
UNIT 3 WORLD WAR I: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES*

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

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

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

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

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

3.2 CAUSES OF THE WAR

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

3.2.1 Economic Rivalries

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

3.2.2 Colonial Disputes

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

3.2.3 Conflicting Alliance Systems

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

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

3.2.4 Rising Nationalist Aspirations

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

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

3.2.5 The Outbreak of War

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

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

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

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

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

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3.3 SEQUENCE OF EVENTS OF THE WAR

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

3.3.1 European Phase of the War

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

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

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

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

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

3.3.2 Global Phase of the War

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

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

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

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

3.3.3 End of the War

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

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

3.3.4 India's Contribution to the British War Efforts

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

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

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

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

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

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

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

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

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3.4 CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR

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

3.4.1 Paris Peace Conference

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

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

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

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

3.4.2 The Treaty of Versailles

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

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

3.4.3 Minor Treaties

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

3.4.4 Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.5 IMPACT OF THE WAR

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

3.5.1 Impact on Europe

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

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

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

3.5.2 Impact on the World

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

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

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

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

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

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Important Facts of the First World War

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

Sparked the Invention of Plastic Surgery

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

The Youngest British Soldier Was 12 Years Old

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

Blood Banks Were Developed During WW1

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

3.6 LET US SUM UP

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

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

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3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

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

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

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

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

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

