

## **PART-IV**

This part describes the scenario of world politics between the two world wars. The following topics will be studied in this part.

**Subpart-I : Paris Peace Conference**

**Subpart-II : First Crisis of Capitalism (First World War)**

**Subpart-III : Second crisis of Capitalism - Great Economic Depression**

**Subpart-IV : Destructive Response against World Economic Depression- Fascism & Nazism**

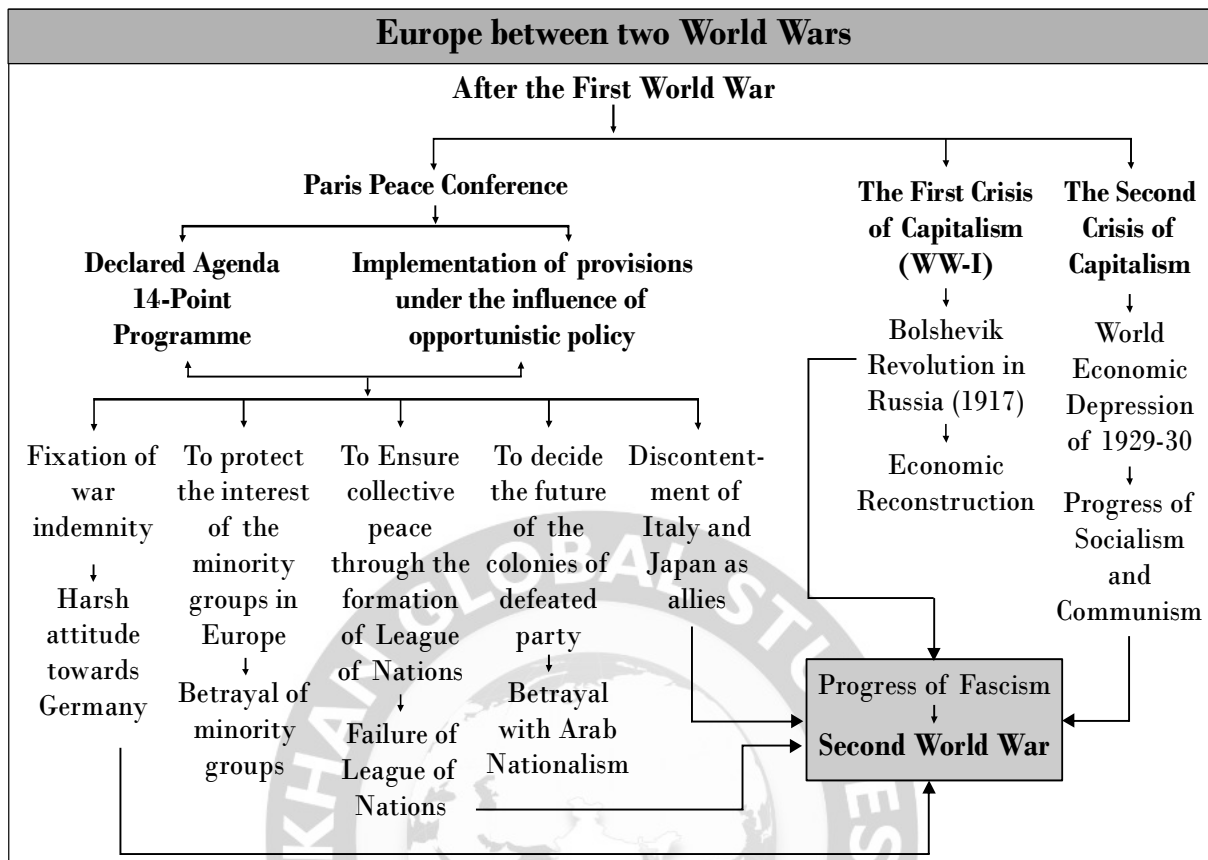
**In the course of studying this part, you should try to underline the following things:**

- Why is the Paris Peace Conference called a ceasefire of 20 years? Or why has any scholar termed the world war as a complete war of 31 years without considering it separately? Was the cause of World War II rooted in the consequences of World War I?
- Why is Russia's Bolshevik Revolution considered as crisis of capitalism?
- What change do you find in the Marxist ideology from Marx to Lenin? What further changes did Stalin bring in the nature of the Russian communist system?
- What changes did the world economic recession bring in the behavior of capitalism?
- What is the point of difference between capitalist and socialist economic models?
- Why is Fascism considered the outcome of the failure of capitalism?

**- Manikant Singh**

## World History (Part- IV)

### Subpart-I: Paris Peace Conference



#### ■ Paris Peace Conference

- The First World War ended on 11th Nov 1918 and an international conference was convened in Paris on 18th Jan 1919. Four main leaders of the conference i.e. Big Four were, US President Woodrow Wilson, British PM David Lloyd George, French Premier Georges Clemenceau and Italian Premier Vittorio Orlando. Interesting fact is that, the Treaty of Versailles was signed in the same Palace of Mirrors where the defeated French emperor Louis Napoleon III put the throne of united German States on the head of Prussian monarch William I.
- The real power of this peace conference was vested in the 'Supreme Peace Council'. This peace conference differed from the Vienna Congress. While the purpose of the Vienna Congress was to crush the spirit of nationalism, the Paris Peace Conference emphasized the principle of nationalism

and self-determination in determining the geographical boundaries of European countries. Conflicting ideologies were clashing in this peace conference. On one side, there was the idealism of Wilson, on the other there was the realism of Lloyd George and Clemenceau. Similarly, on one side there were Wilson's 14-point programmes, on the other there were the secret treaties of the Allied powers. Vienna Congress was more pragmatic as it was not too harsh towards the vanquished nation i.e. France. It even included France in the European Congress thus making it a responsible power. This was the reason that, despite of many problems, peace was maintained for almost 40 years after the Vienna Treaty. Contrary to this, the Paris Peace Conference or the Treaty of Versailles turned out to be too harsh towards the vanquished power. Thus this treaty couldn't sustain peace for more than 20 years.

- **The declared agenda of the Paris Peace Conference**– The declared objective of the Paris Peace conference was to provide the right to self-judgment and absolute justice to every party on the basis of the 14-Point programme of President Wilson. Wilson believed that if this 14-point programme was implemented successfully, the First World War would prove to be the Europe's last war.

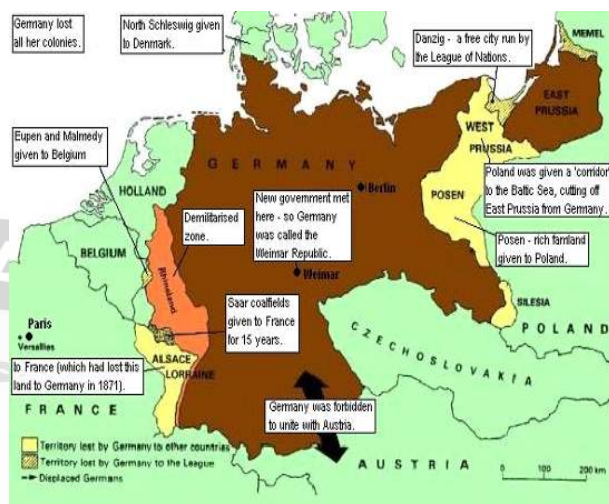
- **Implementation of provisions under the influence of opportunistic policy–**

- Due to certain compulsion on certain material conditions, the peacemakers in Paris Peace Conference diverted from the main objective on many occasions. In fact, Britain and France were representing realism or opportunism. The British Prime Minister was concerned about maintaining the balance of power in Europe, whereas the French Premier wants to emasculate the power of Germany and simultaneously to strengthen the neighbouring countries of Germany. In contrast, American President Wilson was representing idealism, but he also had some hidden agenda of his own and that agenda was to secure markets in Europe for American products.

- **Objective of the Paris Peace Conference:**

1. **Fixation of war indemnity**- Under this provision five separate treaties were concluded with defeated party -
  - i. Treaty of Versailles with Germany
  - ii. Treaty of St. Germain with Austria
  - iii. Treaty of Trianon with Hungary
  - iv. Treaty of Neuilly with Bulgaria
  - v. Treaty of Sevres with Turkey -As per this secret treaty a large part of Turkey, including Constantinople, was to be separated from it. But due to the resistance from Mustafa Kemal Pasha the treaty was modified and a new treaty, “Treaty of Lausanne”, was signed.

- **Treaty of Versailles**- On 28 June, German representatives signed this treaty. This treaty was too harsh towards Germany. In this treaty Germany was forced to part with nearly 13 percent territory and 13 percent resources. Thus for maintaining this arrangement cooperation from Germany was not possible.



- **Why do you think the treaty of Versailles was a dictated treaty?**

1. Germany surrendered in WWI after the assurance that there would be proper justice even to the defeated party but against the earlier assurance, Germany was penalized.
2. In the treaty of Versailles, not even the minimum courtesy of international diplomacy was maintained and German representatives were treated as criminals.
3. The treaty was too much devastating to Germany. In fact Germany had to lose 13% of its region and 13% of its resources. If this treaty could have been implemented in totality (as it is), then the German economy could have been completely destroyed. For example, the German populated region of Sudetenland was given to Czechoslovakia, likewise, Poland was given access to the sea while going across German region but

simultaneously, Germany was not permitted to merge with Austria. It is on this ground, an economist and representative in the British delegation, John Menard Keynes, resigned from his post. The prophecy of Keynes came true when, in the Lausanne Conference of 1932, allied powers were compelled to waive off 90% amount of compensation from Germany.

4. The term 'indemnity' was used in place of 'compensation'.
5. Although it was called a peace conference it proved the worst type of judicial court in which neither any pleading nor witness was permitted, and the decisions were taken arbitrarily.

**Question: The Treaty of Versailles paved the way for World War II. To what extent do you agree with this statement? (UPSC-2013)**

**Answer:** The Treaty of Versailles is established in world history as an event that gave rise to another more terrible world war in order to resolve WW-I. The extremely harsh conditions of the Treaty of Versailles were imposed on Germany which are considered to be an important cause for the Second World War, but there is a time gap between the Treaty of Versailles and the Second World War, this aspect cannot be ignored as well.

There were many such aspects contained in the Treaty of Versailles, which gave Germany a good reason to take a retaliatory stand. First, Germany surrendered on the basis of Wilson's 14-point programme, but still Germany was treated harshly. Secondly, even a normal diplomatic formality was not followed in the midst of this treaty and the German representatives were humiliated. Third, the right to self-determination was ignored which was an important aspect of the 14-point programme.

A large section of German population was cut off from Germany. Above all, the economic

terms of this treaty, as acknowledged by a famous British economist JM Keynes, were so stringent that its implementation was impossible.

Thus, the Treaty of Versailles contained all those factors which could prove to be important for provoking ultra-nationalism in Germany. But we should also keep in mind that there was a gap of about 20 years between the Treaty of Versailles and the Second World War. So it is obvious that there were some other factors which encouraged the Second World War. One of the factors was the Great Depression, which strengthened the fascist power in Germany, and the other was the failure of the Allies nations (Britain and France) to create consensus for the implementation of this treaty.

Thus we see that, although the Treaty of Versailles was instrumental in preparing the background for World War II, but the entire responsibility for World War II cannot be attributed only to the Treaty of Versailles.

#### **Treaty of Saint Germain with Austria:**

- This treaty was signed with Austria on 10 December 1919. As per the treaty, Austrian empire was disintegrated and nations such as Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland and Hungary came into existence. The army strength of Austria was limited to 30 thousand and above all, Austria was warned with strong words that if she violated these provisions, her existence as an independent nation would be annihilated.

#### **2. To protect the interest of the minority groups in Europe:**

- Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, there was unrest in the Balkans due to nationalist aspirations shown by minority groups. Thus, Wilson believed that if the nationalist aspirations of the minority groups were fulfilled, lasting peace would be restored in Europe. So



driven by this objective in mind, the Habsburg Empire was disintegrated and independent nations like Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia were formed.

- But here too, Wilson's 14-point programme was disregarded due to the opportunistic politics. In other words, in the Paris Peace Conference, one of the objectives of the allied power was to emasculate the power of Germany and simultaneously, to strengthen the neighbouring countries of Germany. To fulfill this objective, different minority groups were merged together. Not only this, in order to strengthen the neighboring nation, the German population was also merged with it. For example, the German populated region of Sudetenland was given to Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, Germany was not permitted to merge with Austria. Due to these reasons instability remained in these nations. Consequently, in 1993, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia disintegrated. So much so that a British historian Eric Hobsbawm had remarkably said that “it is a half-baked chicken of Paris Peace Conference which has come to be baked again.”



### 3. To Ensure collective peace through the formation of an international organization like League of Nations:

- After the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, the concept of balance of power was considered as an alternative to war, but this concept could not provide a real alternative to war. Therefore, after the First World War, European leaders and intellectuals started to think about an international organization. Then on the initiative of American President Woodrow Wilson, in the Paris Peace Conference, an international organization, ‘League of Nations’ was formed with the purpose of ensuring collective peace. It was an organization of 41 nations in 1919, which became 60 in 1941. Two important organs of the League of Nations were the Assembly and the Council.



#### **Achievements of the League of Nations-**

- i. It happened for the first time that, the victorious powers could not swallow the regions of defeated powers. The regions of defeated power remained safe under the supervision of the League of Nations.
- ii. The League of Nations was also successful in settling disputes especially in case of small nations. It is said that the League of Nations had to face a total of 40 disputes and it settled many of these disputes.
- iii. The welfare and humanitarian work of the League of Nations was commendable. For example, prevention of contagious diseases, ban on human trafficking, abolition of slave trade etc.

#### **Later this organization failed due to following factors -**

- i. There was a difference of opinion between Britain and the US on the one hand and France on the other regarding the nature of the League. According to French perception, it had to be made much powerful to tackle any situation, but according to Anglo-American perception, the organization had to deal with the situation softly.
- ii. Two important organs of the League of Nations, i.e. Assembly and Council, had equal powers.
- iii. In this organization no country was given special status which could motivate it to work for world peace.
- iv. There was an unanimity clause which was much difficult to implement.
- v. Above all the 'League of Nations' was an international organization but it didn't enjoy the participation of two superpowers of the time, i.e. USA & USSR.
- vi. Last but not the least, the First World War created such an environment of hatred that it was not possible for collective peace in Europe to survive for long.

#### **4. To decide the future of the colonies of defeated party-**

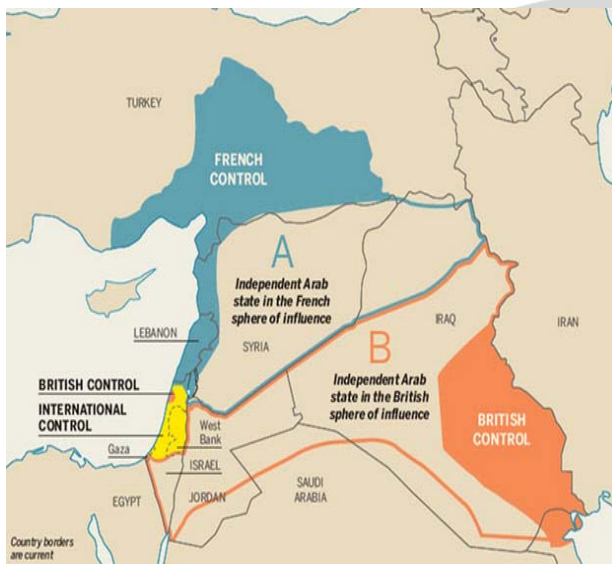
- During the First World War, some colonies enthusiastically supported their imperial masters in a hope that after the war they would get some reward, because the allied nations were fighting the war to protect independence and democracy. This created hope in the colonies. India was also hoping that after the war it would get some sort of 'Swaraj'. China was also enthusiastic. In the same way, Egyptian PM, Jaglul Pasha, was hoping independence from Britain. But they all were disappointed as the 14 point programme of Wilson, which had a provision of right to self-judgment, was not applicable to the colonies. Whether, Wilson made a promise to the people of the colony or not, but having been inspired by the Wilsonian concept of a right to self-judgment, Nationalist Movement started in Egypt, Rowlatt Satyagraha Movement in India, March 3rd Movement in Korea and May 4th Movement in China.
- On the other hand, after the war, the question arose regarding the future of colonies owned by the defeated nations. One option was to give them freedom, but the European powers were not ready to do so. On the other hand, Wilson was against the traditional form of colonialism. Thus colonialism appeared in an altered form, i.e. Mandate System. The colonies were divided into three groups, A, B & C and shared between different nations. The declared objective for this was the development of these colonies under the supervision of the master nation. But the actual objective was to divide the colonies of the defeated nations among the victor nations. The mandates were allotted by the League of Nations, thus legitimizing the system. For example, the German colonies in Africa were allotted to South

Africa. In the same way, in the Arab region, Syria and Iran were put under France, whereas Palestine went to Britain.

- It is said that, the First World War had continued for 31 years in Europe (till WW2). But in case of West Asia and Arabia it had continued for 100 years. In fact in the course of the First World War itself certain mistakes were committed by European powers which proved fatal for peace and stability in west Asia and Arabian region. Arab-Israel conflict, Kurd problem, Al-Qaida and ISIS are the legacies of those mistakes.

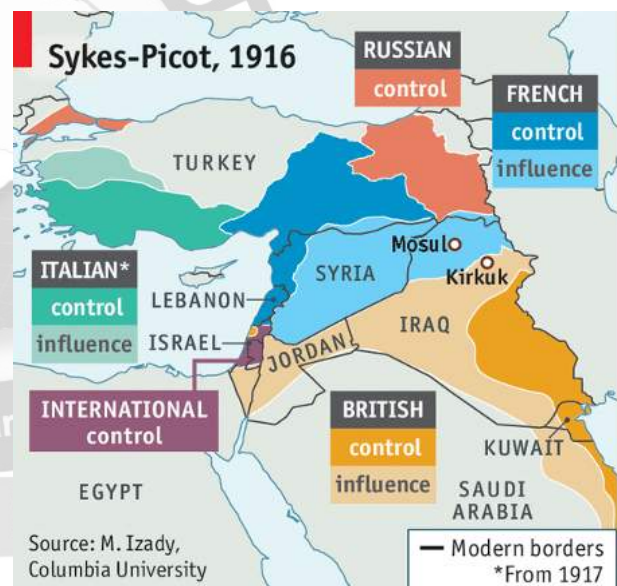


- Sykes-Picot Agreement (1915):-** It was a secret treaty between Britain and France that run counter to the first agreement. According to this agreement, Arabian region had to be divided between the British and the French party.



- The contradictory condition created by the ambivalence of European powers-

- Hussain-McMahon Agreement (1915):-** British concluded a secret treaty with Arabian leaders like Hussain, Grand Sherif of Mecca and his son Faisal. They had to organise a revolt against Turkey. As a reward after the war, they had to be offered a unified Arab nation.

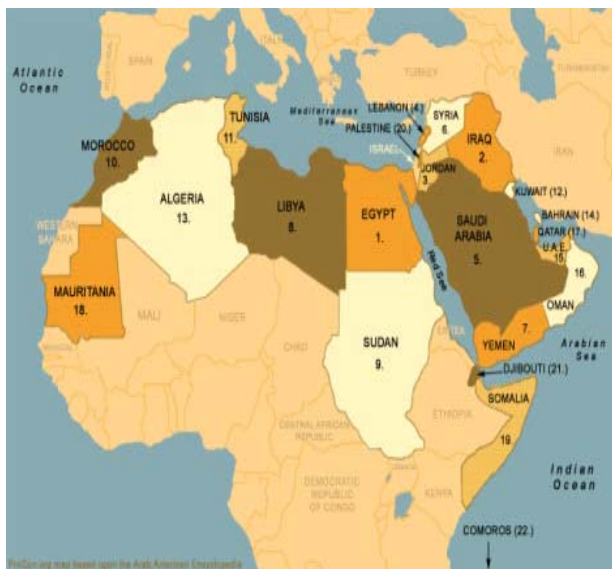


- Balfour Declaration (1917):-** In 1917 Britain gave a secret promise to Jews for the creation of a separate nation in Palestine.

- Arab Nationalism was betrayed in following manner-** After the war, the Arab region was divided into many nations and direct and indirect control of Britain and France was established over them. In Paris Peace Conference, Yemen was declared an independent nation. Then the region of Hejaz was separated and Hussein was made its ruler. Iraq was separated and



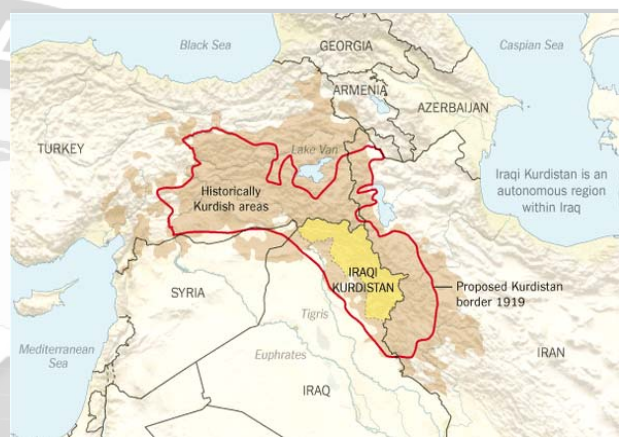
Faisal was declared its ruler. The second son of Hussein, Abdullah, was made the ruler of Trans-Jordan. But in practice Britain controlled the region of Iraq and Trans-Jordan. And as already seen, Palestine was put under British mandate, whereas Syria and Lebanon were placed under France. Egypt was already a colony of Britain. But in due course of time, there was nationalist upsurge in the region and as a result nationalist demands became intense. Thus, Arab nationalism was betrayed in the Paris Peace Conference.



- **Betrayal with the Kurds**– As we know, in the middle of the First World War, the Allies had given an identity to Arab nationalism and assured the Arabs that they would be given a separate nation. The question arises as, how they ignored the sovereign power of the Kurds when there was also large number of Kurdish population in the Arab region. So, the Kurds also raised the demand for Kurdistan. At that time the Kurdish population was under the Ottoman Empire and Iran. Then, at the Paris Peace Conference, the Arabian region was separated from the Ottoman Empire and the Arab regions were divided into several parts, then some Kurds moved to Iraq and Syria. Presently, Kurds are found primarily in four countries – Turkey, Iran,

Iraq and Syria. When Iraq was conquered by the US, it accepted the rights of the Kurds parallel to the Sunni Muslims, and while leaving Iraq, it granted autonomy to the Kurdish region. This boosted the morale of Kurds from other regions as well.

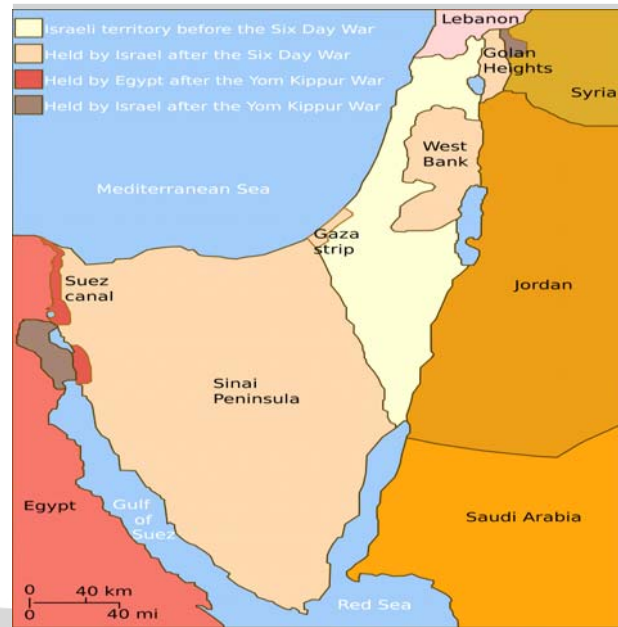
- At present, issue of Kurds is a major problem for the Turkish government. In present times, the Islamic fundamentalist ISIS has made its target not only to Shias, but also to Kurds. Therefore, the Kurds have played a significant role in countering ISIS in Syria as well as in Iraq.



- **Palestinian-Israeli Dispute**– During ancient times, Jews were settled in Palestine region. Later, Palestine fell under the control of Roman Empire. The anti-Semitic policies of Roman Empire forced the Jews to abandon the region and to settle in other parts of the world including Europe and USA. Jews were rich and prosperous, thus they started thinking in the direction of acquiring their own motherland. During the First World War, the British needed Jews' help, thus to appease them the British promised them a separate homeland in Palestine region. With this purpose 'Balfour Declaration' was made in 1916. Palestine was placed under a British mandate during the time. Thus, at the behest of the British, a large number of Jews began settling in the region between the two world wars. But



reactions started among the Palestine people who were being supported by Arabs. To avoid embarrassment the British government took the matter to the UNO. Then UNO, very like the Kashmir issue, gave a controversial verdict in case of Palestine as well. It divided Palestine in two parts - Palestine state and Jew state. About 65% of the territory was given to the Palestinian, while 35% of the territory was given to the Jews. The Jews readily accepted it, but the Arab nations objected to this decision and in 1948 attacked the Jew State. But they were defeated by Jews (America helped Jews in this war). This sowed the seed of Arab-Israel conflict which has continued till the present time.



- Therefore we can say that the First World War was a war that lasted only 31 years in Europe but has been going on for the last 100 years in the Arab and West Asian region. In this context, these lines seem to be highly relevant that- “It was a war to end all wars but it proved a war to end all peace.”
- 5. Discontentment of Italy and Japan as allies—**
- As we know, Italy was in the bloc of Germany and Austria, but later on the basis of the secret Treaty of London in 1915, it joined the Allies. It was assured

that after the war, it would be given a large territory in the Adriatic region. But Italy felt cheated in the Paris Peace Conference and Italian nationalism got hurt. Its natural outcome was the emergence of fascism in Italy under the leadership of Mussolini.

- On the other hand, Japan got the German territory Shandong in China on the basis of a secret treaty in the Paris Peace Conference, but the approach of the United States became tough towards Japan. Therefore, soon after this treaty, in the Washington Naval Conference of 1921-

22, the United States punished Japan and reduced its naval capacity to a limited extent as compared to its neighbors. At that time, Japan was forced to tolerate it, but it was very dissatisfied and angry with this treaty. This was an important reason, why Japan further joined the bloc of Hitler and Mussolini.

■ **Causes behind the failure of the Paris Peace Conference–**

- The Paris Peace Conference was an international conference, but sadly its provisions proved to be more short-lived than those of the previous European Congress. It couldn't sustain peace for more than 20 years. The following were the reasons behind this-

- i. The defeated countries were treated more harshly, especially Germany. Thus for maintaining this arrangement, cooperation from Germany was not possible. Contrary to this, Vienna congress ensured cooperation from France.
- ii. Wilson's 14-Point programme was openly neglected.
- iii. The largest nation of the world, USSR, was kept out of this treaty.
- iv. Soon after the Paris Peace Conference, USA returned back to its continent and, in Europe, there was lack of coordination and cooperation between Britain and France.

### **Inter-Disciplinary Approach**

The First World War could not end the European Empires, but it put the first nail in the coffin of imperialism.

1. World War-I was fought in the name of 'Democracy & Freedom'. Resultantly, it waved the aspirations of colonies.
2. Wilson's 14 point programme added fuel to the fire.
3. World War-I caused a deep blow to the European economy and established the United States as a superpower on a global level.
4. Although after the First World War, the European imperialist powers once again sought to establish their strong grip over the colonies, but now it became clear that their departure from the colonies was only a matter of time.