



**GS FOUNDATION
BATCH FOR CSE 2024**

World History - 05

**(Russian Revolution + Rise of
Totalitarianism + WW II + The
Cold War)**

Russian Revolution (1917)

- Industrialisation: Russia
- Causes of the revolution
- Early Policies
- Civil War & War Communism
- New Economic Policy

Industrialisation: Russia

Obstacles for Russian industrialisation

- Russia was blessed with large reserves of natural resources. But **poor connectivity and excessive cold** made them virtually inaccessible.
- **Feudalism** was prevalent and the **middle class was absent**.
- There was a **dearth of private capital** for investment.
- The labour market was restricted by **Serfdom**.

Bid for industrialisation in the 18th C.

- **Peter 'the Great' initiated** the process of industrialisation in Russia in the 18th century.
- But his attempt **failed** in the absence of structural infrastructure.
- Also industrialisation based on **slave labour** had little chance of success.

Industrialisation in Russia in 19th C

- In earnest, Russian industrialisation started after the **abolition of serfdom in 1861** by Czar Alexander II. His finance minister Sergei Witte encouraged industrialisation based on the **Gerschenkron model**.
 - According to this model, late entrants to industrialisation should follow their own path.
 - In countries where some essential ingredients of industrialisation are missing, the **state should lead from the front**.
- So in Russian industrialisation the state tried to compensate for the dearth of private capital by playing the role of an **investor**. For this purpose it adopted two strategies.
 - Firstly, it **taxed** the peasants of Russia heavily.
 - Secondly, it **borrowed** heavily from external sources.

Features of Russian Industrialisation:

1. Emphasis on **basic and heavy industries** such as iron and steel, cement and railways leading to **shortage of consumer goods**.
2. **Strict state control** prevented the birth of an independent middle class.
 - Therefore, **democratic reforms did not take place**.
3. **State led industrialisation** through heavy taxation and borrowing resulted in **poor efficiency and low productivity**.
 - Thus the state lacked resources for social sector spending.

- Therefore, **poverty and inequality** was extremely high.
- 4. **Unbalanced growth** due to the concentration of most industries in specific regions.
 - Since the working class was confined to a few cities, it led to **growing class consciousness**.

Thus it is not hard to see how the seeds of the Bolshevik Revolution lay in the specific features of Russian Industrialisation.

Causes of the Revolution

- With the abolition of serfdom in 1861, a large labour force was created, which could be accommodated into Russia's emerging industries.
- The working and living **conditions of Russian workers were extremely poor**.
 - As a result, Russia became a **hotbed for Communist activity**.
 - In 1898, the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party was created.
- Russia's defeat to Japan in the **Russo-Japanese War (1904-05)** was a huge blow to the prestige of the Czarist regime.
 - It also led to **economic difficulties** and the prices of essential goods skyrocketed.
 - Food shortages resulted in bread riots and atrocities by the royal troops led to the **First Russian Revolution of 1905**.
- Although the revolution was crushed, **Czar Nicholas II initiated some reforms** and a Duma (representative assembly) was established.
 - However, the **underlying issues of Russian workers and peasants remained unresolved**.
- The Russian Social Democratic Workers Party became increasingly popular and in **1912**, it split into two groups, the **Mensheviks** and the **Bolsheviks**.
 - The former was led by Karensky and drew its support from the Russian middle class.
 - The latter was headed by Lenin and was popular among workers and peasants.
- The **First World War** brought untold misery to Russians.
 - Over 6 lakh Russian soldiers had died and more than thrice that number were wounded or maimed.
 - Most of these soldiers came from poor families and people started questioning the rationale behind the war.
 - They wanted Russia to withdraw from the war.
- The war also led to a **serious financial crisis** due to food shortages.
 - The prices of essential items had risen by 4 to 5 times. This led to daily protests.
- The disastrous Russian campaign also earned **heavy criticism for the Czar** who was personally leading the Russian war effort.
- Peasants and workers were mobilised by socialists through **local Soviets** by the Bolsheviks.
 - They had regular meetings and discussed local issues.

- Newspapers, pamphlets, posters, street plays etc. also played an important role in creating awareness and class consciousness among the working class.
- **Lenin** who was in exile in Switzerland **gained popularity** through his writings.
 - Workers saw him as a liberator. He was also a gifted orator and organiser.
- In **February 1917**, the Mensheviks with the help of some military officers succeeded in **overthrowing the 300 year old Czarist regime**.
 - The Czar and his family were arrested and a **Menshevik government** headed by **Karensky** came to power.
- They brought some important **changes**:
 - A. End of monarchy and establishment of a **republic**
 - B. **Freedom** of the press, thought, speech and expression
 - C. **Right** to life, liberty and property
 - D. **Equality** among all citizens: The clergy and nobility lost their powers and privileges.
- However the **Bolsheviks were not satisfied** with these reforms and branded them as **Bourgeois reforms**.
- Further, the Mensheviks were also **unable to bring an end to the war**.
- **Lenin returned** from exile and mobilised workers, peasants and red soldiers around the following agendas:
 - 1. Industries should be under the control of workers.
 - 2. Land should be under the control of peasants.
 - 3. Non-Russians living in Russian territory should be given citizenship.
 - 4. Russia should withdraw from the First World War.
- In **October 1917**, the Bolsheviks attacked Moscow, overthrew Karensky's government and established **Bolshevik rule**.

Early Policies

- Banks, financial institutions, railways, roads, canals etc. were **nationalised**.
- Several **reforms were initiated for workers**.
 - Minimum wages were fixed, working hours were regulated and the right to work became a fundamental right.
 - This was a first in modern world history.
- **Land** was taken away from landlords and churches to be **redistributed**.
 - Cooperative farming was introduced.
- **Russia withdrew from WWI** and made peace with Germany.
 - This came at a heavy price and Russia had to part with several Western territories.
- **Non-Russians** living in Central Asia were given full **citizenship** with equal rights.

Russian Civil War and War Communism

- However, Russia had to undergo a bloody **Civil War (1918–21)**.
 - The communists i.e. '**Reds**' had to fight the reactionaries i.e. '**Whites**', supported by big landlords, old royalists and western capitalists, especially the US, Britain and France.
 - The Western powers were afraid of the success of the Marxist ideology in Russia and had joined hands with the reactionaries to contain its growth.
- Lenin had to rely upon '**War Communism**' to defeat the whites.
- War communism was the **economic and political system** that existed in Soviet Russia during the Russian Civil War, from 1918 to 1921.
 - This policy was adopted by the Bolsheviks with the goal of **keeping towns and the Red Army stocked with weapons and with food**.
 - The system had to be used because the ongoing war disrupted normal economic mechanisms and relations.
- The **worsening food crisis** became the reason for the introduction of war communism.
 - By January 1918 there were severe food shortages in Petrograd and Moscow and some other cities.
 - Lenin was convinced that the better off peasants (**kulaks**) were hoarding huge quantities of grain in protest against low payments.
 - Lenin's new secret police, the **Cheka**, was given the job of dealing with grain hoarders and speculators.
 - However, its atrocities **aggravated the distress**.
- **War communism included the following policies:**
 1. Nationalisation of all industries with strict centralised management
 2. State control of foreign trade
 3. Strict discipline for workers, with strikes disallowed
 4. Obligatory labour duty on non-working classes
 5. Requisition of agricultural surpluses (in excess of an absolute minimum) from peasants for centralised distribution
 6. Rationing of food and most commodities, with centralised distribution
 7. Private enterprise became illegal
 8. Military-style control of railways
- Because the Bolshevik government implemented all these measures in a time of civil war, they were **far less coherent and coordinated in practice than they might appear on paper**.
 - Large areas of Russia remained outside the Bolsheviks' control, and poor communication meant that even those regions loyal to the Bolshevik government often had to act on their own, lacking any orders or central coordination from Moscow.

Impact of War Communism:

Military

- War communism was **largely successful** at its primary objective of aiding the Red Army in halting the advance of the White Army and reclaiming most of the territory.

Socio-Economic

- In the cities and the surrounding countryside, the population experienced **extreme hardship**.
- **Peasants refused to cooperate** in producing food, leading to severe food shortages.
- **Factory production also declined** sharply.
 - The **Rouble collapsed** due to inflation and **barter** increasingly replaced money as a medium of exchange.
 - 90% of all wages were paid with goods rather than money.
- A **black market** emerged despite the threat of martial law against profiteering.
- This **further intensified the urban food crisis**.
 - Workers began migrating from the cities to the countryside, where the chances to feed oneself were higher.
 - Between 1918 and 1920, Petrograd lost 72% of its population, whilst Moscow lost 53%.
- However, food requisitioning, combined with the effects of seven years of war and a severe drought, contributed to a **massive famine** that caused millions of deaths.
- There were a series of workers' **strikes** and peasants' **rebellions** all over the country.
 - The Cheka reported 118 separate peasant uprisings in February 1921 alone.
- The turning point was the **mutiny at the Kronstadt Naval Base** in March 1921.
 - A government claiming to represent the people now found itself on the verge of being overthrown by that same working class.

New Economic Policy-1921

- From early 1921 Lenin faced the formidable task of **rebuilding** an economy shattered by the First World War and then by civil war.
- In March 1921, the Kronstadt mutiny seems to have convinced Lenin that a **new approach was needed to win back the faltering support** of the masses.
- The **co-existence of private and public sectors** was the central principle of the NEP.
 - Small industries and trade in their products were also restored to private ownership, though heavy industry such as coal, iron and steel, together with power, transport and banking, remained under state control.
 - Lenin also found that often the old managers had to be brought back, along with capitalist incentives such as bonuses.
 - Foreign investment was encouraged to help develop and modernise Russian industry.
- The NEP had a **new agricultural policy**.

- The state allowed private landholdings because the idea of collectivised farming had met with much opposition.
- Peasants were now allowed to keep surplus produce after payment of a tax representing a certain proportion of the surplus.
- This, plus the reintroduction of private trade, revived incentive, and food production increased.
- **NEP labour reforms linked labour to productivity**
 - Incentives were given for cost reductions and greater efficiency.
 - Labour unions became independent civic organisations.
- **NEP reforms also opened up government positions to the most qualified workers.**
 - The NEP gave opportunities for the government to use engineers, specialists, and intelligentsia for accounting, equipment purchasing, efficiency procedures, railway construction, and industrial administration.

Rise of Fascism in Italy

Causes

- **Italy had won WWI but lost the peace in Paris.**
 - Italian demands and expectations were neglected at the Paris peace conference.
 - This was seen by the Italians as a weakness of their democratically elected government.
- **The war had destroyed the Italian economy.**
 - Both industry and agriculture were ruined and **unemployment** was extremely high.
 - Ex-soldiers and the youth were roaming the streets aimlessly, leading to **social unrest and law and order problems**.
- **The inability of the Italian government** to improve this situation eroded its credibility even further.
 - The people were looking for a saviour and Benito **Mussolini capitalised** this opportunity.
 - He organised the out of work soldiers, youth and peasants into the **Fascist party**.
 - Bands of Fascists started roaming the streets armed with batons.
 - They started terrorising ordinary citizens who they suspected of supporting the government.
 - The **government was not able to contain the situation** because many government officials sympathised with the fascists.
- Once Mussolini was convinced that all opposition had been frightened into submission, he **marched into Rome in 1922** and forced the king to invite him to form the government.

Domestic policies of Mussolini

- Within 2–3 years of assuming power Mussolini established a **dictatorship**.
 - The **Chamber of Deputies** (the Parliament) was reduced to the status of a **rubber stamp** and all political parties except the Fascist Party were banned.
- **Opposition leaders were arrested**, especially the socialists. All public meetings were banned and freedom of the press was curtailed.
- He initiated a series of measures to **revive the Italian economy**:
 - Agriculture was expanded by **bringing wasteland under cultivation**.
 - **Irrigation** facilities were developed and **cash crops and horticulture** were encouraged.
 - **Infrastructure** was revitalised with new roads, railways, dams, canals, ports and a renewed focus on the iron and steel and chemical industries.
 - This helped Italy industrialise rapidly.
- **Some critical industries were owned by the state, however most capital and consumer goods industries were privately owned**. These private enterprises were directed and guided by the state.
 - **Banks and financial institutions** were strengthened to provide soft loans for setting up industries.
 - Exports were encouraged and imports were discouraged through **protectionism**.
 - Italy also entered several **trade agreements** in Asia and Europe to sell her manufactured goods.
 - Special focus was given to the **shipping industry**.
 - The **prices of essential commodities were regulated**. This helped control inflation and restore the value of the Lira.

Foreign policy of Mussolini

- It was based on the following principles:
 1. To dismantle the Treaty of Versailles
 2. To promote trade and commerce outside Italy
 3. To recover lost territories.
 4. To acquire colonies in Asia and Africa.
- On the basis of these principles, Mussolini started the process of **strengthening Italy's military**.
- It also **started attacking many small and weak countries** of Europe and Africa.
 - In 1936, Italy was condemned by almost all European powers for occupying Ethiopia.
 - Hitler's Germany was the only country which supported Italy at this critical moment.
 - In 1936 itself, they entered into a historical defensive and offensive military pact known as the '**Rome-Berlin Axis**'.

- In 1937, Japan also joined this fact and the **RBT (Rome – Berlin – Tokyo) Axis** came into existence.
- History was once again repeating itself. The world was dividing itself into heavily armed camps. Thus, Mussolini's foreign policy can be considered to be an important factor behind World War II.

Rise of Nazism in Germany

- The **Great Depression** (1929) caused huge economic hardships for Germans. 6 million Germans became unemployed. This created ripe grounds for the rise of extremism.
- After World War I, **Hitler started mobilising ex-soldiers, industrial workers and unemployed youth** through the German Workers Party (**DAP**), which was later reorganised and renamed as the Nationalist Socialist (**Nazi**) Party.
- In his autobiography Mein Kampf, Hitler has outlined his **agenda**:
 1. To abrogate the **Treaty of Versailles**.
 2. **Pan-Germanism** should be followed.
 3. He gave the concept of **Lebensraum** (living space).
 4. **All former colonies must be recovered**.
 5. **France is Germany's arch enemy**.

Domestic policies

- After assuming power in 1933 through relatively democratic means, Hitler **crushed all democratic opposition** within one year.
 - He established one-party rule and arrested opposition leaders.
 - He banned all other political parties except the Nazi party and restricted freedom of the press.
- In the field of **economy**, following reforms were initiated:
 - Agriculture was improved with modern technology, irrigation, HYV seeds and cash crops.
 - Heavy industries were nationalised while others continued in private hands.
 - Financial institutions were strengthened to provide loans to German industries.
 - Heavy machine industry became the central focus.
 - Strikes were banned and tribunals were set up to resolve industrial disputes.
 - Two methods were used to create more jobs:
 - Women were not allowed to work
 - No worker was allowed to work for more than eight hours

Social cultural policies

- Hitler forced the **Church** to accept Nazism.
 - In return, the Church received state funding.
- The **education** curriculum of Germany was changed.
 - The history of **Aryans** was glorified and Germans were declared as the **master race**.
 - Non-Aryan races such as Jews, Slavs, Serbs, Africans, Mongoloids, Romanians etc were considered to be impure and inferior.
 - **Jews** were officially declared as **enemies of the state**.
- **Jews** were not allowed to serve in the government or conduct business with Germans.
 - This forced many of them to flee the country.
 - Many were arrested and sent to concentration camps.
 - The Jewish **Holocaust** is estimated to have taken 6 million lives.
- Another central feature of his social policy was **Kulture Kampf**, under which Germans were given the duty of producing healthy children.
 - Hitler wanted to rapidly increase the German population so that it could enlarge its military and workforce.
- **People with genetic disorders and disabilities** were not allowed to have children.
 - Often, they were either **chemically castrated or killed**.

Hitler's foreign policy

- His foreign policy was based on the following principles:
 - Establishing **German dominance** in Europe and the world.
 - **Militarism** and anti-internationalism.
 - **Opportunism** i.e. to formulate policies keeping in mind the strengths and weaknesses of opponents
- He continued to assume an **increasingly aggressive** stance with the passage of time.
- After becoming the chancellor in January **1933**, Hitler began his systematic disruption of the world order.
- **October 1933** – Germany **withdrew from the League of Nations** and the **Geneva Disarmament Conference**, calling them discriminatory.
 - This created suspicion among the Western democracies.
- **January 1934** – Hitler signed a **10 Year Non-Aggression Pact with Poland**.
 - The Polish-German border had always been considered volatile.
 - Even the British had not guaranteed its security under the Locarno Pact of 1925.
- **January 1935** – The **Saar Region was reunited** with Germany through a plebiscite.
- **March 1935** – Hitler introduced **conscription**.

- **June 1935** – the **Anglo-German Naval Pact** was signed in order to pressure the British and isolate France.
 - Under this pact, Hitler agreed to limit the size of its navy to 35% of the British naval strength.
 - However he was allowed to increase the size of his army.
- **March 1936** – the **Rhineland was re-militarised**.
- **October 1936** – the **Rome-Berlin Axis** was established.
- **1937** – Hitler supported General Franco in the **Spanish Civil War**. A republican government had been established in Spain in 1931.
 - It had come **under socialist influence**.
 - A group of army officers led by **General Franco** joined hands with big landowners and the Spanish Church to overthrow the government.
 - **Hitler wanted to test the strength of his new alliance** with Italy and the effectiveness of his new **army**.
 - Further, his support to the anti-Communist faction **won the trust of Western democracies**.
 - This was considered to be a **dress rehearsal for World War II**. The military tactics and strategies developed here were repeated later on a more ample stage.
- **November 1937** – The **RBT Axis** was established and emerged as the most powerful military camp in the world.
- **March 1938** – **Austria was merged with Germany** through revolution.
 - Hitler marched with his forces to Vienna and forced the Austrian Chancellor to accept the union.
- **September 1938** – The **Sudetenland** region of Czechoslovakia was merged with Germany through **plebiscite**.
 - The British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain had pressured the Czechoslovakian government to accept the '**Munich Pact**' under which the fate of Sudetenland, which had a majority German population, would be decided by a plebiscite.
- **March 1939** – **Entire Czechoslovakia** was annexed.
 - Western democracies were stunned by Hitler's aggression.
- **April 1939** – **Hitler demanded rail and road connectivity to Eastern Prussia** through the Polish corridor.
 - This demand was firmly rejected by England and France.
- **August 1939** – Hitler gave another shock to the world when he signed a **10 Year Non-Aggression Pact with the Soviet Union**.
 - Western democracies had been tolerating his increasing aggressiveness with the hope that he would act as a buffer against the spread of communism.
 - Thus, this pact was extremely threatening for the West.
- **The Policy of Appeasement** being followed by the western democracies towards the fascist powers, was considered by Hitler to be a **sign of weakness**.
 - He **did not expect a serious reaction to his aggression against Poland**.

- He was convinced that Britain and France would not risk a major war for the volatile Polish border.
- **Disregarding their ultimatum, he invaded Poland** on 1 September, 1939.
- **He expected a short war with Poland.**
 - However, the western democracies transformed their resolve into action and the world was plunged into another World War.

Other causes for the world

- By the mid-1930s, **two military camps** had once again emerged in Europe i.e. the **Axis powers and the Allies**.
 - They entered into a series of secret offensive and defensive peacetime treaties, which created suspicion among other countries and made the situation increasingly dangerous.
- The **aggressive foreign policies of Italy and Germany** created a sense of insecurity among other countries.
 - It forced all of Europe to start building up its armed strength.
- The **policy of appeasement** which was meant to contain the spread of communism, allowed Germany and Italy to become stronger and increasingly aggressive.
- Harsh treatment of Germany and unfairness to Italy at **Versailles** is regarded as an important factor for sowing the seeds of World War II.
 - It pushed these countries towards totalitarianism and militarism.
- **Nationalism** was at its peak during the interwar period.
 - The **media** propagated nationalist ideas and pressured the political leadership towards aggressive foreign policy stances.
 - The leaders also tried to **divert the attention of the people from local issues by manufacturing external conflicts**.
- The **failure of the League of Nations** to reduce tensions and resolve disputes among nations was another factor behind World War II.
- It is also clear that **imperialism**, which itself was the result of **industrial capitalism**, became a major factor for the rise of extreme nationalism and militarism.
- Most of the factors mentioned above are also responsible for World War I.
 - The **major powers did not learn from their mistakes** and the inter-war period was not a period of peace rather a period of preparation for the second world war.

Consequences of World War II

- Like World War I, World War II **rearranged the world map**.
 - Many empires crumbled and new nations were born.

- World War II was followed by **many former colonies becoming independent**.
 - Both the victors and vanquished powers had suffered heavily and were in no position to hold on to their colonies.
 - Within a decade almost 100 former colonies in Asia and Africa became independent.
- The formation of the **UNO** was another major outcome of World War II.
- This war resulted in the emergence of a **new world order**.
 - The supremacy of Great Britain ended.
 - The USA and the USSR emerged as 2 global superpowers in a bipolar world.
- **Weapons of mass destruction** were used in this war.
 - For the first time the power of the atom was unleashed on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
 - These detonations convinced the world that it could not afford to fight a Third World War.
 - The **frequency of international agreements**, treaties and trade pacts, thus increased after the war.
- At the same time, **ideological differences** between capitalism and communism led to the emergence of the **Cold War** and Bloc politics, which threatened world peace over the next several decades.

The Cold War (1945-91)

The Cold War refers to a period of **intense hostilities, without active confrontation** between the capitalist bloc, headed by the USA and the Communist bloc, headed by the USSR.

The term 'Cold War' was coined by the British author and essayist **George Orwell** in 1945. It was explained in the geopolitical and strategic sense by **Bernard Baruch**, the foreign policy adviser to President Truman in 1947.

Dimensions of the Cold War:

- It was essentially an **ideological conflict**. The USA was the champion of capitalism while the USSR was the communist leader. Both ideologies are antithetical to each other and because of this, a long drawn, extremely hostile silent war was fought between the two blocs.
- The Cold War was a **silent war**. The major powers maintained a friendly posture towards each other publicly, but made every possible effort to destroy each other behind the scenes.
- The Cold War was characterised by **bloc politics**. The bloc leaders made every effort possible to gain more allies, and at the same time, contain the spread of their opponent's influence.
- It appeared as if these blocs were preparing for a future conflict which could start at any time. Therefore, the level of **military readiness** was always very high and the Cold War involved a component of **arms race**.

- The Cold War was a **propaganda war**. It was fought in the realm of public opinion. Each side tried to discredit the opponent by exposing their weaknesses while highlighting their own strengths and achievements.
- It involved **psychological warfare**. Both sides tried to demoralise the other through pressure tactics such as aggressive military deployment, military exercises, arms race etc.
- It was **fought through proxies** since the bloc leaders could not afford direct confrontation, as it would have surely resulted in mutually assured destruction.
- In fact, the **nuclear threat** was a characteristic feature of the Cold War. It was probably the single biggest reason why there was no direct war between the USA and the USSR.
- The Cold War was **present in every arena of human life**, be it cultural, scientific, sports or the development of arms.

Background/Circumstances

- The background of the Cold War can be traced to the **Russian Revolution of 1917**. As a result of this revolution, a serious **ideological conflict** had emerged between the capitalists and the communists.
- During the **Russian Civil War (1918-21)**, the Western capitalist powers had supported the Russian anti-Communists i.e 'Whites'. This poisoned the relationship between the USSR and the West permanently.
- The **Policy of Appeasement** followed by the western democracies towards Hitler and Mussolini was considered by Stalin to be an attack on communism. As a result, the gulf between capitalism and communism widened further.
- In June 1941, when Hitler invaded Russia, the communists and capitalists were forced to join hands against Germany. However this was a **friendship of compulsion** and tensions between the two always remained high.
- Stalin was also frustrated by the **delay in opening the Second Front**. He had been demanding that the Allies should invade Europe from the West since 1942. However, the Second Front was finally opened only in June 1944.
 - Stalin felt that this **delay was deliberate**. According to him, the capitalists still considered communism to be a greater threat than Nazism. They wanted Hitler and the USSR to weaken each other irreparably before they could sweep in and dominate Europe.
- The **Soviet occupation of the East European countries** as Germany retreated, between March 1944 to February 1945 alarmed the western capitalist nations. They considered this to be a deliberate imperialist move by the Soviets.
 - The forcible installation of a **communist government in Poland** further intensified suspicions between the two blocs.
- Differences over the nature and character of the **peace treaty** further intensified hostilities between the capitalist and the communists.
 - The Soviet Union wanted to punish Germany for the devastation it had caused. More than 8 million Soviet soldiers and 26 million civilians had died.
 - On the other hand, the western democracies were not ready to repeat the mistakes of 1919. Thus, they negotiated a fair and mild treaty with Germany.

- Dropping the **atomic bomb** on Japan took relations between the capitalists and communists to their lowest point. Stalin had been kept in the dark about the existence of such a weapon.
 - Further, he felt that the detonation was supposed to be a warning to Soviet Russia rather than a means to end the war quickly.

Phases of the Cold War

Phase 1: The Beginning (1945-53)

February 1946: Stalin's radio address - In a radio address, Stalin asked for communists around the world to raise the banner of revolution. He promised Soviet support for all such communist uprisings.

March 1946: Churchill's Fulton Speech - Speaking from Fulton, Missouri, Winston Churchill called upon capitalist nations to ready themselves for another war. He said that the threat of communism was greater than that of fascism and that an 'Iron Curtain' had descended over Europe from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic. This speech further intensified hostilities.

March 1947: The Truman Doctrine - The American President Harry S. Truman announced a radical shift in American foreign policy. The new policy was encapsulated in the Truman Doctrine. The US abandoned its traditional isolationist position and assumed the leadership of the Capitalist Bloc. America pledged to support democratic forces fighting against communism across the world.

- This doctrine was applied for the first time in the **Greek Civil War (1946-49)**. The USA successfully supported the Greek government in defeating the communists.

June 1947: Marshall Plan - This plan was formulated by the USA to facilitate the recovery of the European economy. Communism was less likely to thrive in prosperous societies and thus, economic aid amounting to \$13,000 million was to be given to European nations over a four year period.

July 1947: Molotov Plan - Stalin did not allow the East European countries to accept American aid. He viewed the Marshall Plan as a strategy to expand capitalist influence in Europe and denounced it as '**Dollar Imperialism**'. Instead, the Soviet Union came out with its own plan for economic recovery in Eastern Europe, known as the Molotov Plan.

- However, it could not come close to matching the success of the Marshall Plan. The USSR responded by making the division of Europe even more watertight.

June 1948 to May 1949: The Berlin Blockade - In June 1948, the USSR blocked all routes connecting west Germany to West Berlin. This was done with the objective of forcing the capitalists out of West Berlin. The rapid recovery of West Berlin had become a major embarrassment to the USSR and the socialist economic model.

- However, the western nations were able to maintain connectivity through air and **NATO** was formed in April 1949 to counter the Soviet military threat. The blockade was finally lifted in May 1949, but by this time any hope for improving relations was permanently extinguished.

September 1949: the USSR becomes a nuclear power - The Soviets successfully tested the Hydrogen bomb making the west feel extremely insecure.

October 1949: Chinese Communist Revolution

February 1950: Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty - China formally joined the Communist Bloc. By this point, the balance of power had firmly shifted in favour of the communists.

1950-53: The Korean War - A war between the North, supported by the communists and the South, supported by the capitalist, took the Cold War hostilities to their peak.

Phase 2: Thaw and Escalation (1953-62)

During this phase, **significant improvements** were visible in the relations between the Capitalist and Communist Blocs. This was due to **the death of Stalin and the end of McCarthyism**.

- Stalin was extremely aggressive and personified the spirit of Soviet expansionism. His death resulted in significant reduction of Soviet aggression.
- Senator Joseph McCarthy had risen to power by fabricating reports of communist activity on US soil. This had resulted in the arrest and prosecution of a number of high profile Americans, including politicians, Hollywood personalities and senior civilian and military officials.
 - McCarthy was trying to advance his own political career by amplifying the threat of communism. However he was exposed and discredited after detailed investigations were conducted when he raised allegations of treason against the American President Eisenhower. This greatly reduced the threat perception among Americans.

The thawing of relations was reflected in:

- 1953 - The end of the Korean War
- 1954 - The suspension of hostilities in Vietnam
- 1955 - The USSR recognised Austria as an independent sovereign state
- 1955 - The USSR removed its military bases from Finland

However, this feeling of international cooperation proved to be false. Both blocs were busy strengthening themselves and hostilities escalated to the point that the world came within touching distance of nuclear war.

- 1954: The SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation) was established by the US, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines and Thailand.
- 1955: The Warsaw Pact was signed by the USSR with its Eastern European allies as a countermeasure against NATO.
- 1955: The Vietnam War resumed with direct American involvement.
- 1956: The Suez Canal Crisis and the First Arab War.
- 1962: The Cuban Missile Crisis carried hostilities to their peak and a nuclear war seemed imminent.

Phase 3: Detente (1962-79)

During this period, significant improvements were observed in bloc relations. This was a phase of comparative international peace.

- The **Cuban Missile Crisis** forced both superpowers to take steps to improve relations.
- By the 1960s, the **arms race had started to strain the Soviet economy**. This forced Russia to tone down its aggression.
- **Relations between China and the US had also improved.** In 1971, the Chinese Communist regime was recognised by the US and in 1972, the American President Richard Nixon visited China. China used Ping-Pong Diplomacy to improve relations with the West.
- The **American withdrawal from Vietnam in 1973** also helped in improving relations. The US Policy of Containment had failed and was abandoned. The American leadership started looking for alternatives.

- **Eastern and Western European nations** also began **actively negotiating** with each other to improve relations. This urgency was a result of the realisation that Europe would be the worst affected in case of a war between the two blocs.
- The **NAM (Non-Aligned Movement)** also played an important role in improving relations between the two blocs. It acted as a bridge of peace between the two superpowers and a safe harbour from bloc politics.
- The phase of Detente witnessed a series of agreements between the two blocs:
 - 1968: **Nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty**: powers with nuclear weapons agreed not to give any other countries nuclear technology.
 - 1971: **The US table tennis team played in China** and The US dropped its veto allowing China to join the United Nations.
 - 1972: The US President **Nixon visited China**.
 - 1972: Russia and America signed the **SALT I Treaty** (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) agreeing to limit their ballistic missiles and bombers.
 - 1975: The **Helsinki Agreement** recognised Soviet control over Eastern Europe, concluded a trade agreement, and the USSR promised to respect human rights.
 - 1975: Russian and American **spacecraft docked in space**.

Phase 4: New Cold War (1979-85)

During this phase, hostilities between the two blocs intensified because of the **Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979**. America responded by:

- Not ratifying the SALT 2 Treaty.
- Boycotting the 1980 Moscow Summer Olympics.

In the 1980s, America revived the policy of **proxy warfare** by supporting the Mujahideen in Afghanistan against the Soviets.

Star Wars: The Space Race and Arms Race were also revived by the Strategic Defence Initiative, under which America planned to place nuclear weapons in space.

In 1983, the US President Ronald Reagan termed the USSR as the '**Evil Empire**' and asserted that the conflict between the two blocs was a battle between good and evil.

- The USSR retaliated by boycotting the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Olympic Games.

Phase 5: End of the Cold War (1985-91)

- With **Mikhail Gorbachev** becoming General Secretary of the USSR in 1985, Cold War hostilities started declining.
 - The Soviets suffered **heavy losses in the Afghanistan war**. Gorbachev realised that the meaningless Cold War cannot be sustained indefinitely and made conscious efforts to reduce hostilities with the US. He wanted to revive the Soviet economy and safeguard the survival of the Soviet Union.
- By the 1980s, the **US economy had also started showing signs of stress** due to the arms race and space race.
- The **downfall of communism in Eastern Europe** in 1989-90 greatly weakened the communist bloc. Popular movements successfully brought down communist governments

in Czechoslovakia (1989), Romania (1990), Albania (1990), Bulgaria (1990), Hungary (1990) and Poland (1990).

- The **Berlin Wall**, which had become a symbol of the Cold War and the division of Europe was torn down in 1989. In 1990, East and West Germany were unified. These changes vastly improved relations.
- The **disintegration of the USSR** in December 1991 completely destroyed the concept of the second world. The Communist bloc was toppled and the Cold War came to an end.