Inter War Period to World War II

The Russian Revolution

The Russian Revolution took place in 1917, during the final phase of World War I. It removed Russia from the war and brought about the transformation of the Russian Empire into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), replacing Russia’s traditional monarchy with the world’s first Communist state. The revolution happened in stages through two separate coups, one in February and one in October. The new government, led by Vladimir Lenin, could solidify its power only after three years of civil war, which ended in 1920.

Although the events of the Russian Revolution happened abruptly, the causes may be traced back nearly a century. The Russian Revolution of 1917 centers around two primary events: the February Revolution and the October Revolution.

Conditions for Revolution

First socialist revolution was made in ‘backward’ Russia, a society that was capitalist with strong remnants of feudal social and economic power intact, a working class still linked with land, and a peasantry that primarily aspired to individual land ownership. Essentially, it was the increasing contradictions of late and growing capitalism that created the social premises for the revolutionary outbreaks in Russia.

In Western Europe the growth of capitalism had led to the evolution of liberal constitutionalism and parliamentary democracies. The Russian autocracy oppressed all the other nationalities of the Empire, and stood firmly against all democratic movements in Europe, earning for itself the label ‘Policeman of Europe’. The nature of the Russia state, therefore, became increasingly incompatible with the new demands that the new and changing social and economic forces engendered.

Serfdom (condition of debt bondage and indentured servitude) was abolished in 1861. Even as peasant agriculture became commercialized and there emerged a ‘kulak’ rich peasant strata, the fundamental conflict in the countryside on the urgent
questions of land, rents, wages and rights over commons remained that between the landed aristocracy, which still held the major portion of the land, and the peasantry as a whole.

Expropriation of landed estates and land for the peasants was a demand that neither the tsarist autocracy nor any other political group, except the Bolshevik was prepared to endorse. At the same time, timing and nature of Russian industrialization also created scope for a workers movement that was both very militant and political.

Freedom from national oppression in the Tsarist Empire coincided with the victory of the socialist revolution. Apart from the alienation felt by the peoples of the Baltic region, Central Asia, Transcaucasia and other areas as a result of political and cultural discrimination, the economic backwardness that Tsarist economic policies entailed for these regions ensured that they remain predominantly agricultural with a strong stake in the land question. The Bolsheviks supported land for the peasant as well as the right to secession and a voluntary union. The peasantry in these areas, therefore, played a crucial role in the victory of the socialist alternative to the tsarist autocracy, completely bypassing all liberal solutions to nationalist aspirations.

**Stages in Russian Revolution**

In Stages Lenin was the most important leader of the Bolshevik party. The Bolsheviks did not simply transfer Marxism to Russia. They found viable answers to their specific revolutionary problematic in Russia within the framework of Marxism. The 'hegemony of the working class' was necessary in the first bourgeois-democratic stage of the revolutionary, strategy was the 'alliance of the working class and the peasantry' in the context of a two stage revolution and the leading role of the working class, while transforming their strategy to bring them about.

The Russian Revolution may be said to have gone through three distinct stage and took almost twelve years to complete.

The first stage led to the creation of a parliament, called the *Duma*. 
The second stage, known as the February revolution in 1917, led to the establishment of a Provisional Government at the centre though the rule of the tsar still prevailed.

Finally, the Revolution completed its third and final stage in October 1917 when the rule of the Tsar was overthrown and a peoples’ republic was established. The first major assault on the autocracy occurred in 1905, sparked off by firing on a peaceful demonstration of workers on 9 January 1905. This day came to be known as Bloody Sunday.

The workers and peasants began to demand a 'democratic republic'. They also created the first soviets, grass-root, elected political organizations of workers, peasants and soldiers, which Lenin later called the 'embryos of revolutionary power' and which eventually formed the basis of the post revolution state, and from which the socialist state derived its name USSR. The February Revolution of 1917 began with a demonstration of women workers over shortage of bread in Petrograd. Later, it spread to other cities and to the countryside. Strikes by all sections of society, peasant uprisings, and revolutionary action by the soldiers sealed the fate of the autocracy. The Russian autocracy was overthrown and replaced by a provisional Government dominated by the liberal bourgeoisie. The Revolution achieved political freedom for the first time. Fundamental and civil rights were created.

New post-February revolution regime could not continue for long. The peasants were disappointed that they did not get any land, and the entire working people and soldiers were disappointed that the war still continued. The Bolsheviks easily emerged as closest to the popular mood with their slogans of:

“Land for the peasant”, “immediate end to war”, “Workers' control over industries”, “Right of nationalities to self determination”, and above all “Bread”.

Early Changes

The early legislation aimed at destroying the legal and economic bases of capitalism and in laying the foundation for socialism. One of earliest measures was the abolition of private resources in industry, and the establishment of workers’ control. A second major intervention was in agriculture. By the Land Decree of November 1917 landlordism was abolished, and the entire land nationalized and given over to peasants for hereditary use under individual production. The land communities, the village gatherings and peasant soviets acted as autonomous organs of social and political transformation in the countryside. Within the space of a few years millions of acres of land changed hands and was divided among the peasants.

On 28 December 1917 all private banks were nationalized, and in February 1918 all shareholders in banks expropriated and all foreign debts repudiated. Within a few months of the revolution the government published all the secret treaties of the old government, and proclaimed that all treaties and agreements between Soviet Russia and other countries will be open and public. By Decree on Peace, peace was offered without any annexations, conquests or indemnities. Govt. withdrew claims over areas; took a public stand against colonialism, and in support of all national liberation struggles.

War Communism

Then, this entire process of revolutionary change was brought to a crisis by mid-1918. The revolutionary forces were confronted by Civil war in the form of armed hostility of the forces of the former landed aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, which merged with an equally determined armed intervention by the capitalist countries to dislodge the new socialist regime. The Bolsheviks responded in June 1918 with a series of economic and political measures that have subsequently been designated as War Communism. Loss of economically rich resource areas during war, and the emphasis on production for war effort and machinery to broaden the production base, led to decline in production of consumer goods. The Soviet Government responded with forced requisition of grain surplus from the peasants in order to feed the urban poor and soldiers, and state control of all enterprises in order to revive
industry. Nationalization of industrial enterprises was accelerated for maximum mobilization of resources.

By a March 1918 decision the railways were taken away from 'workers' control and place under semi-military command. While the failure on the economic front led to peasant wars and urban disaffection, the growth of black market encouraged an ethos inimical to socialist ideals. The spirit of voluntarism came under severe strain even as the 'world socialist revolution' in Europe failed to materialize. Recruitment for the Red Army became a problem. Workers opposition to the principle of state control and the uprising of Kronstadt sailors in February 1921 was the final straw after the wide spread peasant rebellions. Lenin was forced to announce that change of policy had become necessary.

NEP

The New Economic Policy (NEP) was a response to a political and economic crisis, though at its core were economic changes that marked a change in the strategy of transition to socialism. Grain requisition was replaced by a fixed tax. In 1924 the tax in kind was replaced by a money tax, followed by legalization of private trade. On 17 May 1921 the decree nationalizing small scale industry was revoked and smaller units were actually de-nationalized, some of them being restored to their former owners. Just as War Communism had enabled the Bolsheviks to tide over the immediate difficulties and to consolidate the Revolution, the NEP (New Economic Policy) changes made possible economic recovery in the ensuing years and also won the confidence of the majority of peasants. However, potential for conflict again between town and country, the peasant and working class remained in a long term sense. Reason was that private sector was predominant in agriculture throughout NEP, and a lot of industry was still a state monopoly. NEP changes could not resolve the problems and social contradictions that derived not merely from the war situation or specific polices but from the larger social contradictions that arise when the revolutionary working class is called upon to build socialism in the midst of a vast peasant majority. The early socialist state heroically experimented with guaranteeing
full employment, free and equal education for all, free healthcare, equal access to
culture and cultural advance, and equality for women.

**Internationalism**

For the Bolsheviks the Russian revolution was always inseparable from the world socialist revolution. This, together with the cardinal Marxist principle of the unity of the interests of working classes all over the world, and their socialist vision of an oppression-free world, was the basis of their internationalism. This internationalism was given shape in the form of the Socialist international. When the social-democratic parties of Western Europe refused to oppose their own ruling classes in the interest of the working classes in Europe, as the Bolsheviks saw it, the Bolsheviks broke away from them, changed their name to communist party, and accordingly formed a new Communist International. Initially, for the Bolshevik their revolution had to spread elsewhere, as, backward Russia did not have the productive capacity to sustain advanced socialism.

However, it was Russia that gave the first Socialist State. The Communist International was envisaged as the vanguard of internationalism of revolution. As soon as the Bolsheviks proclaimed in November 1917 the right to secession as part of self determination, the Allied powers made this issue a part of their armed intervention. The Comintern, at this stage modified their right to be that of the workers and peasants in the different areas. It developed the idea of a United Front between national liberation movements and the Communist Parties in Europe and Soviet Russia. The strategy of the communists in these areas was strongly influenced by the Comintern, where the national-liberation struggles were seen as not only against the imperialist powers and the feudal landlords in their own country, but also against the bourgeoisie in their own country. The agrarian revolution was seen as the basis of the national liberation struggles with the workers playing the leading role.

In the 1920s as the Bolshevik’s struggle with their peasantry seemed muted with the NEP changes, a similar accommodation occurred in the Comintern policy towards
the co-relation of social forces in the national liberation struggles. The Comintern recognized and supported the 'positive' role of the bourgeoisie in these countries against Imperialism. This policy continued well into the 1920s and Communist Parties were formed in many Asian countries. The links with China were particularly strong, and early strategies of the communist groups in China, India, Turkey and Afghanistan were strongly influenced by Comintern policies. Communist members of these countries were also represented in Comintern.

Planning for Industrialization

Soviet economic development from 1926 to 1941 constitutes the first global attempt at comprehensive state planning and is therefore important in the history of world industrialization. Marxists like the Soviet Bolsheviks had always believed in 'planning' of the economy. Marx had argued that a socialist society would be free of the arbitrary control of market forces, or the self-interested control of the capitalist class to maximize profit. Instead socialist society would control resources directly and plan production to meet the real needs of the people.

As the dominant Soviet leader Stalin became more and more impatient with the rates of growth within the market economy of the NEP, careful planning gave way to the demands of polities. Instead of a planned economy running according to carefully formulated estimates of economically practicable targets, there appeared a 'command' economy, running according to the political orders and priorities of the government. Stalin nursed certain obsessions that were detrimental to planning as a process of balanced and realistic economic growth. Demand to build gigantic industrial complexes on a scale beyond the available resources to construct or operate.

This obsession was accompanied by an unrelenting insistence on haste, captured in the slogan, "tempo decide the whole thing". The First Plan had mixed results. Consumer goods, agriculture and, temporarily, military strength were sacrificed to a rapid growth in heavy industry. In the decade after 1928, Soviet industry developed at a rate and on a scale entirely without precedent in world economic history. Industrial production in 1937 reached 446 per cent of the 1928 level according to
official Soviet figures, and 249 per cent according to the most conservative Western estimate; the corresponding annual per cent rates of growth were 18 and 10.5.

While the state had succeeded in extending and consolidating control over the greater part of industry by nationalization, the predominance of private peasant farms meant that production and marketing decisions in agriculture remained beyond central planning and therefore state control. Lenin had argued that the government would have to gradually persuade peasants to give up their private farms and join together in collective farms. This would have to be done by providing peasants with modern equipment, credit and agronomic support. During the 1920s agronomists and land-consolidation experts occasionally succeeded in persuading the households involved in the consolidation of landholdings divided into strips to set themselves up as collective farms. But such collective farms tended to be small and few.

Peasant farming methods and technology under NEP had remained extremely backward. The small size and fragmentation of farms prevented modern farming methods and the use of better implements. One third of land was not sown at any given time. Although grain production had recovered to pre-war levels by the mid-1920s, much less grain was marketed in the 1920s than before the First World War. This was partly a consequence of the increase in rural population. The problem for the state was to attract a greater share of the marketed harvest to its own collection agencies rather than to private traders.

Despite a good harvest in the autumn of 1927, peasant marketing and state procurement of grain fell far below expectation to a level that was insufficient to feed the towns and the army, and export grain in order to pay for the import of machinery. If the state had chosen to raise its procurement prices for grain, to match private market prices, funds available for industrial expansion would have suffered. The rapid rise in industrial investment during 1927-28 was a major factor leading to the grain crisis from October 1927. Consumer goods became even more scarce (the "goods famine") as investment shifted to heavy industry; and, they cost more to buy as state procurement prices for grain remained low. In answer to this goods famine,
the peasant went on what the regime called a "production strike" by refusing to market at state-determined prices the quotas of grain set by the state. Instead, the peasants chose either to sell to private traders at higher prices or to meet their tax obligations by selling higher priced industrial crops or livestock products. Soviet leaders faced two alternatives. They could continue with the New Economic Policy balanced industrialization, gradual collectivization, and adjust agricultural delivery prices to induce the peasants to market more grain; this was the policy advocated by leaders like Bukharin. Or they could institute a radical new policy of accelerated collectivization and forced industrialization. Stalin opted for the second alternative.

The peasants met forced collectivization with large-scale passive resistance and sporadic armed resistance. Rather than hand over their animals, to the Kolkhoz, many peasants slaughtered them, the attack on the peasant economy was accompanied by a fierce campaign against the Orthodox Church, the centre of traditional peasant culture. In March 1930, in an article called "Dizzy with Success", Stalin blamed local officials for excesses he had authorized. He called for a temporary halt the collectivization drive resumed but with clearer guidelines this time. Tens of thousands of communists and urban workers were urgently mobilized to work in the countryside as Kolkhoz organizers and Chairmen. Villagers were steadily persuaded or coerced by discriminatory taxation to return to the collectives. By 1937, 86 per cent of sown area had been brought within the Kolkhozes and collective farms accounted for 89 per cent of the grain harvest and 87 per cent of grain procurements by the state. Collectivization, sometimes called the "Second Revolution", changed the peasant way of life more radically than did the Bolshevik Revolution.

The fact that it was not carried out by peasants voluntarily, but by a largely urban and proletarian Party, and by force, meant that it was authentically a 'revolution from above'. The lynchpin of the difference between peasant life before and after collectivization was that the collective farmer had no control over the grain and cash crops that were produced on the collectivized land. His second need was not only to defeat the opposition but to attack and root out the source of all potential opposition and criticism in the democratic traditions of party leadership. Third need, was to
move from a single-party to a single-ruler state. "Trial of the Sixteen" (August 1936), "Trial of the Seventeen" (January 1937), the military chiefs, were arrested, accused of treasonable collaboration with Germany and Japan, and shot. It was known as "The Trial of the Twenty-one" (March 1938). This was only the tip of the iceberg. The Great Purge decimated between 35 and 50 per cent of the entire officer corps of the Soviet armed forces. Most estimates agree that about five per cent of the population was imprisoned during the period, making a total of some eight million persons, of whom perhaps ten per cent were killed. Three crucial aspects of the Russian economy and polity between the period 1928 and 1941: industrialization through planning, collectivization of agriculture and the purges of the 1930s.

Planned industrialization meant setting targets for industrial production for a period of five years and systematically going about achieving the targets. Collectivization of agriculture stood for a transformation of plots of agricultural land under individual possession into large collectives which could be exposed to modernized farming though state initiative. Large scale opposition to Stalin's policies both within and outside the party coupled with a desire to convert Russia from a single party rule to single ruler state led to the purges of the 1930s. In these purges a number of trials took place in which old Bolsheviks, members of Lenin's politburo, a number of army officers and many state officials were executed. Virtually anyone who did not agree with Stalin's policies was put to death. All dissent was suppressed. Whereas the victims of collectivization were invariably members of the rural population, the purges of the 1930s targeted mainly the urban population, the military and the political elites and the educated sections of the population.
Security Threats

The League of Nations was Wilson's great internationalist project for the new era. The League was to provide the foundations for order in the post-war scenario, to remake the international state system which had been successively undermined by conflicts among European powers. The league's main project was 'collective security'. But in reality, different countries in Europe perceived their security needs differently. For instance, Britain perceived Soviet Russia to be the main enemy, France saw the main threat from the neighbouring Germany. French moved towards a policy of bilateralism and concluded a series of independent pacts with states surrounding Germany. Locarno treaties of 1925 were born out of a previous German request that France and Germany conclude a pledge of not resorting to war between each other, something which would also involve Britain and Belgium. By 1925 the British agreed to guarantee such a treaty, which would also include the Belgium-German frontier. The sum total of the Locarno treaties was as follows: Britain would guarantee the frontier of Belgium against future (German) aggression while France would do the same in the east-protecting Poland and Czechoslovakia. Germany would join the League of Nations. The Locarno treaties were followed up by the Kellog-Briand pact of 1928 also known as the Pact of Paris. The pact was universal in scope and the signatories renounced the use was as an instrument of international relations. Ultimately Sixty Five States signed the treaty.

Economic Crisis

To a great degree, the 'recovery' in Europe in the years after World War I was built almost entirely on US loans. The process also ensured a constant supply of liquidity back to US lenders. To take an example, the US lent money to Germany in the 1920s for her recovery. In turn Germany passed on money to the French and the British as part of reparation payments(for ww1). The French and the British for their part re-routed money back to the US as part of repayment for war loans. The world economy was flush with money supply, most of it US-dominated. The atmosphere was ripe for speculation.
The crisis actually began over the rapid drop in agricultural prices in North America. With European recovery the world agricultural surplus began to rise, and the North American producers (who had vastly increased production during the war period) were convulsed by rapid drop in prices. Bankruptcies began in US agriculture and saw a rapid drop in expenditure. It was only a matter of time before the stock market would be affected. The actual events began to unfold in October 1929. On 24th and 29th of October 1929, thirteen and sixteen and a half million shares were sold. In that month US investors lost 40 billion dollars, a huge sum at that time. The meltdown had begun. The crash was followed by the worldwide fall in agricultural prices. Given the fairly advanced integration of the world economy for agricultural products, millions of primary producers were affected.

The great economic depression type crisis had earlier been predicted by writers like Karl Marx who had spoken about the cyclical nature of capitalism: how its chaotic and unplanned character would lead to periodic crises of over-productions. In fact, the tendency towards over-production in capitalism is blamed by many writers for its cyclic nature. However none of the previous downturns of the world economy had such serious consequences as that beginning in 1929. The downturn of 1871 was significant in that it undermined British hegemony in the world economy, but in no way did world-wide depression occur. The only country that was relatively unaffected by the crisis was the Soviet Union.

**FASCISM**

Fascism emerged in Europe as a synthesis of organic nationalism and anti-Marxist socialism. Organic nationalism means a belief in the harmonious collectivity of Nations superseding all other forms of human identification. Its organic nationalism accounts for its deep-rooted hostility to internationalism and organizations and movements based on internationalism such as communism, freemasonry, the League of Nations, finance capital and the multi-national Jewish community.

Fascism emerged as a radical movement based on the rejection of nations of liberalism, democracy and Marxism. The Fascist synthesis symbolized the rejection
of a political culture inherited from the Enlightenment and its ideas such as rationalist materialism, individualism and pluralist autonomy. The other major cultural variables of fascism were: activism, vitality and social- Darwinism.

Sorel's philosophy of action was based on intuition, energy and elan. Its activism was used to mobilize the masses. Social Darwinism believed that people in society compete for survival and only superior groups and races succeed. The war did provide sociological and psychological conditions for the crystallization of Fascism. It revealed the capacity of nationalism in the mobilization of masses and economic resources. It further demonstrated the importance of unity of command, of authority, of moral mobilization and of propaganda in the service of the modern state. Its perfect expression being the quasi-sacred figure of the leaders like the Duce (as in Italy) or the Fuehrer (as in Germany). A party militia was often used to reinforce the sense of nationalism and constant struggle as well as to wipe out opposition. The exaltation of youth and the specific tendency towards an authoritarian, charismatic, personal style of command (whether elective or non-elective) were other features related to this militarization of politics.

The ideas of corporatism (as a community of people, of producers free from class strife) emerged in reaction to individualism, social atomization and new centralizing states. Its two distinct forms were societal corporatism (based on autonomy to corporations) and state corporatism. At the same time it also made use of anti-Semitism and an embryonic militant group of young activists. Another trend toward the crystallization of the fascist right was symbolized by an instrumental, modernizing radical right which combined domestic modernization with militant nationalism. It is important to understand the ideological range that is covered by the rightwing regimes. All of them are not similar, and can cover a broad spectrum starting from conservative regimes to extreme fascist ones.

**Fascism in Italy**

Fascism in Italy was created by the convergence of certain existing trends. The split in the radical syndicates Confederation of Trade Unions took place in 1914 over the issue of Italian participation in the war. The syndicates believed in the 'self-
emancipation' of the 'producers', which could be achieved through 'regulation at factory level', and not through 'seizure of state power'. The state would be replaced at an appropriate time by worker's syndicates or associations, which would act as the instruments of self-government of the producers.

The Syndicate wing which moved towards fascism embraced extreme nationalism, and nations were described by it in class terms as proletarian or plutocratic. The futurists who rejected traditional norms and existing institutions and exalted violence, and were fascinated by speed, power, motors and machines, or all the modern technological possibilities, were another major ideological factor. Mussolini's socialistic views, and ideas on leadership, mass mobilization and national revolution contributed yet another strand.

The growth of fascist squads led by ex-military personnel and supported by the local police and army especially in northern and central Italy the Po Valley and Tuscany was directly linked to the actual or perceived threat of the left. The King appointed Mussolini as the Prime Minister on 29th October 1922, who temporarily observed all the constitutional norms after the assumption of power. In February 1923, a fusion of Fascist Party and Nationalist Association of Italy (ANI) took place. This fusion with a conservative, elitist, monarchist right-wing was essential to gain broader support among army officers, academics, civil servants and businessmen. The traditional right groups co-Operated with fascists in passing the Acerbo Bill in 1923 which proposed that the party receiving a quarter of votes in an election, should be automatically given two-thirds of seats in the parliament. Using force and fraud, Fascists swept the 1924 election.

Mussolini went ahead with his institutionalization of dictatorship. In October 1926, all opposition parties were banned. The press was shackled, and the Public Safety Law (1926) made the security of state take precedence over personal liberty. The Syndical Laws (1926) brought labour under the control of state, in the interest of production. The law confirmed the fascist unions in their monopoly of negotiations, set up tribunals for compulsory arbitration and banned strikes and go-slows. The 'Corporate State' was formally created in 1934 with 22 new combined corporations of
employers and employees, Mussolini also tried to appease the church. Large grants were made for the repair of war damaged churches. In 1923, religious education was made compulsory in secondary schools.

A military type Militia developed out of the fascist squads. It was trained to use all kinds of weapons and centered around a core of professional soldiers. Its cadres were indoctrinated and used against opponents. The semi-military propaganda-type organization included Balilla, young vanguards and the young fascists. However, unlike the Nazi German state, Fascism in Italy never achieved a day-to-day institutional control. The state intervention in the economic life of the nation was marginal in the early part or regime. The Direct state investment during the Depression was only an emergency measure. The Fascist State also introduced certain welfare schemes for workers in 1930s. e.g. family allowances were given in 1934.

The Italian state also lacked any policy of racial anti-Semitism, at least, up to 1937. In November 1938, however, under the influence of Nazis, racial laws were passed which banned marriage with Jews, denied jobs to them in public services, debarred them from joining the Fascist Party and from owning more than 50 hectares of land.

Dictatorship in Spain
The first phase of authoritarian government in Spain was established during 1923-30 by General Miguel Primo de Rivera. It emerged as a kind of military reaction to the socialist pressure for democratic reforms and above all the attempt of Spanish Parliament to fix 'responsibilities' for disastrous military campaign in Morocco. Initially the overthrow of the Spanish Cortes or parliament was intended to be a temporary step. But a dictatorship was institutionalized gradually. The demise of Rivera's dictatorship inaugurated a new phase of mass democracy and led to the radicalization of Spanish politics along both left and right lines. CEDA or the Confederation of Spanish Right groups was the main conservative authoritarian party during 1933-36. Its youth movement (JAP) underwent a certain vertigo of fascization but remained ambivalent. The failure of militant nationalistic ideology in Spain stemmed partially from the influence of intense regional nationalism (or sub-
nationalism) of Catalans and Basques, directed against the unified Spanish nation-state. Moreover, Spanish Civil war (1936-39) produced a polarized revolutionary-counter revolutionary conflict in which leadership passed completely in the hands of the insurgent Nationalist Army which created the Franco regime.

**Fascism in Germany**

The regime that took over in Germany in 1933 represented the most extreme form of fascism. Crisis of parliamentary democracy in Germany in the 1920s created conditions for the rise of fascism. In the realm of ideology, there were strong precursors to the doctrines of the Nazi era. Racialism and imperialism were powerful themes in the aspirations of the Wilhelmina German elite, for whom the phrase *Weltpolitik* signified their search for great-power status and a world mission. In Vienna, the Christian Socialist mayor combined social and administrative reform with virulent scapegoating of the Jews for all social ills. The repeated attempts by the communist to bring about a soviet-like seizure of power sharpened tensions, spread fear among the middle classes and conservative elements, and contributed to an atmosphere of extreme polarization.

**German Politics & Failure of Weimar Republic**

The Weimar Republic underwent a crisis in 1922-23. The collapse of the monetary system resulted in hyperinflation, with one pound exchanging for 15 million marks in September 1923. In January 1923 the French army occupied the Ruhr in response of Germany's defaulting on reparations payments. There was high unemployment, far too great a dependence on foreign investment and stagnation in German agriculture. Political instability was endemic, with no single party majorities, as many as 15 ministries between 1919 and 1928. The Weimar Republic refers to the political system that came into place in Germany after World War I and continued till the Nazi takeover in 1933. The name comes from the town of Weimar in Germany were the Republic's constitution was promulgated. The threat from revolutionary socialism, which became the Communist Party, was to be a constant feature in the Weimar period till the rise of the Nazis. Stresemann was the most important political leader in the country. He vigorously opposed the French occupation of Germany's Ruhr valley. He got the Dawes plan of 1924 for the economic reconstruction of Germany.
ratified in the Reichstag of Parliament. He gained German admission to the League of Nations in 1926, and also encouraged and helped stimulate German economic recovery by rationalizing German industry through a series of cartels, and an aggressive export drive.

Despite all efforts, Weimar experiment collapsed under the weight of the economic crisis after 1929. The Wall Street Crash of October 1929 had a terrible impact on Germany, with the withdrawal of American loans, loss of export markets, and collapse of industrial production. Unemployment rose to 5.6 million in 1932. A series of political intrigues in January 1933 led to an agreement to a conservative coalition to be led by Hitler as Chancellor.

There were to be only three Nazis in a twelve member government, and the conservatives believed that they could use Hitler to suppress the left. In a series of ruthless political move Hitler proved them disastrously wrong, as he consolidated his hold on power, crushed all real and potential opposition, and created a highly centralized state.

The Enabling Act (Law for Removing the Distress of People and Reich) was passed on 23 March 1933. This became the legal basis for Hitler's dictatorship. Legislative power was transferred to the executive, politically undesirable and 'non-Aryan' civil servants dismissed. After the Reichstag fire of 27 February 1933 a state of emergency was proclaimed the following day. On 2 August 1934 Hindenburg died and Hitler assumed the office of President. Henceforth all armed forces personnel were required to swear and oath to the Fuehrer and the Chancellor. Anton Drexler in Munich founded the German Workers Party in 1919.

In 1920-21 Hitler has emerged as the leader of the party, which soon after became the German National Socialist Worker's Party (NSDAP). On 14 July 1934 the NSDAP was declared the only political party in Germany, with attempts at forming other parties punishable under criminal law. After the Enabling Act was passed, major changes were introduced which rapidly altered the juridical basis of the state. Thus, the legal lights of the Third Reich proudly proclaimed that "Hitler is the Law".
and produced theories transforming the principle of the legal state into that of the leader state, or Fuhrerstaat. The extra-legal notion of the Leader, to whom the civil service and the Army swore "unconditional obedience" by "sacred oath", assumed crucial importance in administrative functioning and signified a decisive break with constitutionalism.

The fascist bureaucracy in Germany formally submitted to the "leader-principle", that is, a single charismatic leader controlled the entire movement, the party, and the state. Ascendency of Nazism The new regime's attitude to women and the family was an admixture of ultra-conservative patriarchal sentiment and the racialist biological characteristic of Nazi ideology. The slogan "Kinder, Kirche, Kuche" (kids, church, kitchen), became the favourite mode of referring to the social role of women. The production of "racially pure" babies became the Nazi's obsession, and various financial and ideological incentives were offered to females to give birth to more children. These incentives ranged from marriage loans and child subsidies to parents with large families towards such as the Honour Cross of the German Mother in bronze, silver and gold, for mothers of four, six, and eight children. The Nazis were highly antipathetic to liberal and cosmopolitan culture. Chambers whose decisions had the validity of law were set up for every sphere of cultural life, including the fine arts, music, theatre, literature, press, radio and films. The Press was completely controlled by standing directives and oral instructions issued. All education from primary school curricula to university instruction was Nazified, Textbooks were re-written and Mein Kamf was elevated to the status of unfailling pedagogical guiding star. Teachers were required to join the Nazi Teachers League and swear allegiance to Hitler. Jews were forbidden to teach. "Racial Science" was introduced in curricula, which required teaching the racial theories of the Aryan-German master race and the Jews as the breeders of all evil. Hitler was nominally a Catholic. However, his stance toward the churches of various denominations was hostile, and at best utilitarian.

Nazi party program spoke of the need for a "positive Christianity", Within the Protestant tradition too, there was conflict, but Nazism fed upon the anti-Semitic prejudices of the Lutherans. (Martin Luther was ferociously anti-Jewish and a staunch believer in absolute obedience to authority.) On the whole however, the
churches remained loyal to the regime and fulfilled its needs by ordering all pastors to swear allegiance to the Fuehrer. During the war the 30 point program for the national Reich Church of Germany outlined Nazi church policy, which included the elimination of Christian teaching, the cessation of the publication of the Bible and the placement on altars of nothing except a copy of Mein Kampf and a sword. Genocide

The most oppressive aspect of Hitler's regime was a systematic persecution of the Jews.

The Nuremberg Laws of 15 September 1935 deprived Jew of German citizenship, confining them to "subject" status. Marital or extra-marital relations between Jews and 'Aryans' were forbidden. Three more laws over the next few years outcast them completely. The first concentration camps came up in 1933 under the SA. After the Roehm purge of June 1934, the camps were turned over to the SS, with guard duty being assigned to the Death's Head units. Thus did the names such as Dachau, Auschwitz, and Buchenwald acquire notoriety. The actual process of extermination was begun with the so called euthanasia practised on 70,000 mentally infirm Germans between 1938 and 1941. In late 1941 this method was applied to concentration camp victims unfit to work- camouflaged gas vans were employed to gas Jews. Mass extermination in gas chambers began in Belzec, in Lublin district of Poland in March 1942. Jewish slave labours were also systematically machine-gunned. The largest camp was Auschwitz-Birkenau, where between 2 to 3 million Jews, along with gypsies, Poles, and Soviet prisoner of war were murdered.

Conclusion

Fascism has been interpreted in multiple ways. According to the Marxist position, Fascism is a violent, dictatorial agent of finance capital. It has been billed as a unique expression of Middle Class Radicalism or product of a cultural and moral breakdown. It was the result of Extreme Neurotic or pathological impulses. Some theorists have tried to understand Fascism as product of the rise of amorphous masses with the breakdown of traditional identities based on kinship, church, guild and residence, etc. and a form of Bonapartism or an autonomous authoritarian government independent of specific class-domination.
World War II also known as the Second World War, was a global war. It is generally considered to have lasted from 1939 to 1945, although some conflicts in Asia that are commonly viewed as becoming part of the world war had begun earlier than 1939.

It involved the vast majority of the world's nations including all of the great powers eventually forming two opposing military alliances: the Allies and the Axis. It was the most widespread war in history, with more than 100 million people, from more than 30 different countries. In a state of "total war", the major participants threw their entire economic, industrial, and scientific capabilities behind the war effort, erasing the distinction between civilian and military resources. Marked by mass deaths of civilians, including the Holocaust and the first use of nuclear weapons in combat, it resulted in an estimated 50 million to 85 million fatalities. It made World War II the deadliest conflict in human history.

GROUND OF PRE-WAR
The peace treaties of 1919, coupled with the Russian Revolution of 1917 and a fundamentally weak League of Nations, did not resolve the basic problems of security of Europe. Deep seated ambitions, fears, insecurities, and mistrust there were bound to clash politically and militarily in the absence of habits, institutions, and mechanisms to facilitate the peaceful resolution of conflict. Nazi Germany in general and Adolf Hitler in particular was primarily responsible for the war and deliberately prepared for it, whether or not he intended the exact timing of its outbreak or expected its ultimate scope. Britain and France were equally responsible for the war because their leaders had appeased Hitler's ambitious demands instead of checking them, had neglected to build an anti-fascist alliance, and had encouraged an eastward expansion of Germany so as to draw the Soviet Union into war.

Germany was penalized by the 1919 peace treaties but not destroyed; it remained potentially the strongest power in Europe. Germany harboured many grievances that
some people in Britain and the US considered legitimate and was the leading proponent of ‘revisionism’ even while it strove in the 1920s toward acceptability in world councils and democracy at home under the Weimar Constitution. That constitution could not withstand the strain of coping with economic depression. The Nazi Party had eliminated all opposition, especially of the Communists and the Socialists. Hitler led a ‘resurgence’ of Germany on an explicit ideology of ‘Aryan’ racial purity, virtue and superiority, reunification by ‘self determination’ of the German race, lebensraum or ‘living space’ for them, and cancellation of the 1919 peace treaties.

The US was at fault for not participating in the League, for being isolationist and ambivalent about Germany in the 1920s and 1930s, and then for encouraging Britain, France and Poland to resist without clearly warning Hitler. Poland was at fault for not forming a common front with the Soviet Union and then for not submitting ‘peacefully’ to German demands. Mussolini was blamed for support and encouragement of Hitler, before joining the Western allies in 1943. The Soviet Union was responsible for propagating the idea of an ‘inevitable’ conflict between communism and capitalism/fascism, but most of all for entering into a non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany in August 1939 and so giving it a ‘green light’ for attack on Poland while simultaneously annexing several territories itself. This temporary alliance was reversed when Hitler ordered an invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 and his armies advanced towards Moscow and other cities before being halted at Stalingrad in the winter of 1942-3.

In East Asia and the Pacific militarist Japan took on an aggressive role with all its Neighbors to build on Economic Co-Prosperity Zone, antagonizing the US, another Pacific Ocean power that tried to deny Japan access to oil and other raw materials. When Japan destroyed part of the US fleet anchored at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii on 6 December 1941, and Hitler declared war on the US on 11 December 1941, the US entered a new global war against both Japan and Germany, which ended only with their ‘unconditional surrender’ in 1945.
Causes of World War 2

1. UNFAIR TREATIES
The treaties (of Versailles, Riga, Lausanne, Locarno, etc.) simply, redrew the map of Europe. Four great empires, the Russian Romanov, the Hohenzollern, the Habsburg, and the Ottoman faced defeat and collapsed. Germany became a republic, suffering from the stigma of defeat and burdened by allied reparations. The victorious western democracies gained territories. France, for instance, gained Alsace-Lorraine which was with Germany since 1871. Discontent over the severity of the Allied peace terms and squabbles over the newly drawn frontiers contained seeds of future conflicts.

2. FAILURE OF LEAGUE
The idea of a world organization for maintaining peace in the globe was proposed by Woodrow Wilson, the American President. But it did not generate much hype as the treaty of Versailles, the cornerstone of this organization the League of Nations was not ratified even by America. Moreover, the defeated powers were also not invited to become members. Germany was allowed to join the League only in 1926. League sponsored Disarmament Conference in Geneva (1932-34) failed to reach any agreement. Cracks began to appear in global peace in the early 1930s. The League lacked the executive powers to impose peaceful solutions.

3. TOWARDS ANCIENT GLORY
Japanese Militarism, Italian Fascism and German Nazism became increasingly strident in their demands. In 1931, Japanese forces seized Manchuria, a region of China rich in natural resources, and made in a puppet state called Manchukuo. Italian forces invaded Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and conquered it by May 1936. In Germany, Hitler started a program of military build-up-in violation of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. In March 1936, he notified to the western powers the existence of a German Air Force (Luftwaffe). In the same year, Germany and Italy formed an alliance, called the Rome-Berlin Axis, which was joined in 1940 by Japan.

4. ARMS RACE
Germany abrogated the disarmament clauses of the Treaty in December 1933 and proceeded to build an army, air force and navy machine oriented to the future that virtually overran Europe in 1940-41. Germany recovered the Saar region by
plebiscite in January 1935, overturned the free city status of Danzig between 1934 and 1936, and re-militarized the Rhineland in March 1936. Months of negotiations and increasing tension culminated in a four power conference of Britain, France, Germany and Italy in Munich on 29 September 1938 renouncing war and permitting German military occupation of most of Czechoslovakia.

In March 1938, German army moved into Austria to achieve union (Anschluss) with Germany. In 1938, Hitler sought the control of Sudetenland, a region of Western Czechoslovakia dominated by German speaking people. Britain wished to preserve peace at all costs, by meeting Hitler’s demands and following a policy of appeasement.

5. POLICY OF APPEASEMENT

In September 1938, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and French Premier Daladier agreed to turn over the Sudetenland to Germany and forced Czechoslovakia to accept the agreement (which became known as the Munich Agreement). The failure of appeasement soon became clear. Hitler violated the Munich Agreement in March 1939 and seized the rest of Czechoslovakia. Similar treatment was meted out to Poland later on. In Spain in 1936, a ‘popular front’ of republicans, socialists, anarchists and syndicates assumed power. The army leaders and right-wing parties, socialists, anarchists and syndicates assumed power. The army leaders and right-wing parties feared the program of this front and rebelled under General Franco. The situation thus became ripe for other world military powers to show their powers. The divisions were quite apparent. The Fascist and Nazi regimes provided military support to General Franco while the Soviet Union helped the Republicans. The Republican forces also received "volunteers" from many countries though liberal democracies desisted from a direct national participation at this time.

Division Of World In Ideological Camps

In the Second World War, division of the world into two armed camps followed more or less same pattern as for the First World War. Only a few states such as Italy,
Japan, Turkey, and Romania switched their sides. Germany, Italy, and Japan (known as the Axis Powers) were joined by Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Albania, Finland, and Thailand. The Allied armed camp mainly consisted of Britain, France, Soviet Union, Belgium, Denmark, Turkey, and the United States. But more important was the ideological camp formations.

After the World War 1, liberal democracies re-established their control over the Central European Empires, helped by reformist, compromising socialist leaders in many cases. However, using ultra-nationalist slogans, induced by economic problems, Fascist and right-wing dictatorships soon gave a stimulus to establish a powerful right-wing armed front in countries like Italy, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Spain, and Japan. These dictatorships arose especially in countries that lacked traditions of democratic institutions. The central doctrine of these variegated dictatorships was the supremacy of state as opposed to the liberal democratic ideal.

Benito Mussolini established a Fascist regime in Italy in October 1921 when dissatisfaction with parliamentary democracy was high, and the peace settlement was unpopular for having brought only limited gains. Italy’s territorial ambitions in south eastern Europe were opposed by France, an uncompromising upholder of the Treaty settlement, and Italy’s bid to augment its north African colonies by occupying Ethiopia in 1935 antagonized Britain as well as created a crisis in the League of Nations, which was unwilling to enforce meaningful sanctions against Italy under Article 16. Mussolini had come to admire the more efficient Adolf Hitler and signed a pact with him to create a ‘Berlin-Rome Axis’ in 1936. Their first collaboration was to assist militarily General Francisco Franco in overthrowing a newly formed and fragile Republic in Spain governed by a left-oriented coalition called the Popular Front.

The spectrum of politics had created three major hands in the 19th century—left, centre (liberal democratic) and right (counter-revolutionary). The War put the squeeze on ideological space (hegemonic space) available within a state. It tended to homogenize citizens, within territorially organized states, at least in their attitudes towards war and national defence and in demonizing enemy states. The left spectrum of this divide was mainly inspired by socialist ideology. Similarly liberal
democratic parties represented the centrist politics of promoting industrial capitalism in their respective countries.

Britain, France, America, the main allies in both wars, had well-established liberal democratic traditions. Germany, Austria, Italy, Japan, Hungary lacked such democratic traditions. Although Japan and Italy helped the Allies in the First World War, both left them during interwar period itself and with their dictatorial, authoritarian regimes found their natural allies (the Central Powers) during World War II.

The Russian autocracy under the Romanovs supported western democracies owing to economic compulsions as 25% of investments from abroad came from France (1914) and Russian banking, railway development and the Southern Russian Industrial Complex all depended on French capital. During World War II, ideological compulsions again compelled Communist Soviet Union to ally itself with western liberal democracies against the danger of extreme right-wing dictatorships despite inter-war recriminations.

The Ottoman Empire supported the Central Powers during World War I; however, a democratically reformed Turkey joined the Allies in the Second World War. German Constitution of 1871 entrusted formal sovereignty to a Federal Council (Bundesrat) whose members were nominated by the executives of member-states. It also established a Reichstag or Parliament of 400 deputies elected by a direct, secret, adult male suffrage. However, there was complete lack of parliamentary responsibility in this system as the Imperial Chancellor, appointed by the emperor, and enjoying enormous powers, was not accountable to the Reichstag. The German empire, therefore, emerged as a hybrid of Prussian military hegemony and imperial federation, combining modern franchise with ancient monarchical authority. The Emperor retained control over the three pillars of absolutism in the dominant Prussian state, the army, the bureaucracy and the foreign affairs. Similarly, the Habsburg monarchy of Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire were also dominated by medieval social institutions and military methods. During the Second World War, liberal democracies of Britain, France and USA, etc.
And Communist Soviet Union allied together to wipe out right-wing dictatorships. The outcome in 1945 left the two contending armed camps (Western democratic camp and Communist camp), antithetical to each other, reviling each other, but both with the same end in view, that of, global domination.

**Japanese Aspirations**

Japan’s modernization drive since the late 19th century led it to graft what it considered the best of America, Britain, and Germany on to its own homogenous and disciplined society, to alliance with Britain in 1902, a victory against Russia in 1904, the annexation of Korea in 1910, and a self-image of being the leader of Asia. Though it received the Shantung province of China (formerly controlled by Germany) in 1919, Japan’s other ‘21 demands’ were not met at Versailles. Japanese officials felt that they did not receive equal treatment in the Naval Disarmament Conferences of 1922 and 1927, or in the Council of the League of Nations. Japan’s assertiveness was externally expressed in expanding its commercial and industrial reach into Western markets, the Manchurian province of northern China, through Southeast Asia, and to the western Pacific basin where it rivalled the US. Internally, Japan’s civilian and parliamentary government came under increasing strain, especially as economic depression deepened, and soon passed under the control of a militaristic clique of army and naval officers. Japan announced its withdrawal from the League in 1933 and joined an Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany and Italy in November 1937.

**Armed Camps**

The nature of modern warfare was the result of two simultaneous processes. First was the idea of 'nation in arm' or conscription in the French Revolution. This gave men equality in battle which was denied to them in actual life. This democratization of war transformed wars into mass-wars or people's war in which civilians and civil-life itself became the proper and sometimes the main target of military strategy. The other was the growth of industrial economy which provided the resources, the organizational techniques and methods of motivation needed to fight mass-wars, thus remodelling them as total wars.
The 19th and 20th centuries witnessed the transformation of war from specialized activity of a professional military group. First into the total mobilization of industrial resources to produce weapons, then into total involvement of entire industrial societies in the process of hurling concentrated mechanized forces against military or civilian targets anywhere on the globe, and finally into a scientific contest to develop weapons of mass destruction. The armament race among major powers continued, fuelled by the profit motives of the private firms such as Krupp in Germany, Vickers Armstrong in Britain, Schneider-Cruesot in France, Skoda in Austria and Putiloff in Russia, collectively known as 'the merchants of death'.

Massive Mobilization Of Resources

The character of industrial mobilization changed markedly during the World War II. Instead of the mass production of a few key items, as in the First World War, the second global conflict drew on virtually every phase of industry. The new engines of war, tanks, air crafts, radar etc., were highly complex and delicate. It required an elaborate system of mass production of several million items according to schedules and priorities which went on shifting with new technical developments and the changing emphasis of war strategy. This could be planned only by states at a high level of economic development. When the war came, all major combatants channelled their production capacities into the manufacture of goods for sustenance of war.

During the World War II, European war economies also adopted the American system of mass-production. Standardized interchangeable parts were produced in bulk and the end product was put together on the assembly line. In five war years, USA economy produced 300,000 military aircraft and 86,700 tanks. Germany produced 44,857 tanks and assault guns in the same period and also produced 111,767 aircraft during 1934-44. It became necessary to conscript the entire economy and civilian life to achieve these military targets. A high level of armed mobilization, which hovered around 20% for most powers during the Second World War, and which lasted for a few years, produced a kind of social revolution in the
employment of women outside the household, temporarily in the World War I and permanently in the World War II. Only Germany avoided this integration of women in the labour market for ideological reasons, as the Nazi State did not consider women worthy of employment outside their houses. Another important aspect of war was that it was waged as a zero-sum game, i.e., as a war which could only be totally won or totally lost. Unlike the earlier wars which were fought for specific and limited objectives, world wars were waged for unlimited ends.

In the Second World War, this found expression in the phrase "unconditional surrender". The USA removed all restrictions on Allied armament contracts, including those of immediate payment through the lend-lease agreements. The new military establishments took on many of the features of great industrial enterprises; Modern business method, office organization, system of record keeping. The use of duplicating, sorting and communication equipment and all such paraphernalia for carrying on large industrial operations and emergence of a kind of corporate leadership in the management of military strategy gave military institutions many characteristics of a large business corporation. The army officers became "the managers of violence".

In most of the belligerent countries, there was suspension of market mechanism in favour of controls and direction designed to ensure the restructuring of national economies according to the needs and priorities of war production. War was no longer a matter predominantly of purely financial costs-but assumed the form of mobilization of all economic resources. Technological Innovations After World War I, fully automatic weapons in the rifle weight class or the Assault Rifles were developed which combined the burst-fire capability of the sub-machine-gun with the range and accuracy of the infantry rifle. The better known were German MP-44, and after World War II, the Soviet Kalashnikov and AK-47. In World War II, anti-aircraft guns became more improved and lethal. The role of field and naval artillery declined-the tank partly relieving its field role and the tactical bomber aircraft its bombardment role. Light and mobile guns were more in demand during World War II. Some important anti-aircraft guns used during World War II were-the Bofors 40 mm gun of US and UK, Soviet M-1939, 37 mm gun and German 88 mm guns. Arrival of Tanks was countered by the
development of armour-piercing ammunition. In the World War II, heavier machine guns were used. The lighter variety of machine guns such as German MG-34/42, the Soviet Degtyarev, British Bren and US BAR fired 350-600 rounds per minute. The sub machine guns such as German MP-38/40 series, popularly known as 'burp' guns, Soviet PPD and PPSh, American Thompson and the British Sten were also used extensively. Submarines were used on a larger scale in the World War II in the Atlantic by Germany and in the Pacific by the US. US navy's Agronaut during Inter-war period and Gato and Balao submarines during World War II played decisive role in the naval warfare.

German Zeppelins were early military aircraft used during World War I. Their use did not prove very effective. Later, military air crafts were improved. The bombers were also improved, with Boeing Aircraft Company producing B-9 bombers in 1931-the progenitor of all modern combat air crafts. During the Second World War, chemical weapons were stockpiled but were not integrated into military planning. Military ineffectiveness and fear of retaliation prevented their use. During the World War II, Germany developed V1 and V2 missiles (1944-45) nicknamed in German as 'Vergeltungswaffen' (or Vengeance weapons) which became the precursors of modern ballistic missiles.

**Nuclear Weapons**

US entered the World War II in December 1941 and started the *Manhattan Project* to make atomic bomb. Colonel Leslie Groves became the head of the Manhattan Engineer District. In October 1942, after reorganization, J. Robert Oppenheimer became the director of Project Y (group that actually designed the bomb). A plutonium weapon-Trinity was tested in July 1945 in South Central New Mexico. On 6 August 1945 at 8.15 am, local time, a US B-29 bomber named Enola Gay flew over Hiroshima. The untested U-235 bomb nicknamed Little Boy was air-burst 1900 feet above the city to maximize destruction. The effects were devastating-about two-thirds of city was completely destroyed and 140,000 persons died by the end of the year (out of a population of 350,000). A second weapon, a duplicate of plutonium-239 implosion assembly which was tested as Trinity, and nicknamed Fatman was planned to be dropped at Kokura on 11 August 1945, but schedule was moved up
two days to avoid bad weather, to 9 August, the US bomber, unable to sight Kokura, dropped it on the secondary target of Nagasaki.

Results of War

World War 2 involved mass destruction of physical resources, productive capacities and human resources of both the victors and vanquished. The estimated deaths in the World War II were between 3-5 times the estimated figures for the World War I. It included about 5.1 million Jews. About 20% of total population of the USSR, Poland and Yugoslavia was wiped out in the second war. The loss of productive capacities was also enormous. About 20% pre-war capital assets of USSR 13% pre-war assets in Germany, 8% in Italy, 7% in France and 3% in Britain were destroyed during the World War II. The night of 9 November 1938, the night of broke glass (Kristallnacht in German) inaugurated the Holocaust (or the mass murder of about 5.1 million European Jews by the Nazis). On the night of 9 November 1938, a number of Jews were killed and about 20-30,000 were sent to concentration camps. In the World War II, the number of stateless, the uprooted people in Europe were 40.5 million, excluding non-German forced labourers in Germany and Germans who fled before the advancing Soviet armies. About 13 million Germans were expelled from the parts of Germany annexed by Poland and the USSR, from Czechoslovakia and parts of South-Eastern Europe. Other major by product of war, partition of India and the Korean War produced 15 million and 5 million displaced persons. The Establishment of Israel-another war-effect, uprooted about 1.3 million Palestinians.

World: Post World War 2

In the decisive phase of the war the forces of liberal democracy and socialism got together to defeat and eliminate the third force, fascism. But sooner, the world was split between a Communist bloc, an anti-Communist bloc, and a small number of neutral states. In February 1945, Churchill (British Prime Minister), Roosevelt (American President) and Stalin, leader of Soviet Union met at Yalta in the Crimea. It was easy for the Allies to agree in their objective of defeating Germany and Japan. But differences of interests, opinion and ideas surfaced when the question of future opened up. Britain and America disliked communism and feared its spread in the devastated countries of Europe. The display of Russian strength during the war also
alarmed them. The allies had agreed to free elections in the East European Countries liberated by the Red Army such as Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Albania. But Stalin imposed communist governments of these countries. Eastern Poland was exchanged with German Silesia by Stalin, thus moving the Russian frontier further west. Britain intervened in Greece and toppled a Communist government there. Germany was initially divided into four zones. Berlin, the capital city under Russian controlled zone was also similarly divided. In 1948, three western zones introduced a new currency, without consulting the eastern zone, resulting in rail and road traffic blockade by Soviet Union for eight month during which the British and Americans airlifted all supplies to Berlin. The Soviet on the one side and US, Britain and France on other side, opposed each other in every sphere. The Eastern European countries under Soviet hegemony refused to accept American aid under the Marshall Plan, for reconstruction of their economies. The Soviet Union made the atomic bomb in 1949 and the situation of hostility further intensified which was called the Cold War. Peace remained elusive in this open ideological war.

Certain non-European forces were of great significance within European from World War 2-end to until the end of the 1980s. These were, for example, the preponderance of American influence in European affairs, the dominance of the dollar in the global financial system, and the sustained hostility between the two militarized politico-economic blocs that emerged after the war. The West European powers, especially the United Kingdom, had been financially depleted by the war and been displaced from their great power eminence; they now opted, with varying degrees of reluctance or enthusiasm, for a subordinate relationship with capital-surplus USA.

In Yugoslavia, the situation was complicated by the presence of two distinct pressure groups, the communist National Liberation Front led by Josip Broz Tito on the one hand, and on the other, the nationalist and royalist Chetniks under Draza Mihailovich. Yugoslavia was exceptional for the communists having seized power without the assistance of the Red Army; it was therefore able to join the Soviet Bloc and leave it
subsequently of its own volition. Poland had been bifurcated during the war and occupied by both Germany and the Soviet Union: The nationalist Home Army worked in co-operation with the exiled government in London. But it was decimated by the Germans after the failure of the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. In Soviet occupied Poland, the communist-led Polish Committee of National Liberation managed to seize the initiative with the help of the advancing Soviet Red army. Given the destruction of the home Army, it was able to dominate the Provisional Government of National Unity that was formed by the merger of the two rival provisional governments based in London and Soviet-held Poland. However, not all of Europe followed this pattern. Unlike so many other cases, the resistance movements in Denmark, the Netherlands, and Norway were relatively unified. They posed little difficulty for post-War national political revival.

Of the major European countries outside the Soviet bloc, Spain, Portugal, and Greece witnessed prolonged dictatorships: it was not until the 1970s that electoral democracy was restored. Stable multi-party coalition arrangements emerged the most significant and perhaps the most peculiar of such supra-national projects was the making of the two Germanies. "Race for Berlin" led to the partition of Germany into four zones, one under each occupying power. The initial Franco-US agenda, overriding British objections, proposed to de-industrialize Germany. But later, US shifted perspective from the relatively isolationist "America First" stance to the pursuit of an unambiguously interventionist one described as the "leadership of the Free World." From this now flowed the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.

The Truman Doctrine announced its support for "free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure"; and the Marshall Plan, known officially as the European Recovery Programme, set out to revive and reconstruct Europe, including West Germany. The Marshall plan was set within the framework of the new monetary and trading system based on the supremacy of the US dollar and the dismantling of trade barriers. The latter were envisaged by the Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank and International Monetary Fund or IMF) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The French, British, and American zones were merged in 1949 to create the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany). However, sovereignty was granted to the Federal Republic only in
1955 after its defences were secured by a limited re-militarization and its induction into NATO. The zone of Soviet occupation, or East Germany, went through the same process of being restructured to ensure integration with the Soviet power structure. The new state was established in 1949; Berlin, the capital of undivided Germany, having been likewise divided, continued to remain the focus of hostilities, from the Blockade of 1948 to the building of the wall in 1961.

**Economic Recovery Continues**

The Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) was established in 1949 as a transcontinental military body, and the European Coal and Steel Community appeared in 1951 with the specific economic concerns. The European Economic Community of 1957 and the European Community of 1957 had larger objectives that prompted apprehensions of loss of national sovereignty, notably in Britain. In response, Britain initiated in 1959 the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

The first phase of economic recovery, from 1945 to 1947, was effected though bilaterally negotiated US loans and grants and the food aid disbursed through the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA). These sufficed to avert the general collapse of the economy that industrial dislocation and poor harvest threatened; they were adequate even to raise industrial output to pre-war levels. During the next phase of recovery, 1948-1951, European countries willing to participate in the US-sponsored recovery program received 13 billion dollars.

This was supplemented by a 1 billion dollar loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank). The largest beneficiaries of this program were Britain, France, Italy, and West Germany. It established an international body of recipient nations, the organization for European Economic Co-operation, to which each nation submitted a national plan every four years. These aid-receiving nations were required, under the "counterpart" clause, to make available a fund of domestic currency equal to the aid received and to be spent in ways approved by the US. They had to agree to use the aid to finance food imports only from the US whether or not cheaper alternative sources were available. They had to also employ the service of US shipping and insurance for 50%
of aid financed purchases, besides also ensuring preferential treatment to American oil interests. It led on to a long economic boom that lasted until the mid-1970s. Although the deflationary policies created some employment, they also led to the economic boom. As a result the period after the 1970s witnessed a near full employment. It yielded a "new capitalism" of near full employment, high productivity, high wages, and extensive social welfare. All these combined to blunt class antagonism and to generate consensual politics.

However, the results were uneven across West Europe. Less developed countries like Ireland, Spain, and Portugal were less affected by the quantitative and qualitative transformations achieved by the more advanced economies. However, the long boom came to an end in 1973 with the first oil shock, when oil producing countries unilaterally and dramatically raised the prices of oil. European economies suffered inflationary pressures, output decelerated, and unemployment rose. They immediately led to restrictive policies within the parameters of the existing system of economic management, and more gradually, to a change of economic perspective. From the late 1970s, in country after country, the social democratic consensus broke down. New political program proposed to restrict social welfare to the minimum necessary. They repudiated government intervention and demand management. All these led to the privatization of nationalized industries, extensive deregulation, and the adoption of monetarist and supply side policies. The idea of the "social democratic consensus" itself is valid only in post-war terms. It was based on a substantial and pragmatic dilution of the pre-war program of social democracy to accommodate fundamental tenets of conservatism (the sanctity of private property) and of liberalism (the limited state). Social Democracy thus conceded the possibility of the gradualist reform of capitalism. This consensus allowed stable coalitions of right-centre and left-centre groupings: occasionally, in the immediate aftermath of bitter electoral conflict, even "grand coalitions" of the left and the right were possible. Except for Britain in West Europe, the predominant tendency was towards the formation of coalition governments even where the electoral system was not based on proportional representation.
Economic Recovery in Soviet Block

In the Soviet bloc, reconstruction was hindered by the relatively lower capacity of the leading power, the Soviet Union. External capital was in short supply, except on terms that were unacceptable to the Soviet system. Capital for the industrialization program therefore had to be internally generated. In the newly Soviet countries, nationalization permitted rapid expansion in heavy industrial capacity.

Radical agrarian programs of farm collectivization and nationalization on the Soviet model soon plunged the agricultural sector into turmoil and led to food shortages. East Europe was thus preoccupied with the problem of adjusting to a new system of production and stagnation in the very sectors whose boom was the basis of West European prosperity. The plan-driven economies of the eastern bloc, with the exception of the USSR, began with a very low industrial base. Since investment priorities were largely determined by the state, national plans focused excessively on developing heavy industry. The resulting imbalance led to chronic shortages of consumer goods. In the initial stages, trade and economic relations were confined to the region, that is, the eastern bloc. However, the shortage of capital and of agricultural products, especially wheat, led to a parallel dependence on western countries. Poland and Romania borrowed extensively from the West in the 1970s to finance their industrialization programs; By the early 1970s, the USSR was compelled to import grain from the USA. Imports of food grain and light industrial from the hard currency areas (West), without corresponding exports resulted in a combined balance of payments deficit of 10 billion dollars by 1975. These were financed by borrowings from western banks. Imports were cut back and the deficit was eliminated; but, by 1982, East bloc debts stood at 81 billion dollars and its debt service ratio stood at 100 percent, that is it was borrowing money solely in order to pay back debts. Soviet export earnings deteriorated with the collapse of world oil prices in the mid 1980s called infamously as gulf crisis which accompanied the downfall of Soviet Union.