pay reparation and her armed forces were curtailed. (viii) Finland was deprived of several small territories which all went to the Soviet Union. The area Salla, the province of Petsamo and the Naval Base of Porkkala Udd were given by her to the Soviet Union. Like other defeated powers, reparation was imposed upon Finland also. Its armed forces were considerably curtailed and limited. These Five treaties gave a maximum advantage to the Soviet Union. Another country which gained sufficient territory, power and prestige was Yugoslavia which became the most powerful nation in the Balkans and a rival of Italy.

Austria: Austria had been occupied by the German army in 1938 and ever since continued as an occupied part of defeated Germany. Austria was treated as a “liberated territory”. The Moscow Conference of 1943 pledged to create a sovereign state of Austria. But, soon after the war, serious differences developed among the Allies. The Soviet Union wanted to impose severe economic restrictions on Austria. This was not acceptable to the Western powers. The deadlock remained for nearly 10 years. Finally, Austria agreed to declare itself a “neutral” country and to pay some compensation to the Soviet Union. Thereupon, the Soviet Union agreed to separate the Austrian question from the problem of Germany. A Peace Treaty was signed by Austria on May 15, 1955, whereby it became a “neutral” country.

Japan: The Cold War and differences between the United States and the Soviet Union delayed the conclusion of the peace treaty with Japan. But, unlike Germany and Austria, Japan was under the occupation of only the American forces. After the Japanese surrender on August 10, 1945, an interim military administration had been set up by the Americans. The entire authority was vested in the hands of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers. General MacArthur was appointed as the Supreme Commander and Japanese Administrator. A meeting to draw up a peace Treaty was convened by the United States at San Francisco in 1951. The meeting was attended by 52 countries. It was attended by the Soviet

Union and other socialist countries, but India and Burma refused to attend it. Some of the proposed terms of peace were not acceptable to India. Even the Soviet Union found it impossible to sign the draft treaty. The treaty drafted under US influence was signed with Japan by 49 countries, on April 28, 1952. A separate peace treaty was signed by India with Japan in June 1952.

The Peace Treaty signed by Japan with the United States and 48 other countries had 27 articles. It recognised the independence of Korea. It may be remembered that Korea had been divided after the war between North Korea (Communist) and South Korea (Liberal Democracy). Japan surrendered its rights over the Islands of Formosa, Sakhalin and Kurile. The Islands of Bonin and Ryukyu (Okinawa) were placed under the American Trusteeship. The Japanese sovereignty was limited to her four principal and a few small Islands. Secondly, Japan agreed to give up all her rights to China. Thirdly, Japan accepted responsibility for the war and liability to pay reparation but given economic conditions, it was exempted from the payment of reparation. This was done because the Treaty was concluded much after the heat of the war had subsided and because it was now a close ally of the United States. Lastly, it was agreed in principle that the foreign armed forces would be withdrawn from Japan.

Germany: Germany was divided into four occupation zones immediately after its surrender. The western powers alleged that, in violation of the understanding earlier reached, Soviet Union was converting its zone of Eastern Germany into a communist state. This hampered not only the unification of Germany but also the conclusion of a peace treaty. Nevertheless, both the Soviet Union and the Western powers took several unilateral decisions regarding Germany. The first such decision was taken by Britain and the United States who merged their zones into one on January 1, 1947. Later, France also allowed the merger of her zone with the unified western zone. Subsequently, the three powers decided to set up a free, independent and democratic government in West Germany. The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), comprising erstwhile western zones, was formally established on September 21, 1949. The Western powers formally terminated the 'state of war' with the Federal Republic of Germany in 1951.

Soon after the setting up of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Soviet Union proceeded to create an independent state of East Germany. It was designated as the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and was organised on the Socialist pattern of the USSR. Full sovereignty was granted to GDR by the Soviet Union by a treaty concluded between them in September 1955—one year after the sovereignty of West Germany was recognised by the Western powers. Thus, Germany remained divided into two hostile countries till 1990—one was aligned with the West had capitalist order and had made very rapid industrial progress, and the other was aligned to the Soviet Union and had her economy based on socialism and her political system patterned on the Soviet Union. The two Germany—West Germany and East Germany began the process of unification in 1989. United Germany was born only in October 1990.

6.5 INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

India's contribution to the British Empire during the Second World War has for long been overlooked. It is only over recent years that the sacrifices made by

India are being acknowledged. As in the First World War, Indian soldiers were called upon by Britain to help in the war effort. The size of the British Indian army at its peak reached 2.5 million – making it the largest volunteer army in the world. Approximately 89,000 Indian soldiers died fighting for the Empire.

Indian soldiers fought in all the major battles – Tobruk, Monte Cassino, Kohima and Imphal. They fought on all major fronts – East and North Africa, Italy, Burma, Singapore, Malay Peninsula, Guam and Indo China – and secured South East Asia from the Japanese. Some 700,000 Indian soldiers fought in the Burma and South-East Asian theatre. Historians have begun to record only now: among the fiercest of the battles during the war was the Battle of Kohima and Imphal in 1944. The Japanese 15th Army, 85,000 strong for the invasion of India, was essentially destroyed, with 53,000 dead and missing in the Battle of Kohima and Imphal.

The entire Indian subcontinent stood transformed during the war years. The subcontinent became a vast supply ground for the war against the Japanese in South East Asia. Millions of Indians toiled for the Empire under pathetic conditions. Thousands of Indians mined coal in Bihar, built supply roads from India into Myanmar and China, including the famous Ledo Road between China and India in North East India. In addition to meeting its requirements, India became a major supplier of war material to the Allies. Hundreds of its new factories maintained regular supplies of textile and other war-related material to all the Allied countries. Official figures suggest that thousands of Indians working at ports and factories died from Japanese aerial bombings on India's eastern coastline.

Thousands of non-combatants were sent overseas to man and manage the supply lines and support services. These were the 'coolies' who loaded and unloaded cargo at imperial ports or cleared lands for aerodromes. Merchant seamen living around the ports of London, Cardiff, Liverpool and South Shields worked to ensure that the supply lines to Britain remained open. They worked under atrocious conditions for less pay than their white counterparts.

The war-related British taxes and levies further imposed a crushing burden on India's poverty-stricken population. Indians not only fought in the war but also financed it. The noted military historian Srinath Raghavan writes that by 1942-43, India was paying more than Britain towards the war, transforming its relationship with Britain from a debtor to a creditor - with Britain owing it a mind-boggling £1.3 billion by the end of the war (*India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia 1939-1945*)

The Second World War had a huge impact on India. It greatly energized India's freedom movement. Millions participated in the Quit India movement of 1942. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose raised the Indian National Army (INA), consisting of Indian soldiers and prisoners of war (POWs) of Japanese in South East Asia, to fight and overthrow the British rule in India. Netaji sought Japanese help for his mission. The INA and Japanese forces advanced but were stopped by the British Army in Imphal and Kohima in the North East. There were other outcomes of the war. The Second World War produced a professional and highly regarded Indian armed forces. Hundreds of new factories that were set up to produce and supply war material laid the foundation of India's manufacturing sector. Many in the business circle made huge profits and became industrial entrepreneurs

after independence. The war also made it clear to the great powers after the war that India was the pivot of the Asian security. Arguing in 1946 for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, Jawaharlal Nehru noted: “It is India that counts in the defence and security of these regions far more than any other country.”

6.6 EMERGENCE OF SUPERPOWERS

The concept of Super Power developed only after the Second World War when some of the erstwhile big powers were overtaken in respect of power (capability) to influence the minds and actions of other states) by two countries, namely the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR, commonly known as the Soviet Union). On the eve of the Second World War, British Empire, France, Italy and Japan were among the recognised big powers. When the war ended not only Germany but Italy and Japan were also defeated. The defeated countries became militarily weak, politically insignificant and economically impoverished. Among victors, Britain had become so weak that by 1947 it was unable to maintain its troops even in Greece and Turkey for their defence against communism. British Empire could not be sustained. Once India became independent in 1947, the process of decolonization was accelerated. Britain was still recognised as a big power and occupied a permanent seat in the newly-constituted UN Security Council, but its strength had considerably diminished. France had been a victim of German occupation until a second front was opened and it was liberated in August 1944. Although France emerged victorious and was given a permanent seat in the Security Council, yet for several years after the war, it was far from being a powerful nation. That left only two of the principal vectors i.e. the United States and the Soviet Union who gained in military power and political status. Thus, an important consequence of the Second World War was the emergence of these two victors as Super Powers. Even after Britain, France and China became nuclear powers they could not challenge the Super Power status of US and USSR.

6.6.1 The United States Became a Nuclear Power

Towards the end of the war, there was just one country which possessed the potential that no other state had. In July 1945, the Americans exploded, experimentally, the first nuclear device in the history of mankind. In August, they dropped two atom bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki which broke the resistance of Japan and brought about her unconditional surrender. The world was shocked, and the Soviet Union was disgusted because even when the two were allies in the war, the United States did not indicate the fact that she was developing an atom bomb. Even when the US decided to use the atom bomb in Japan, the other Allies were kept in the dark till the actual use of it.

Besides its nuclear weapons, what had helped America become a Super Power was the fact that no battle ever took place on her territory throughout war. After the Pearl Harbour, Americans were engaged in an unprecedented war, but the civilian lives and property were left untouched. This gave an added advantage to the Americans because their other Allies in the war had suffered heavy civilian losses also. Britain was heavily bombarded; France was under occupation for four years and the Soviet Union had been a target of German invasion till the second front was opened against her.

6.6.2 Soviet Union's Challenge to the United States

The power base of the Soviet Union was not comparable to that of the United States. The USSR had succeeded in establishing communist regimes in Poland and several other East European countries, which were liberated by its army from the Nazi control. But it did not possess nuclear weapons until testing of first such device in 1949. The USSR had suffered enormous losses during the war. Not only its troops were killed and wounded in large numbers but it had suffered civilian losses also and the destruction of industrial and physical infrastructure.

The Soviet Union became a nuclear power in 1949 although until 1953 the US maintained clear superiority in areas like delivery system. But, once the USSR became a nuclear weapon state, it also began developing the delivery system such as aircraft and missiles. It was because of its rising military capability, achievements in the space and other sciences and its attraction as an alternative socialist model of economic development and social justice that her status improved and she was recognised as a Super Power.

Immediately after the Second World War, the Soviet Union had made an all-out effort to overtake the United States in science and technology. It subordinated everything including post-war reconstruction to catching up with the Americans in military technology. Once the Soviet Union developed its nuclear power, it became a rival of the United States and the two came to be recognised as the Super Powers. Both led a power bloc each. After the Second World War, the United States and the Soviet Union faced each other directly but often through their proxy regimes and allies in different parts of the world. According to Lundestad, "They were the two main actors in the international area; the geographic distance separating them was gone, but the political distance would soon be greater than it had ever been".

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the Unit for tips for your answer.

1) How did the Second World War impact India?

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6.7 LET US SUM UP

World War II broke out when Nazi Germany invaded Poland on 1st September 1939. Two days later, England and France declared war on Germany. Earlier two arch rivals, Germany and the Soviet Union had concluded a non-aggression pact. Major causes of the Second World War were the humiliating terms imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles; failure of the collective security system

and disarmament which was thought to be a sure guarantee of avoiding war; the world economic crisis which encouraged military and aggressive actions in countries like Japan; the creation of Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis, an alliance of three fascist powers determined to destroy existing world order; the problem of dissatisfaction of minorities; the policy of appeasement pursued by Britain and supported by France to win over the Fascist and Nazi dictators: and finally German attack on Poland that became the immediate cause of the war.

To begin with, several countries joined the war on the side of Britain and her allies, but America kept out of it till outstanding disputes led Japan to attack Pearl harbour which forced the United States entry into War as an Ally in December 1941. The Soviet Union had invaded Poland and Finland and was expelled from League of Nations. But, ignoring the Non-Aggression Pact, Germany attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941. The Soviet Union immediately aligned itself with Britain. Meanwhile, Italy had entered the War in June 1940 by declaring War on France and siding with Germany. The Axis powers suffered their first setback when Italy was attacked in 1943. Mussolini was dismissed by the king and later Italy surrendered unconditionally, although for some time Rome was occupied by Germans. After a second front was opened by UK and USA, Germany not only lost France but was forced to surrender in May 1.945. Japan continued to fight in the Pacific till two atom bombs were dropped by American in August 1945 forcing Japan to surrender. Thus, the War ended with the defeat of the three fascist powers; and the victory of the Allies.

Peace-making efforts after the war proved to be a very difficult task. The Allies had convened the Potsdam Conference (1945) for drawing up a peace treaty with Germany. No peace treaty could be concluded with any of the defeated countries immediately after the war. But after prolonged diplomatic activities, peace treaties were concluded with Italy, Romania, Hungary and Finland; and later with Austria and Japan. Germany remained occupied for several years and naturally, no peace treaty could be concluded for several years.

The most significant outcome of the war was the partition of Germany into four occupation zones. Later three Western Zones became one sovereign country, and in the east, a Soviet-backed government was established. As east European countries were liberated by the Soviet army, they were given communist governments. The Cold War began between two power blocs into which the world war divided.

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6.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) The immediate cause of the war was the German invasion of Poland in September 1939 which led to a military response from England and France.
- 2) The principle of collective security that was written into the covenant of the League of Nations called for providing security to a victim of international aggression. Members of the League would take collective action against the aggressor in the form of economic sanctions, or military support to the victim of aggression or both.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) Your answer should include the following: i) The War energised Indian freedom movement -with millions taking part in Quit India movement on the one hand and Netaji Bose raising the Indian National Army to overthrow the British rule. ii) Manufacturing industry got a boost as it had to meet the war supplies. iii) India also financed the war, emerging as a creditor nation at the end of the war. iv) The war also made the great powers realise that India was the pivot of Asian security