

ASPECTS OF TWENTIETH CENTURY WORLD

Unit – II

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1. Origins of the First World War- Causes and its nature

(a) Causes

European Alliances and Counter-Alliances

In 1900 five of the European Great Powers were divided into two armed camps. One camp consisted of the Central Powers- Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy. Under the guidance of Bismarck, they had formed the Triple Alliance in 1882. The understanding was that Germany and Austria would help each other. The other camp consisted of France and Russia. Their alliance was formed in 1894 with the promise of mutual help if Germany attacked either of them. An isolated Britain wanted to break her isolation and approached Germany twice but in vain. As Japan was increasingly hostile towards Russia, as France was the ally of Russia, it preferred to ally with Britain (1902). The Anglo-Japanese Alliance prompted France to seek an alliance with Britain to resolve colonial disputes over Morocco and Egypt. This resulted in the Entente Cordiale (1904). In return for letting the French have a free hand in Morocco, France agreed to recognize the British occupation of Egypt. Britain subsequently reached an agreement with Russia over Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet. Thus was formed the Triple Entente of Britain, France and Russia.

Violent Forms of Nationalism

With the growth of nationalism, the attitude of “my country right or wrong I support it” developed. The love for one country demanded hatred for another country. England’s jingoism, France’s chauvinism and Germany’s Kultur were militant forms of nationalism, contributing decisively to the outbreak of War.

Aggressive Attitude of German Emperor

Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany was ruthlessly assertive and aggressive. The Kaiser proclaimed that Germany would be the leader of the world. The German navy was expanded. The sea being considered a preserve of England ever since Napoleon’s defeat at Trafalgar (1805), Germany’s aggressive diplomacy and rapid building of naval bases convinced Britain that a German navy could be directed only against her. Therefore, Britain embarked on a naval race, which heightened the tension between the two powers.

Hostility of France towards Germany

France and Germany were old rivals. Bitter memories of the defeat of 1871 and loss of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany rankled in the minds of the French. German interference in

Morocco added to the bitterness. The British agreement with France over Morocco was not consented by Germany. So Kaiser Wilhelm II intentionally recognised the independence of the Sultan and demanded an international conference to decide on the future of Morocco.

Imperial Power Politics in the Balkans

The Young Turk Revolution of 1908, an attempt at creating a strong and modern government in Turkey, provided both Austria and Russia with the opportunity to resume their activities in the Balkans. Austria and Russia met and agreed that Austria should annex Bosnia and Herzegovina, while Russia should have freedom to move her warships, through the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, to the Mediterranean. Soon after this, Austria announced the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Austria's action aroused intense opposition from Serbia. Germany gave Austria firm support. Germany went to the extent of promising that if Austria invaded Serbia and in consequence Russia helped Serbia, Germany would come to Austria's assistance. The enmity between Austria and Serbia led to the outbreak of war in 1914.

The Balkan Wars

Turkey was a powerful country in the south west of Europe in the first half of eighteenth century. The Ottoman empire extended over the Balkans and across Hungary to Poland. The Empire contained many non-Turkish people in the Balkans. Both the Turks and their subjects of different nationalities in the Balkans indulged in the most frightful massacres and atrocities. The Armenian genocide is a frightful example.

Taking advantage of the political and economic instability of the Turkish Empire from the second half of the eighteenth century, Greeks followed by others began to secede, one after another, from Turkish control. Macedonia had a mixed population. There were rivalries among Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and later Montenegro for the control of it. In March 1912 they formed the Balkan League. The League attacked and defeated Turkish forces in the first Balkan War (1912–13). According to the Treaty of London signed in May 1913 the new state of Albania was created and the other Balkan states divided up Macedonia between them. Turkey was reduced to the area around Constantinople.

The division of Macedonia, however, did not satisfy Bulgaria. Bulgaria attacked Serbia and Greece. But Bulgaria was easily defeated. The Second Balkan War ended with the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest in August 1913.

Immediate Cause

The climax to these events in the Balkans occurred in Sarajevo in Bosnia. On 28 June 1914 the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, nephew and heir to Franz Joseph, Emperor of Austria-Hungary, was assassinated by Princip, a Bosnian Serb. Austria saw in this an opportunity to eliminate Serbia as an independent state. Germany thought that it should strike first. It declared war on Russia on 1 August. Germany had no quarrel with France, but because of the Franco-Russian Alliance, the German army which was planning a war against both France and Russia wanted to use the occasion to its advantage. The German violation of Belgian neutrality forced Britain to enter War.

(b) Course of the War

Two Warring Camps Central Powers

The warring nations were divided into two. The Central powers consisted of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria. Italy which was earlier with Germany and Austria had left, as her attempt to recover Trentino in north east Italy, where Italians lived in majority but remained as part and parcel of Austria- Hungary, was not supported by Germany. Italy remained a neutral country when the War broke out. But it decided to enter the War hoping to gain the territory in the north - east. Britain, France and Italy signed the secret Treaty of London in April 1915, by which Italy agreed to enter the War against the Central Powers in return for this territory after the War.

Allies

Nine states that opposed the Central powers were: Russia, France, Britain, Italy, the United States, Belgium, Serbia, Romania and Greece. Romania and Greece declared war on the Central Powers in 1916 and 1917 respectively but played little part in the war. Most Americans wanted their country to remain neutral and so in the first three years the United States gave only moral support and valuable material aid to Britain and France.

Tsar's Abortive Attempts for Peace

Tsar Nicholas II of Russia suggested to the Powers that they meet together to bring about an era of universal peace. In response, two Peace Conferences were held at The Hague in Holland in 1899 and 1907 but in vain. Russia fought on the side of the Allies.

War in Western or French Front

Germany steamrolled and smashed the resistance of the people of Belgium. On the side of the Allies, the burden of the fighting fell on the French army. Within a month Paris seemed almost doomed.

Battles of Tannenberg and Marne

Meanwhile Russian forces invaded East Prussia. Germany defeated them decisively. In the battle of Tannenberg Russia suffered heavy losses. Yet this caused distraction and helped to relieve the pressure on the western front. The French army made all out efforts to drive away the invading Germans. At the Battle of the Marne (early September 1914), the French succeeded in pushing back the Germans. Paris was thus saved. The battle of Marne is a memorable for trench warfare.

Battle of Verdun

Between February and July 1916, the Germans attacked Verdun, the famous fortress in the French line. In the five-month Battle of Verdun two million men took part and half of them were killed. The British offensive against Germans occurred near the River Somme. In this four-month Battle of Somme Britain lost 20,000 men on the first day. The battle of Verdun, however, decided the fortunes of the War in favour of the Allies.

War in Eastern or Russian front

In the eastern front, Russian troops repeatedly defeated the Austrians. But the Russians were in turn defeated by the Germans. Russia had the worst trained and equipped army and therefore Russian losses were the greatest. In 1917, the Tsarist regime in Russia was overthrown in a revolution. Russia wanted peace and consequently it signed the Treaty of Brest- Litovsk (3 March 1918) with Germany. After this, the position of Germany became strong. It appeared as if the Allies were going to lose. However, USA came to their rescue and played the final decisive role in crushing Germany.

Minor Theatres of War In the Middle East

Turkey also fought on the side of the central powers. Though Turkey met with initial success and the Allies suffered reverses, particularly in Mesopotamia and Gallipoli, ultimately Turkey was defeated. The Turks tried to attack Suez Canal, but were repulsed. Britain attacked Turkey in Iraq, and later in Palestine and Syria. In Arabia, taking advantage of the growing

Arab nationalism a revolt was engineered by a British Agent. Britain attacked Turkey directly and tried to capture Constantinople. But the Turks put up a brave fight.

In the Far East

China also joined the allies. Japan was able to capture the province of Kiauchau given by the Germans to China in the province of Shantung. There was no war in the Far East. Japan made use of the occasion to threaten China into ceding valuable concessions and privileges.

In the Balkans

The Austro-German army in coordination with Bulgaria crushed Serbia. Serbia came under German rule. Rumania watched the course of the War and in August 1916 joined the Allies. Rumania also passed under Austro- German occupation.

Fate of Colonies of Germany in Africa

The German colonies in western and eastern Africa were also attacked by the Allies. As these colonies were quite far from Germany they could not receive any immediate help, and therefore surrendered to the Allies.

Italy falls to Austrian onslaught

Italy formally joined the Allies in the war in May 1916. Italians were fighting with the Austrians and continued to sustain their resistance. But when the Germans came to Austria's help, the Italians collapsed.

Central Powers' Victories

The Central Powers successfully occupied Belgium and a part of France in the north-east, Poland, Serbia and Romania. The epicentre of the struggle was the western front and the seas. As the Allies controlled the sea-routes, they cut off the supply of food and other material reaching the Central Powers. In Germany and Austria women and children suffered from hunger and privation. Germany attacked England by air. Bombs were thrown on London and places where there were major factories. Later aeroplanes were used for targeting civilian population. The Germans introduced poison gas and soon both sides resorted to its use.

Naval Battles and America's Entry into the War

In 1916 a naval battle (Battle of Jutland) had taken place in the North Sea. The British won the battle. Thereafter Germany started their submarine warfare and their cruisers went roaming about, interfering with the shipping of the Allies. One of these was the famous Emden,

which bombarded Madras. As a counter measure to the blockade the Germans proclaimed in January 1917 that they would sink even neutral ships in certain waters. This meant that all ships in British waters, whether owned by countries involved in the War or not, would be targets for German submarines. Lusitania, an American ship, was torpedoed by a German submarine. There was a lot of resentment in the USA and President Wilson declared war against Germany in April 1917. America's entry with its enormous resources made Allied victory a foregone conclusion.

Consequences of the First World War

Destruction and Casualties

The First World War resulted in innumerable destruction of life and property. Nearly 10 million soldiers lost their lives and around 21 million men were wounded in the First World War. There is no statistic available as to how many civilians died due to diseases and because of the aftermath of the war. The cost of devastation was incalculable. The greatest property damage was in Belgium and France. War resulted in the destruction of factories, bridges and railroad tracks. Heavy artillery shells and trenches made land in many regions barren. The scale of destruction was such that the war was called the World War or the Great War from its occurrence until 1939.

Economic Consequences

Another huge impact of the First World War was the devastation it caused on the economies of European nations. The devastation was such that after the war European nations changed from being creditor nations to being debtor nations. European nations levied heavy taxes on their people to compensate the war expenditure. The United States was perhaps least impacted economically from the First World War. The devastation faced by Europe allowed the United States and nations such as Japan to achieve ascendancy in the world market. The United States also let European nations to borrow from it to pay for their reconstruction after the war.

Social consequences

The war brought about a major change in the social scenario as well. Due to the war, the population of Europe was checked temporarily. However, the advance in medicine and technology helped increase the population in Europe. Even more than that, the advances in technology also brought about rising standards of living and better quality of life. Urban area started witnessing growth with peasants settling there. Women chose to work and opted for

more jobs. They filled jobs where men were less. This new found independence of women was a flag for the feminist revolution in the future. The onset of war resulted in the social distinctions among classes deteriorating with society becoming more democratic.

Political Consequences

The four major imperial powers ruled by monarchies—the Germans, Russians, Austro-Hungary and Ottoman Empires—were politically and militarily defeated by the end of the war. Thus, it can be stated that the First War resulted in a collapse of empires and a rise of nations. This collapse of empires and the rise of nations led to the redrawing of the map of Europe. The victory of democratic nations like Britain, France, Belgium, the United States and Italy immediately brought democracy in vogue. After the war, Germany set up the Weimar Republic with a parliamentary constitution to replace the old empire and Austria became a democratic republic. Moreover, the victorious nations became even more powerful after the war. Britain emerged as the most powerful colonial power. France recovered its glory by recovering the province of Alsace and Lorraine. Japan emerged as the powerful nation in the Far East. The United States emerged as the major economic power among the allies despite following the policy of isolationism prior to entering the First World War.

At the same time, the war also destroyed the traditional balance of power in Europe. There was formation of new nations like Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. There was also a rise of dictatorships in Italy, Spain, Portugal and Turkey. In Russia, the war resulted in the Russian Revolution and the formation of Soviet Russia. The turmoil in the newly formed German Weimar Republic eventually led to the rise of Adolf Hitler. These changes paved the way for even greater turmoil that was to occur in the future.

2. Paris Peace Conference Treaty of Paris

The Armistice of 11th November, 1918 ended the First World War. Then a conference was held at Paris to bring a settlement in Europe. The first session of the conference was held on 18th January 1919 at Paris. Seventy delegates representing the countries which brought about the collapse of Germany and her allies assembled in Paris. There were numerous advisers, assistants and clerks. Big Four, Woodrow Wilson of the United States of America, Lloyd George the prime minister of Great Britain, Clemenceau, the Premier of France and Orlando, the Prime Minister of Italy played an important role in the conference.

The conference was inaugurated by Poincare, the President of France and George Clemenceau, the Premier of France was elected its President. The celebrations of the conference were drawn at the end of April 1919.

Aims of the Conference

The Paris Peace Conference was convened to achieve the following aims:

1. To redraw the map of Europe due to the fall of the Hohenzollern / Hapsburg and Ottoman Empires.
2. Remove the obstacles of international tariff.
3. Reduction of national armaments.
4. Imperial adjustment of all colonial claims and the interests and sentiments of the people were to be considered.
5. Evacuation of Russian territory; Russia was to be given full opportunity to decide her future course of action.
6. Evacuation and restoration of Belgium.
7. Evacuation and restoration of French territory.
8. Readjustment of Italian Frontiers along her recognizable lines of nationality.
9. Autonomous development for the people of Austria-Hungary.
10. Evacuation and restoration of Serbia, Montenegro, Rumania and an outlet to the sea for Serbia.
11. Securing of sovereignty for the Turkish portion of Ottoman Empire and freedom of shipping through the straits.
12. Establishment of an independent Poland with access to the sea.
13. The creation of an international organization to guarantee independence and territorial integrity to small and big states of the world.

Woodrow Wilson elaborated his general principles of peace-making in a number of speeches between February and September 1918. His most important addition to the general principles were the absolute justice and mutual adjustment. As regards the creation of an international organization, Woodrow Wilson himself presided over a commission, which drafted the covenant of the League of Nations. The peace settlement is also based upon the principle of self-determination. Special provision was made for the protection of the minorities. They were to be protected in matters of religion, language, and citizenship.

3. Versailles Treaty – Impact

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

Provisions of the Versailles Treaty

Given below are the provisions of the Versailles Treaty:

1. Territorial Provisions

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

- (i) Germany lost Alsace and Lorraine to France, which it had taken from France in 1871. Belgium got back Eupen and Malmedy as well as Moresnet, which it got in partial compensation for the destruction of its forts by Germany.
- (ii) Germany agreed to give Upper Silesia and the southern part of East Prussia to Poland if the people concerned were in favour of joining it. The wishes of the people were to be determined by a plebiscite. When the plebiscite was actually held the decision was in favour of a complete merger with Germany. However, Poland insisted that it must be given those areas, which had Polish majority. After the intervention of France, the League Council partitioned Silesia, leaving more than half of the area and population to Germany, but the industrialized areas of Silesia were given to Poland. Danzing, the main port city of West Prussia was taken away from Germany and was set up as a free city under the administration of the League of Nations, because its population was wholly German.
- (iii) Memel was given to Lithuania in 1924 and in the north Germany lost northern Schleswig to Denmark after a plebiscite.

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

2. Military Provisions

The Treaty of Versailles considerably reduced the military might of Germany. It was compelled to abolish the German general staff and forced to reduce its army to 1 lakh with a small navy and merchant marine, without modern equipments, to be exclusively used only for police administration. The German navy was limited to 6 battleships, 6 light cruisers, 12 destroyers and 12 torpedo boats. As regards the air clauses, the Treaty absolutely forbade naval or military air forces for Germany. The Treaty also imposed restrictions on the manufacture of

arms and ammunition. It was also forbidden to manufacture or purchase tanks, armoured cars, poisonous gases and submarines. The Rhineland was permanently demilitarized and Germany was not allowed to maintain or construct any fortifications either on the left bank of the Rhineland or on the right bank to the west of a line drawn 50 kilometres to the east of the Rhine. This meant German troupes were not allowed or maintained in the area and the existing fortifications had to be destroyed. The harbours of the Islands of Heligoland, Dune and Kiel Canal were also to be demilitarized and all fortifications demolished. It was even prevented from exporting and importing war materials. The military services were made voluntary and for 12 years for soldiers and 25 years for officers. The War Guilt clause fixed the blame for the outbreak of the War solely on Germany and its allies.

3. Economic Provisions and Reparations

The Treaty also aimed at keeping Germany economically weak. The League, therefore, held Germany responsible for the loss and damage caused during the War and asked to pay compensation to the Allied and Associated governments. The provisions of reparations were the final humiliation for the Germans. Though there could be little valid objections to the general principle of reparations, many historians now agree that the actual amount decided by the Reparation Commission was far too high. Germany was to pay reparations for the damage done to the allies and the actual amount was not decided at Versailles. However, after much argument and haggling it was announced later in 1921. The problem of payment of reparation proved complicated as it was very difficult to arrive at an amount which Germany would pay to the Allies. For that a Reparation Commission was set up and the representatives of Great Britain, USA, Italy, France and Japan were to decide the compensation amount. On 28 April 1921, the Commission assessed the debt of Germany at 6,600 million pounds. This amount led the Germans to protest that it was impossible to pay and they soon began to default their annual instalments. The international tension resurfaced when France tried to force the Germans to pay. Eventually, the Allies admitted their mistake and reduced the amount to 2,000 million pounds as per the Young Plan of 1929. But, not before reparations had proved disastrous both economically and politically. This amount was successively scaled down and finally abolished in 1932.

The Treaty also recognized the rights of the Allies to the replacement of all merchant ships and fishing boats lost or damaged in the War (ton for ton and class for class). As per the Reparation Commission, Germany had to deliver large quantities of coal for 10 years to France, Belgium and Italy. It was also to deliver a large number of horses, cattle, sheep, etc., to France

and Belgium. All German properties in the former German colonies and in the Allied countries were to be confiscated and its pre-war trading concessions with the signatories like Morocco, Egypt and China were to be abolished. The Rivers Elbe and Oder of Germany were internationalized with a view to provide Switzerland and Czechoslovakia an access to the sea. The Kiel Canal was internationalized and thrown open for all ships of all nations. The Allies also demanded that Germany should allow free passage to merchant and war vessels of all countries.

4. Legal Provisions

The Allies also demanded that King Kaiser William II, the emperor of Germany should be tried as a war criminal for committing ‘the supreme offence against international morality and the sanctity of treaties’. He was to be tried for these offences by a special tribunal. These provisions however, could not be implemented because the government of Netherlands refused to surrender the German king Kaiser William II, where he had taken shelter. However, as per the legal provisions within 6 months of the implementation of the Treaty Germany was to restore all the trophies, archives, historical souvenirs or works of art carried away by her forces from France during the Franco-German War and the World War. Germany was also to compensate the University of Louvain for the destruction of her manuscripts and documents and hand over two paintings to Belgium which were at that time in Germany. The Treaty of Versailles was one of the most controversial documents signed by the nations in modern times. So, the Germans described it as a dictated peace, a Treaty forced upon by the vanquished. Throughout the Conference the representatives did not consult the Germans even once and their objections were completely overruled. Germany was forced to sign the treaty under threat of another invasion of their country. Lloyd George, who consistently advocated a lenient peace with Germany said, ‘These terms are written in the blood of fallen heroes. We must carry out the edict of Providence and see that the people who inflicted this war shall never be in a position to do so again. The Germans say that they will not sign. Their newspapers say they will not sign. The politicians say the same thing. We say, Gentlemen, you must sign. If you do not do so in Versailles you shall do so in Berlin’. Even historian E.H. Carr in *International Relations between two World Wars*, has said, ‘Nearly every treaty which brings a war to an end, is in one sense a dictated peace, for a defeated power seldom accepts willingly the consequences of its defeat. But in the Treaty of Versailles the element of dictation was more apparent than in any previous peace treaty of modern times’. It was, thus, evident that the element of dictation was very much present in the Treaty of Versailles. But this was not something peculiarly confined

to this Treaty alone. The revengeful attitude of Germany as manifested in the Treaty of Brest Litovsk and the Treaty of Bucharest concluded with Russia and Romania respectively. This further hardened the attitude of the Allies because 'the minds of the German rulers were too clearly revealed by these treaties to permit any illusion'.

Undoubtedly, the peace settlement did not exactly succeed in maintaining peace. The leaders of the Peace Conference wanted Germany to pay heavily so that an event of this magnitude was not repeated. Even Lloyd George, who stood for the lenient treatment of Germany, won the famous Khaki election with the slogan, 'We shall hang Kaiser and make Germany pay to the last penny'.

The element of reciprocity was also missing from the Treaty with regard to disarmament, transportation, colonies, abolition of capitulations, punishment of officers, etc. All these provisions were unilaterally applied to Germany alone and the Allies were completely exempted from them. If disarmament was reasonable for Germany, it was obviously reasonable for the Allies. However, except Great Britain, no other Allied power agreed to disarm. If the principles of reciprocity and natural justice had been followed, the Treaty of Versailles would have been a piece of justice. Without reciprocity, it was a Treaty of force and its terms could be executed only so long as the force continued to be applied to make them execute it.

It has been said by the critics of the Treaty that the seeds of the Second World War lay in the Treaty of Versailles. However, no great diplomatic instrument like the Treaty has been modified, revised and infringed in the same way as the Treaty of Versailles. In 1926, Part 1 of the Treaty was amended to enable Germany to get the membership of the League of Nations. Part V dealing with military, navy and air force was violated by Germany in 1935. Part VII dealing with the War criminals was allowed to go by default. Part VIII, dealing with reparation, was modified by the Reparation Commission and other committees in 1931 before it was given a decent burial by the World Economic Conference. Part II and III dealing with the western, northern, and eastern boundary of Germany were violated by Germany. The other steps which infringed the Treaty of Versailles again and again, including promulgation of new military laws by Germany, conclusion of Naval Treaty with Britain in 1935, occupation of Austria by Germany in 1938, and the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia by Germany in 1939. Thus, the Treaty of Versailles proved ineffective in its purpose due to the fact that the Treaty failed to satisfy neither the victors nor the vanquished. The Treaty failed to establish permanent peace, not because of its inherent faults in the Treaty, but it was mainly due to the subsequent policies pursued by the Allied Powers and Germany.

4. Russian Revolution- Establishment of Socialist State

The biggest outcome of the War, the Russian revolution, was unique in world history. The socio-political and economic conditions prevailing in Russia were brought to a head by the vast losses and sufferings caused by the War. There were really two revolutions in the year 1917, one in March and the other in November. On the abdication of the Tsar the bourgeois government which followed, wanted to continue the war. But the people were against it. So there was a second great uprising under the guidance their leader Lenin, who seized power and established a communist government in Russia.

Causes of the Revolution

Social Causes

In Russia Peter the Great and Catherine II attempted westernisation without changing the social conditions. The Russian peasants were serfs tied to lands owned by wealthy Russians. After Russia's defeat in the Crimean War, some reforms were introduced. In 1861 Tsar Alexander II abolished serfdom and emancipated the serfs. But they were not given enough land to subsist. These peasants became the powder keg for the revolution. The labourers and workers whose number had increased on account of industrialisation were aggrieved as they got very low wages. Role of Revolutionaries The spread of revolutionary ideas among the intelligentsia and their repression by the Tsar's government made the socialistically inclined students to carry their propaganda to the peasantry. Soon, based on the Marxist philosophy, new ideas began to take shape and a Social and Democratic Labour Party was formed.

Autocracy of the Tsar

Tsar Nicholas II of Romanov dynasty had little experience of government. His wife Tsarina Alexandra was a dominant personality and Nicholas was under her strong influence. Determined that Russia should not be left out in the scramble for colonial possessions, Nicholas encouraged Russian expansion in Manchuria. This provoked a war with Japan in 1904. The resulting Russian defeat led to strikes and riots. On 22 January 1905 Father Gapon, a priest, organised a march of men, women and children on the Tsar's Winter Palace in St. Petersburg demanding a representative national assembly and agrarian and industrial reforms. But police and soldiers fired on the procession. Hundreds were killed and many thousands wounded. The events of this day (known as Bloody Sunday) led to riots, strikes and violence. Nicholas was forced to grant a constitution and establish a parliament, the Duma. This was no longer

satisfactory to the left-wing parties that formed a Soviet (council) of worker's delegates in St Petersburg, led by Trotsky.

Opposition to Tsar and Dissolution of Duma

The outbreak of the First World War had temporarily strengthened the monarchy, as Russia allied to France and Britain. As there was rumour of a palace revolution, Nicholas made himself the Commander-in-Chief of the army. At the end of 1916, Rasputin, who had a domineering influence over the Tsar and the Tsarina, was murdered by a member of the Tsar's family. The members of the St. Petersburg Soviet were arrested. Whenever the Duma opposed the Tsar's move, it was dissolved and fresh elections held. Without change of government policy, the fourth Duma ended with the revolution of 1917.

Popular Uprisings

The bread shortages among women textile workers, many with husbands in the army, forced them to go on strike anyway and march through the factory areas of Petrograd, the capital of the Russian Empire. Masses of women workers demanding "Bread for workers" waved their arms towards factory workers and shouted "Come out!" "Stop work!" The city's 400,000 workers joined the movement the next day (24 February).

Abdication of Tsar

The government used the troops to break the strike. But soon mutinies broke out in the barracks. The Tsar ordered a declaration of martial law. But his order was not broadcast in the city, as there was no one to do this job. The Tsar then tried to return to Petrograd. The railway workers stopped his train. The generals at the front and some leaders in Petrograd, frightened by these developments pleaded with the Tsar to abdicate. On 15 March, Nicholas II abdicated.

Provisional Government

There were two parallel bodies to take on government functions. One was of the bourgeois politicians of the old state Duma, comprising propertied classes. On the other there were workers' delegates drawn together in a workers' council, or Soviet. Those in the Duma were able to form a provincial government with the consent of the Soviets. The Soviet was dominated by Mensheviks and the minority Bolsheviks were timid and undecided. The situation changed with the arrival of Lenin.

Failure of Provisional Government

Lenin was in Switzerland when the revolution broke out. Lenin wanted continued revolution. His slogan of 'All power to the Soviets' soon won over the workers' leaders. Devastated by war time shortages, the people were attracted by the slogan of 'Bread, Peace and Land.' But the Provisional government made two grave mistakes. First, it postponed a decision on the demand for the redistribution of land and the other was government decided to continue with the war. Frustrated peasant soldiers deserted their posts and joined those who had resorted to land grabbing. This intensified the rising in Petrograd led by Bolsheviks. The government banned Pravda and arrested all Bolsheviks. Trotsky was also arrested.