

### World War I

**World War I** or the **First World War** was a war fought by many countries, which is why it is called a "world" war. It started in 1914 and ended in 1918. 135 countries took part in World War I, and more than 15,000,000 people died in the war.

#### **World War One - Causes**

The First World War, which began in August 1914, was directly triggered by the assassination of the Austrian archduke, Franz Ferdinand and his wife, on 28 June 1914 by Bosnian revolutionary, Gavrilo Princip. This event was, however, simply the trigger that set off declarations of war.

The actual causes of the war were;

1) **The system of Alliances**

An alliance is an agreement made between two or more countries to give each other help if it is needed. A number of alliances had been signed by countries between the years 1879 and 1914. For example, the Dual Alliance signed by Germany with Austria Hungary in 1879 and later joined by Italy in 1882 to become the triple Alliance.

This system led to the division of Europe into two antagonistic power blocs. It led to fear and suspicion between nations. It transformed local disputes into a general conflict. The Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy were directly opposed by the Entente powers of France and Russia and later included Great Britain to form the Triple Entente in 1907.

2) **Imperialism**

Imperialism is when a country takes over new lands or countries and makes them subject to their rule. By 1900, the British Empire extended over five continents and France had control of large areas of Africa. With the rise of industrialism, countries needed new markets. The amount of lands 'owned' by Britain and France increased their rivalry with Germany who had entered the scramble to acquire colonies late and only had small areas of Africa.

3) **Economic rivalry.**

According to Marxism, the highest form of capitalism would ultimately lead to an inevitable war through economic rivalry. In the late 19th century, all European powers had industrialized or had started. Therefore, to match the needs of economy and industry, nations sought to expand their territory through imperialism in order to gain raw materials and markets. This then led to the clash of imperial interest between nations and ultimately led to conflict and war.

4) **Militarism**

Militarism means that the army and military forces are given a high profile by the government. The growing European divide had led to an arms race between the main countries. The armies of both France and Germany had more than doubled between 1870 and 1914 and there was fierce competition between Britain and Germany for mastery of the seas. The British had introduced the 'Dreadnought', an effective battleship, in 1906. The Germans soon followed suit introducing their own battleships. The German, Von Schlieffen also drew up a plan of action that involved attacking France through Belgium if Russia made an attack on Germany.

5) **Nationalism**

Nationalism means being a strong supporter of the rights and interests of one's country. The Congress of Vienna, held after Napoleon's exile to Elba, aimed to sort out problems in Europe. Delegates from Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia decided upon a new Europe that left both Germany and Italy as divided states. Strong nationalist elements led to the re-unification of Italy in 1861 and Germany in 1871. The settlement at the end of the Franco-Prussian war left France angry at the loss of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany and keen to regain their lost territory. Large areas of both Austria-Hungary and Serbia were home to differing nationalist groups, all of whom wanted freedom from the states in which they lived.

6) **Moroccan Crisis**

In 1904 Morocco had been given to France by Britain, but the Moroccans wanted their independence. In 1905, Germany announced her support for Moroccan independence. War was narrowly avoided by a conference which allowed France to retain possession of Morocco. However, in 1911, the Germans were again protesting against French possession of Morocco. Britain supported France and Germany was persuaded to back down for part of French Congo.

## SPECIAL COVERAGE

### The First Moroccan Crisis

The First Moroccan Crisis clearly indicated that Germany's relation with France was at best fragile. In 1905 Morocco was one of the few African states not occupied by a European power. In May 1905 it was agreed that an international conference should be held on Morocco in Algeciras.

#### *The Algeciras Conference of 1906*

The main aim was to decide what was to be done with regards to Morocco. The two main protagonists at Algeciras were France and Germany. However, it soon became very clear to Germany that other European powers had sided with France – Britain, Spain and Italy. The Algeciras Conference ended on April 7th 1906. The Germans got very little out of the conference.

The plan to create a triple alliance or even a quadruple alliance to isolate Great Britain failed. Arguably, by the end of the conference, Britain and France had even closer ties to one another. A German presence in North Africa had also failed to materialize. The French media portrayed Germany as an inferior nation, much to the concern of the more experienced politicians in Paris. The Algeciras Conference may have 'resolved' the crisis in Morocco but the outcome clearly defined Europe into certain camps. At this conference Germany publicly lost out.

#### *The Agadir Crisis of 1911 (the Second Moroccan Crisis.)*

The Agadir Crisis occurred in 1911 just four years after the First Moroccan Crisis. Germany's attention was diverted after the 1905-06 crises by other issues, mainly building up her navy so that it rivaled the Royal Navy. As a result France spent five years having far more influence in Morocco than Germany. They backed the corrupt Sultan, Abdul Aziz, who was accused by some of his countrymen of selling out Morocco to the French. The half-brother of Aziz, Mulay Hafid, took a stand on behalf of the Moroccan people who proclaimed him Sultan in January 1908.

Fez also came under attack. In April 1911 a decision was made in Germany to send troops to Fez to support the foreign contingent living there. The plan was to send German warships to Agadir and Mogador ostensibly to defend German citizens in Morocco. A gunboat, *the 'Panther'*, was sent to Agadir on July 1st 1911.

#### *What part did the Agadir Crisis play in the outbreak of World War One?*

The episode proved that Germany was hell-bent on trying to dominate Europe as a whole. Winston Churchill and David Lloyd George were among those who believed this.

#### 7) *Bosnian Crisis*

In 1908, Austria-Hungary took over the former Turkish province of Bosnia. This angered Serbians who felt the province should be theirs. Serbia threatened Austria-Hungary with war. Russia, allied to Serbia, mobilized its forces. Germany, allied to Austria-Hungary mobilized its forces and prepared to threaten Russia. War was avoided when Russia backed down. There was, however, war in the Balkans between 1911 and 1912 when the Balkan states drove Turkey out of the area. The states then fought each other over which area should belong to which state. Austria-Hungary then intervened and forced Serbia to give up some of its acquisitions. Tension between Serbia and Austria-Hungary was high.

#### 8) *The Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand*

A secret society called *Ujedinjenje Ili Smrt*, ('Union or Death') or Black Hand was founded in Belgrade, an outgrowth of an older Serb nationalist group: *Narodna Odbrana*. When it was learned that the Heir-Apparent to the Austrian throne, Franz Ferdinand, was scheduled to visit Sarajevo in June of 1914, the Black Hand decided to assassinate him. Three young Bosnians were recruited, trained and equipped: Gavrilo Princip, Nedjelko Cabrinovic and Trifko Grabez.

The murders of Franz Ferdinand and Sophie brought Austro-Serbian tensions to a head. As Vienna took a hard line against Serbia, the other powers in Europe took sides. The wheels of war gained speed. The Crisis of July turned into world war, just over thirty days after Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie were shot.

### System of Alliances.

By 1914, Europe had divided into two camps.

- 1) The **Triple Alliance** was **Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary**.
- 2) The **Triple Entente** was **Britain, France and Russia**.

#### 1) **The Triple Alliance**

The alliance between Germany and Austria was natural. Both spoke the same language - German - and had a similar culture. Austria was in political trouble in the south-east of Europe - the **Balkans**. She needed the might of

Germany to back her up if trouble got worse. Italy had joined these countries as she feared their power on her northern border.

Each member of the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria and Italy) promised to help the others if they were attacked by another country. By the close of the war the Central Powers had been extended to incorporate Bulgaria and Turkey

## 2) The Triple Entente

The Entente Powers comprised a military alliance - driven by a variety of inter-related treaties - of France, Great Britain and Russia.

The Entente alliance sprang from the military concerns of Germany's neighbours to east and west. Russia and France; accordingly in 1894 they signed an alliance based upon fears of growing German power. Britain subsequently forged alliances with both Russia and France once it became clear that Germany intended to construct a navy to match the Royal Navy in the late 1890s. Thus the Entente Alliance was not a formal alliance. The term was later replaced by the more general 'Allies' to include other nations including Italy and Japan.

## THE COURSE OF THE WAR.

The war was fought in three continents; Europe, Africa and Asia and both on land and on the sea. In Europe, the war was fought in two fronts

1. **The Western Front** was where most of the fighting between Germany and the Allies happened. The war in western front was fought in Belgium and France as per the Schlieffen plan.

*Count Alfred von Schlieffen*, mastermind of the Schlieffen Plan, served as Germany's Chief of the Imperial General Staff from 1891 to 1905. It was Schlieffen's plan, long after he retired from army (1906) that was used for the August 1914 attack on France that was to trigger World War One.

**The Schlieffen Plan** entailed an attack on France (while Russia mobilised her army) followed by an attack on Russia. The plan meant that Germany could place the bulk of her military might on one frontier and then move it to another.

The basic mechanics of Von Schlieffen's plan were;

- a) A devastating attack on France via neutral Belgium as soon as Russia had announced her intention to mobilise, which would take six weeks.
- b) A holding operation on the Russian/German border to be carried out if necessary and if required.
- c) Germany was to use 6 weeks to defeat France. a massive and successful surprise attack against France would be enough to put off Britain becoming involved in a continental war
- d) Germany would then use her modernised rail system to move troops quickly from the French operation to the Russian front. Russia would then be attacked and defeated.

*The Schlieffen Plan was daring but it had a number of glaring weaknesses:*

- a) The actions of Russia determined when Germany would have to start her attack on France even if she was ready or not.
- b) It assumed that Russia would need six weeks to mobilise. But she mobilized faster than it was assumed.
- c) It assumed that Germany would defeat France in less than six weeks.

Early on July 31, Russia began a full mobilization of its forces in preparation for war with Austria-Hungary. On August 1, Germany declared war on Russia and German troops began moving into Luxembourg in preparation for invading Belgium and France. On August 2, Germany contacted the Belgian government requesting free passage through Belgium for its troops. This was refused by King Albert and Germany declared war on both Belgium and France on August 3.

The German Army went into Belgium on the 4 August. On the same day, Great Britain started a war on Germany, because Britain was a friend of Belgium. When the Germans got to the Belgian city of Liège, they did finally push the Belgians out of the city, but it had taken longer than the German generals had planned.

On December 24-25, 1914, there was a temporary halt to the fighting on parts of the Western Front. This was the **Christmas truce**.

The initial force behind the Christmas Truce came from the Germans. Christmas was celebrated in full, with men visiting across the lines and gifts of food and tobacco being exchanged. As Christmas ended, both sides reluctantly returned to war, the bonds forged at Christmas slowly eroded as units rotated out and the fighting became more ferocious.

By 1915, the Western Front had become a stalemate as both sides engaged in **trench warfare**. The men on both sides took spades and dug lines of trenches went all the way from Switzerland to the North Sea, because they did not want to be killed. In front of the trenches, there was barbed wire that cut anyone who tried to climb over it,

and mines that blew up anyone who tried to run across the "no man's land" that was in between the trenches. Gas was also an important weapon used.

The war in the west was static in the next three years and attempts by the military commanders on both sides to break the stalemate led to deaths of many soldiers. At the battle of the Somme in 1916 60,000 British men died in a single day. It was one of the bloodiest days in the history of the British army.

Seeking to shatter the Anglo-French lines, the German Chief of Staff, Erich von Falkenhayn, began planning a massive assault on the French city of Verdun. The Battle of Verdun lasted from February 21, 1916 until December 18, 1916 and was one of the longest and bloodiest battles of World War I. A brutal battle of attrition, Verdun cost the French an estimated 161,000 dead, 101,000 missing and 216,000 wounded. German losses were approximately 142,000 killed and 187,000 wounded.

2. **The Eastern Front** was fought in Central and Eastern Europe and was one of the main places where World War I took place. The start of the war on the eastern front involved an attack on Russia on 1st of August 1914. On August 6, Austria-Hungary declared war on Russia and six days later entered into hostilities with France and Britain. The Russians were decisively defeated by allied forces of Austria and Germany at the battle of Tanneberg in August 1914 and at the battle of the Masurian Lakes in September 1914.

### **War in the seas**

Some of the fiercest battles between the Allies and the central powers took place in the sea.

By May 1916, Germany's main fleet was stationed in the North Sea to attack Britain's fleet. However, the British intelligence decoded the German wireless code and was able to prepare the royal navy to fully counter Germany's challenge. Both sides suffered casualties in the war that followed. 11 German ships and 14 British ships were lost.

### **Importance of Britain's supremacy at sea**

- a) The British naval forces assisted in blocking the central powers particularly the Germans from accessing food and raw materials from other parts of the world. This derailed their war plans.
- b) Her naval supremacy enabled the allies to capture colonies of the central powers.
- c) The sea blockade enabled the allies to maintain uninterrupted communication with other allied forces, as well as safeguard the British food and raw material supplies from other parts of the world.

### **The final phase of World War 1**

The final phase of the war was a second German onslaught on France in 1918 where the Germans were decisively defeated in the hands of USA soldiers.

### **End of World War I.**

Two events that led to the end of World War I were:

- 1) Russia's withdrawal from the war after the Great Russian revolution.
- 2) The declaration of war by the United States of America against the central powers.

### **The First Russian Revolution**

In 1917, there was a revolution in Russia. The Russian people didn't want to fight anymore, because the war had been putting burdens on them, and many of them were poor and hungry.

### **The Second Russian Revolution**

Two factions fought to rule over Russia. The passive Mensheviks lost against radical Bolsheviks. The leader of the Bolsheviks was Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) which was Communist who followed the ideas of Karl Marx. The new government sued the Germans for peace, and signed a peace treaty called Brest-Litovsk with the Central Powers in March 1918 at the city of Brest Litovsk.

The Germans and Russians stopped fighting. This gave Germany lots of land in Eastern Europe and the Baltic Sea

### **USA entry into the war.**

The German generals using submarines named U-boats (underwater boats) attacked American ships (**Lusitania**) that were carrying food and weapons to Great Britain. Some Americans were killed by the submarines.

Germany also wrote a secret telegram note to Mexico suggesting that the two countries work together to attack the United States (the Zimmerman Telegram- because the person who sent it was named Arthur Zimmerman-the German foreign minister).

*Other reasons why USA entered the war on the side of the Allies were;*

- i. America was concerned with safeguarding her trade with Britain. (US- Anglo relationship was strong). USA was fully aware that the a defeat of Allied powers would cost her financial and industrial institutions
- ii. The USA and British intelligence were able to link some Germany sympathizers with the industrial sabotage in factories and trade unions in the USA.



- iii. Cruelty of the Germans led to the growth of anti-Germany feelings in the United States. Many of the Allies sympathizers had relatives in either France or Britain.

American people decided that they wanted their country to enter the war to punish Germany. On April 6, 1917 the United States declared war against Germany and became part of the Allies.

The socialist politicians declared Germany a republic and met with the Supreme Commander of the allied forces on 7th November 1918, Ferdinand Foch, to negotiate for end of the war with very stiff terms to the Germans.

The stiff terms given to the Germans included;

- i. Germany to withdraw from all occupied territories, including overseas colonies.
- ii. All German forces west of the Rhine to be withdrawn.
- iii. All German warships to surrender to the Allies.
- iv. Occupation of some parts of Germany by the Allies.
- v. All Allied prisoners of war to be released.

The Germans were given 72 hours to either accept or reject these stiff conditions. Protesting bitterly, they signed an armistice on 9th November 1918.

At 11:00 AM on 9th November 1918, the war ended.

### ***Reasons why the allies won World War I.***

- i. Allied powers had many supporters drawn from 25 states some of which were Britain, France, Belgium, Russia, Italy, USA, Japan and Portugal. They had more manpower than the central powers.
- ii. Germany failure to effectively control her expensive colonies and others turned against her.
- iii. USA entry into war on the side of the allies accelerated the defeat of the central powers. The industrial might of USA and her economic wealth helped the Allies to force the central powers to their knees.
- iv. The Allies had able and focussed political leaders like Lloyd George-the British Premier and Georges Clemenceau, the French Premier.
- v. Germans/axis powers made serious technical mistakes like invasion of the neutral Belgium by Germany which turned the world opinion against the central powers.
- vi. Superior naval power of the Allies. The superiority of the British Royal Navy enabled the Allies to enforce a naval Blockade that caused severe food shortages among the central powers.
- vii. Germany fought the war on many fronts.
- viii. Germany was badly led down by her colleagues like Italy who decamped and Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary who had to be assisted all the time. Turkey on her part easily accepted defeat.
- ix. The Allies had financial and industrial resources in Europe and in their colonies which were used to great advantage during the war.
- x. The Allies had powerful weapons e.g. they used Tankers, Aircraft and Battleships.
- xi. The allies were united under the Command of General Foch which disadvantaged the central powers. German also used young and inexperienced soldiers after 1918 due to heavy casualties.
- xii. The central powers were surrounded by the Allies as they lay in the centre of Europe. They also lacked an extensive coastline and thus were easily blockaded.

### **The Peace Treaties.**

In January 1918, Woodrow Wilson, President of the USA, outlined, in his speech to the congress, the 'fourteen points' that were essential in maintenance of world peace. Among these were three great principles that formed the basis of world peace namely;

1. Self-determination of all peoples, i.e, the right of peoples all over the world to determine their own fate.
2. The need to make public all diplomatic and international agreements.
3. The need to establish a League of Nations which would provide an avenue for discussing all international problems, protect small states from aggression by large ones.

In January 1919, statesmen from the 27 Allied powers converged at Paris, France to determine the fate of the defeated central powers. The central powers were not party to the discussions but were required to sign on the final draft. The Key personalities at the conference were;

- i. Lloyd George( PM of Britain)
- ii. George Clemenceau (PM of France)
- iii. Woodrow Wilson (President of USA)
- iv. Vittorio Orlando (PM of Italy)

Five treaties were signed with each of the central powers separately as follows;

- i. The Treaty of Versailles with Germany (28th June 1919)

- ii. Treaty of St. Germaine with Austria (10th September 1919)
- iii. Treaty of Neuilly with Bulgaria (27th November 1919)
- iv. Treaty of Trianon with Hungary (4th June 1920)
- v. Treaty of Sevres in 1920 and Lausanne in 1923 with Turkey.

### **The Treaty of Versailles.**

It should be noted that all the above treaties were generally referred to as the Treaty of Versailles.

### **Terms of the Versailles Treaty of 1919.**

- i. The treaty declared Germany an aggressor who was supposed to pay reparations and whose military capability was to be reduced.
- ii. She lost all her colonial possessions with the African colonies being taken from her and put under supervision of the League of Nations.
- iii. The treaty of St. Germaine provided for the creation of Yugoslavia, Bosnia, Herzegovina and Malta as mandated territories.
- iv. Germany was totally disarmed and only allowed to retain a force of 100,000 soldiers and her navy was disbanded. Military conscription was banned in Germany.
- v. Germany's population and size was reduced as Austria, with a large German population was allowed to remain independent. Italy acquired Stria, the Italian-speaking region of Austria.
- vi. Rhineland was to be permanently demilitarized. Germany troops were not allowed in the region.
- vii. By the treaty of Versailles, Germany lost the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine to France.
- viii. The treaty established the League of Nation.

### **Failures of the treaty of Versailles**

- i. The treaty handed Germany a heavy punishment as if she was the only one to blame for World War 1. This provoked deep resentment and bitterness among the German nationals.
- ii. The treaty ignored the interests of the colonial people. The former colonial possessions of Germany and turkey were handed over to France and Britain in total disregard to the African grievances during the Versailles conference
- iii. The treaty failed to cater for the interests of the minority in Europe. The new republic of Austria was forbidden from merging with Germany though a national vote was for the merger.
- iv. Italy was given a raw deal in the settlement. She was only given Stria, an Italian-speaking region formerly belonging to Austria.
- v. Though the treaty proposal for the formation of the League of Nations came from the USA president Wilson, the US constitution prohibited commitment to such an organization, whose membership required a nation to help a future victim of aggression.

### **RESULTS OF WORLD WAR I**

- i. Nationalist movements in Asia and Africa grew in strength and number after the war and a sense of patriotism arose.
- ii. USA gained an upper hand in the post war European affairs. She emerged as a leading world power.
- iii. German military capability was reduced on land and sea and heavy indemnity imposed on her. She lost all her colonies, which were made mandated territories of the League of Nations.
- iv. The end of the war marked the beginning of the decline of western imperialism. As early as 1920, there was a possibility of independence for colonial countries. The war encouraged imperial powers to give more freedom to their subjects.
- v. The end of the war witnessed the creation of new states e.g. Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Finland.
- vi. Germany and Italy fell in the hands of dictators e.g. Mussolini and Hitler.
- vii. The war Created bitter feelings and mistrust among the countries that fought in the war. This continued until the outbreak of the Second World War.
- viii. It led to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia as radicals took over government there.
- ix. It led to a change of government in Britain.
- x. There was greater use of motor vehicles and aircraft, which facilitated transport.
- xi. The art of surgery improved.

- xii. Between 1914 and 1918, European factories were destroyed and business brought down hence heavy losses.
- xiii. There was massive destruction of property and infrastructure.
- xiv. It led to the great depression 1920 to 1921, which affected economies worldwide.
- xv. It led to increased taxation by the colonial authorities to meet war and post-war demands.

## **THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS**

### **Origin and organization of the League of Nations.**

The League of Nations was established by the victors of the First World War in 1920 at the treaty of Versailles with the main aim of preventing the occurrence of another war. The idea of its formation was mooted by Woodrow Wilson, the US president who was supported by Lord Robert Cecil of Britain, Jan Smuts of South Africa and Leon Bourgeois of France.

The League of Nations came into force during the first meeting in London Britain, on 10th January 1920.

### **Reasons for the formation of the League of Nations in 1920.**

- i. It was formed for the Maintenance of world peace / It was specifically created to prevent the outbreak of another world war
- ii. The League of Nations was meant to foster international cooperation in solving problems as they arise.
- iii. It was formed to jointly take instant action against an agreed aggressor by economic and possibly by military means.
- iv. Members were to secure and maintain fair and humane conditions of labour as one way of maintaining peace in the world.
- v. It was formed to oversee development of territories lost to central powers during the First World War. E.g. Tanganyika, Togo, South West Africa etc.

*The main organs of the League of Nations were;*

### **The Council.**

It was made up of permanent and Non-permanent members. The permanent members were France, Britain, Italy and Japan. Non permanent members were four, elected by the general assembly.

The main role of the council which sat in Geneva was to appoint committees and secretary General with the approval of the majority of the Assembly. It also dealt with disputes amongst member states, reduction of armament, execution of arbitral awards and admittance and expulsion of members.

### **The Assembly.**

It met once a year at Geneva and was comprised of three delegates from each member state. It elected non-permanent members to the council. The functions of the Assembly included;

- i. Control of the Budget of the organization (including contributions and expenditure).
- ii. Admission of new members after approval of a two-thirds majority.
- iii. Appointment of non-permanent members of the League of Nations Council.
- iv. Consideration of treaties.
- v. Supervision of the work of the League of Nations council.
- vi. Appointment of the 15 judges of the permanent Court of International Justice.
- vii. Giving approval to the appointment of Secretary-General.

### **The Secretariat.**

The Secretariat, based in Geneva, consisted of the secretary general and his staff. It was the administrative body of the League of Nations. It kept records of the organization and conducted correspondences including treaties by member states. It implemented the decisions of the League of Nations. It provided continuity between one meeting of the council or the assembly and the next,

### **The International Court of Justice.**

Set up between 1920 and 1922, it comprised of eleven judges and four deputy judges elected for nine years by the assembly and the council. It was based at the Hague- Holland. Decisions made by the court were binding on all parties in dispute.

### **International Labour Organization.**

It consisted of 4 delegates- two for member states and two for workers from each member state. Its main aim was to maintain good working conditions for men, women and children.

### **The Mandates Commission.**

It had then responsibility of supervising the administration of the trustee colonies.  
The League of Nations also had several specialized agencies.

### **Achievements of the League of Nations.**

- i. The League of Nations, through the Permanent Court of International Justice, maintained international peace and security. E.g. in the city of Danzig in spite of the hostility between the poles and the Germans.
- ii. The League of Nations achieved its objective of treating the minority with humane. The International Office for Refugees, for example, assisted refugees. Victims of the Nazi persecutions were also assisted.
- iii. The league assisted in the administration of the trust territories, through the Mandates Commission. E.g. in Togo, Tanganyika Cameroon and Rwanda-urundi. In addition, the territories acquired from turkey. E.g. Iraq and Palestine.
- iv. The league was able to solve several interstate disputes in a peaceful manner. E.g the frontier dispute between turkey and Iraq over the Mosul province (1924-1926), the dispute between Poland and Germany over northern Silesia.
- v. The league successfully restored financial stability in Austria following the economic slump in the country after the World War 1.
- vi. It successfully enforced control over the manufacture and sale of arms. It also held disarmament meetings.
- vii. The league ensured signing of peace treaties to promote security in the world. For example, the Locarno treaties of 1925 that settled boundary disputes between Germany and France.

### **Failures of the League of Nations.**

The League of Nations failed its Prime objective of maintaining world peace in the following ways;

- i. It failed to solve the Sino-Japanese dispute after Japan invaded Manchuria in China in 1931. Japan after refusing to abide by the League's demands that it withdraws from the Chinese territory, even pulled out of the league in 1933.
- ii. The Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. Benito Mussolini, rather than accept the League's verdict that he withdraws Italian troops from Ethiopia, pulled out of the League.
- iii. The League failed to stop German Violation of the terms of the Versailles Treaty. She embarked on a remilitarization programme and established a navy and an airbase.
- iv. Nations continued to make many defensive pacts in total disregard of the Treaty of Versailles.
- v. Germany invaded other regions such as Poland and Austria between 1936 and 1939, while Russia invaded Finland in 1939 in violation of the League of Nations.

### **Factors that undermined the effectiveness of the League of Nations.**

- i. Member countries were not willing to take disputes to the international court of justice.
- ii. German was still determined to increase its military strength and continue with its aggression policy.
- iii. Individual nations were more pre-occupied with national interests and pride, at the expense of the organization's interests.
- iv. The Versailles peace settlement resolutions were too harsh to Germany thus leaving the Germans aggrieved and refuse to cooperate with the League of Nations.
- v. The League of Nations lacked the executive authority to implement its resolutions.
- vi. USA congress refused to ratify the treaty of the League of Nations. This denied the organization diplomatic and economic strength.
- vii. There was shortage of funds to implement the functions of the League of Nations.
- viii. The Appeasement Policy of Britain and France forced them to stand aside and avoid taking a firm action against Japan when she invaded china, Germany when she invaded and occupied Rhineland, and Italy when she attacked Ethiopia.

### **The Second World War**

The 1930's witnessed the rise of dictators in Europe like Adolf Hitler of Germany, Benito Mussolini of Italy and General Francisco Franco of Spain who intentionally defied international opinion and disregarded the Versailles Treaty and League of Nations. Their activities and those of Japan began to interfere with prevailing peace in the



world. This happened at the time when USA had retreated into isolation leaving the task of maintaining world peace only to Britain and France.

The Second World War involved most countries in the world with millions of people conscripted for service in both the military and war related industries.

### ***Causes of the Second World War.***

- i. *Germany's dissatisfaction based on territorial grievances.*
- ii. The Versailles treaty of 1919 imposed harsh and humiliating conditions on Germany, which aggrieved the Germans to the level of being ready to go to war again.
- iii. *The rise of nationalism in Europe.* In Germany, the chancellor, Adolf Hitler who had the desire to dominate the whole world, fuelled it. For example, he encouraged German speakers in Sudetenland, Czechoslovakia to demand independence from Czechoslovakia. Italy under Mussolini invaded Ethiopia, in 1939 to regain her lost glory and national pride after the Adowa defeat I 1896. Syria rose up against France.
- iv. *Political developments in Europe.* In Italy in 1922, the fascist government under Benito Mussolini came to power. In Germany, Hitler's Nazi government assumed power in 1933. The Fascist government in Italy emphasized on the regaining of lost glory. The Nazi government began a fresh new policy of aggression.
- v. *The economic problems caused by the great depression of 1929 to 1931.*
- vi. The great slump led to widespread unemployment, declining wages, poverty etc. these led to social discontent and political unrest in many countries of the world.
- vii. *The failure of Germany to pay reparations.*
- viii. This was followed by the French invasion of the Ruhr industrial region- a German territory. This led to increased tension.
- ix. *Weakening of the League of Nations.* Japan left the League of Nations after protest over Manchuria, which she had grabbed, from china. Italy left the League of Nations after Mussolini had grabbed Abyssinia and annexed it against the will of the allies and Ethiopians. Russia invaded Finland in 1939 and the league was unable to intervene. There were many secret treaties among members of the league.
- x. *The Spanish civil war (1936-1939).* The republican revolution of 1931 ended the Spanish monarchy. The struggle between the royalists and socialists, however, continued. The European powers took sides in the civil war. France, Britain and Russia supported the royalists. Germany and Italy supported General Franco who was fighting from exile in Morocco.
- xi. *Growth of military alliances.* Hitler and Mussolini established a military pact in 1936 (The Berlin-Rome Axis). It became the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis with the joining of Italy. The alliance between Russia and German to divide Poland widened the gap between them and the allied forces. It created fear and suspicion.
- xii. *The invasion of Poland by Germany.* This happened in September 1939 was the immediate cause of the war. This upset Britain and France, who stated their intentions of assisting Poland. They declared war on Germany in October 1939.

### **COURSE OF WORLD WAR 2**

The invasion of Poland by German forces on 1st of September 1939 and the subsequent declaration of war against Germany by Britain and France on 3rd of September 1939 marked the beginning of the Second World War. Meanwhile on 17th September 1939, the USSR attacked Poland from the East, as per the secret clause in the Nazi-Soviet act of August 1939. Poland had been overrun by German and Russian forces by 27th September 1939. The country was divided between Russia and Germany.

#### **The phoney war.**

This was a period during world war two when no major military operations were undertaken on the western front although war had been declared on Germany by France and Britain. The period lasted eight months from 3rd of September 1939. It was used by the Allied countries to fully mobilise their forces for an attack on Germany since they had not initially been prepared. Hitler on his part did not want to be involved in war in the west since his armies had not fully recovered from the consequents in the east.

During this period, two unsuccessful attempts were made to bring peace;

- a) On 6th October 1939, Hitler and Stalin of Russia made an attempt to convince the Allies to accept the Nazi Occupation of Poland and make peace.

- b) On 7th October, King Leopold of Belgium and Queen Wilhelmina of Netherlands appealed to the Axis powers and the Western Allies to make peace.

### **War in Western Europe.**

On 9th April 1940, Hitler launched a sea-borne invasion against Norway after attacking Denmark via land. They were assisted by a Norwegian Nazi sympathiser Vidkund Quisling. The prime minister of Norway and his Ministers fled to London and Hitler established a puppet government in the country.

The defeat of British and French forces in Norway sparked off a parliamentary revolution in Britain forcing the PM Neville Chamberlain to resign to be replaced by Sir Winston Churchill.

Germany extended their attack on Luxembourg, Netherlands and Belgium. The Allies were unable to contain the German advance and even retreated to the French port of Dunkirk, marking a major defeat of the allies in Europe.

On 14th June 1940, the Germans captured Paris forcing the new Prime Minister Paul Reynaud to sue for peace with Hitler on 22nd June 1940. Under the peace agreement, The Germans took over Alsace –Lorraine, Northern France and the Atlantic coastline. The French government fled to Vichy, southern France.

Why the French were defeated so quickly.

- a) The French forces were not psychologically prepared for the war and thus were found divided.
- b) The French forces were not as well organized as the Germans thus exposing various military weaknesses. For example, the Germans were supported by combat planes which the French did not use.
- c) Poor communication between the army and the Air force. The French generals failed to coordinate the war properly to the extend of ignoring the fact that the Air force could have been used to drive German Bombers off.

Having succeeded in their Paris onslaught, the Germans attacked Britain in July 1940. However, Winston Churchill, the British Premier, had mobilized forces to resist this attack successfully he even obtained reinforcement from USA.

The battle of Britain determined the future of World War II. It forced Hitler to delay his attacks.

### **War in North Africa.**

WWII in Africa was marked by the Italian successful attack on French and British Somaliland. Under Marshal Graziani, the Italian forces advanced to Egypt though unsuccessful. In June 1942, German forces moved to North Africa to reinforce the Italians.

However, British forces led by General Bernard Montgomery moved quickly and captured Malta which would have been used as a base for attack by the Germans. General Montgomery attacked the Germans at El Alamein in Egypt, forcing them to move to west. On 8th November 1942, British and American forces invaded Morocco and Algeria.

Although the Germans continued fighting in Tunisia, by May 1943, their Army under General Rommel had surrendered.

### **War in the Balkans.**

In August 1940, Hitler Attacked and captured Romania and Bulgaria. In April 1941, Yugoslavia and Greece were taken. Crete was taken in May 1941.

On 22nd June 1941, Hitler attacked USSR forcing the Russian troops to retreat. However, he failed to capture Moscow before the onset of winter. In June 1942, the Germans resumed their offensive. They were finally defeated at the battle of Stalingrad on 31st January 1943 by the Russian Red Army led by Marshal Zhukov. The Germans lost 300,000 men while 100,000 survivors surrendered.

By May 1944, the Russians had pushed the Germans from their territory and were approaching Germany itself.

### ***Why the Germans were defeated during the Russian Invasion.***

- i. The Germany army was fighting in several fronts at the same time as compared to the allies. This lack of concentration in one area allowed the other Russian army to defeat them.
- ii. The soviet forces employed the scorched earth policy which left very little for the German forces.
- iii. The Germans ill-treated the soviet people and exploited their economic resources causing resentment and unity to fight with determination.
- iv. Weak leadership by the German military leaders contributed to their defeat.

### **USA entry into World War I.**

The Japanese attack on the American great Naval Base at Pearl Harbour on the Hawaiian island is the one incident that dragged USA into WWII.

On 8th December 1941, the USA, Britain and the Netherlands declared war on Japan. The Germans and Italians also declared war on the USA. Russia kept off the war in Asia having signed a treaty with Japan.

Japan resisted fiercely. Her airforce sank two British battleships on 10th December 1941. She captured Hong Kong, Malaya in Malaysia and took over the great naval base at Singapore. She also occupied Burma, Dutch East Indies, the Philippines and parts of the western pacific islands.

The Japanese forces were repulsed while on their way to Port Moresby, New Guinea in may 1942.

In 1942, Britain used her bases in India to attack Japan. Japan attacked India in 1944, but the strong and large allied forces defeated the Japanese at the battle of Kohima.

### ***The defeat of Germany.***

After 1942, the tide of success began to turn against Hitler. German forces were defeated by the allies in North Africa and France. By March 1945, the Allies had crossed the Rhine, pushed the Germans out of France in June 1944.

The Germans were meanwhile facing the Russian attack from the East. Hitler accepted defeated and handed over power to one of the Military Generals to retreat to an underground Bunker in Berlin.

On 29th April 1945, Hitler married his long term Mistress Eva Braun. On the following day, he committed suicide by shooting himself while Eva Braun took Poison.

On 7th May 1945, the Germans surrendered unconditionally

Why the Germans were defeated.

- i. Germany had acquired far too many territories and she was unable to effectively control them.
- ii. The USSR recovered from her losses and began to rearm in a bid to fight against Germany.
- iii. The USA entry into the war in 1941 on the side of the allies contributed to the eventual defeat of the Germans.
- iv. Germany's Axis powers were only four, fighting against more than 27 allies. Even among the Germany collaborators, Italy surrendered while Bulgaria and Romania also were a burden to the Germans.

### ***The defeat of Japan.***

After Germany surrender, Japan continued with fierce fighting sometimes employing the services of suicide bombers known as *Kamikaze*. The allies were able to liberate the territories captured by Japan

After the defeat at Okinawa, Japan was certain of defeat, but her PM , Admiral Suzuki Kantaro, did not believe in unconditional defeat. On 6th August 1945, a bomber Aeroplane, Enola Gay, commanded by Colonel Paul Tibbets, flew over Hiroshima dropping a 4535.15kg atomic bomb. About 78,000 people died. On 8th August 1945, Russia attacked Japan. On 9th August 1945, an even larger Bomb was dropped on Nagasaki killing more than 40,000 people.

Japan surrendered unconditionally on 15th August 1945 bringing WWII to an end.

### ***Factors that enabled the allied powers to win the Second World War***

- i. Allies had more wealth in terms of food, raw materials and equipments.
- ii. Allies controlled the North Sea, which ensured safe transportation of troops and equipment. They were also able to block the central powers in the sea.
- iii. Entry of USA in the war led to defeat of Germany. America had strong American air force and war resources,
- iv. Germany's inability to control her expansive territories and some turned against her and in favour of the allied powers.
- v. The unity, morale and determination of the allied leaders and fighters.
- vi. Popular sentiment was for allied victory and Hitler's defeat.
- vii. Hitler's over-confidence and craziness did not allow him to comprehend the enormity of opposition up against him and the axis forces.
- viii. External support especially from the colonial people in Africa, Asia and elsewhere.
- ix. Axis powers dropped out of war one by one.
- x. Allies had better industries and financial resources/ superior economy, war tactics and superior diplomacy by all the allied powers.
- xi. The axis powers made serious tactical mistakes e.g. Hitler failed to prepare for a winter campaign in Russia and was obsessed with the idea that Germans must not retreat.
- xii. When the USSR recovered from her losses, she rearmed herself and attacked Germany.

### ***Social results of Second World War***

- i. Depopulation and great suffering as Millions of people perished either in war or due to famine and diseases.
- ii. People suffered psychologically and emotionally from the loss of loved ones and torture of the war.
- iii. The end of the war witnessed change in the status of women. Women started doing work, which was initially monopolized by men. E.g. military and management.
- iv. There was permanent ill health and shortening of life for millions of peoples because of years of under-nourishment or captivity.
- v. There was massive Destruction of property such as homes, houses, buildings, roads and bridges.
- vi. A large number of people were displaced as people moved to look for peaceful areas and this led to great suffering. The new refugees included the Jews, Slavs and the poles.
- vii. The war fomented bitter feelings and mistrust among the countries that fought
- viii. The war helped to shade off the myth popularized by Europeans that they were a superior race to Africans as European casualties in the war proved that they were mortals

### ***Identify the political effects of the World War II.***

- i. Defeat of axis powers led to government changes in Germany, Italy and Japan.
- ii. The division of Europe into two opposing blocks led to the cold war, which was followed by an arms race between USA and USSR.
- iii. Germany was divided into two. The communist East and the capitalist West. The city of Berlin was also divided between the east and the west.
- iv. Germany and Italy were weakened especially with the loss of their colonies.
- v. U.S.A & U.S.S.R emerged as superpowers. The pre-war balance of power was destroyed and the power vacuum was filled by two new superpowers, the USA and USSR
- vi. A weakness of the League of Nations to prevent the outbreak of war was demonstrated. This Led to UNO formation.
- vii. There was rise of nationalism in Asia and Africa. It led to Africans struggle for independence because they were confident knowing that Europeans were no superior to them. Nationalists among the Asians leading to attainment of independence in Pakistan and India in 1947, in Burma (Myanmar) in 1948, and in Ceylon (Sri Lanka.) in 1949.
- viii. The Japanese destroyed the myth of European military superiority due to the defeat of British and American forces in the Far East.
- ix. New states were created. In 1948, the state of Israel was established in the Middle East, to settle the Jews who were displaced during the war.

### ***Economic effects of World War 2***

- i. Agriculture and industries were disrupted due to lack of equipment, raw materials and human resources.
- ii. External trade almost came to a standstill because of fear and insecurity.
- iii. It led to increased dependency on colonies by European powers. There was need of raw materials to reconstruct the destroyed industries.
- iv. Some Industries were established in the colonies to manufacture goods because of the difficulties faced in running them during the war.
- v. It led to the rise of European economic cooperation. The post war economic destructions led to the need for cooperation. This paved way for formation of the European Economic Community in 1957.