



World History

MPSC Mains

General Studies I
Class Notes





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MPSC MAINS

World History
GENERAL STUDIES - I
(Class Notes)

Year 2025-26

World History Notes – MPSC Ready, Fully Illustrated & Exam-Oriented

Ace World History with Notes That Make Learning Visual, Analytical, and Easy!

Why These Notes Stand Out

Comprehensive

- Integrates political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions for holistic understanding.

Illustrations That Stick

- Flowcharts, timelines, maps, and diagrams for quick retention.
- Makes even complex events and processes instantly understandable.

Issue-Based, Answer-Oriented Structure

- Organized by themes, regions, and causes & consequences.
- Helps analyze historical events critically, perfect for mains answers.

Smart Revision & Quick Recall

- Concise bullet points, highlight boxes, and summaries.
- Optimized for fast revision before prelims and mains.

Current Affairs & Contemporary Relevance

- Links world events to modern India and global trends.
- Enhances answer writing with context and analysis.

Who Should Use These Notes?

- MPSC Civil Services Aspirants (Mains)

- History Optional Students
- Any Competitive Exam Aspirants needing structured, analytical world history knowledge

Your Edge in the Exam

With these notes, you can:

- Master history without rote learning
- Visualize events clearly and quickly
- Write impactful, structured answers in UPSC Mains

Turn History into Your Score Booster!

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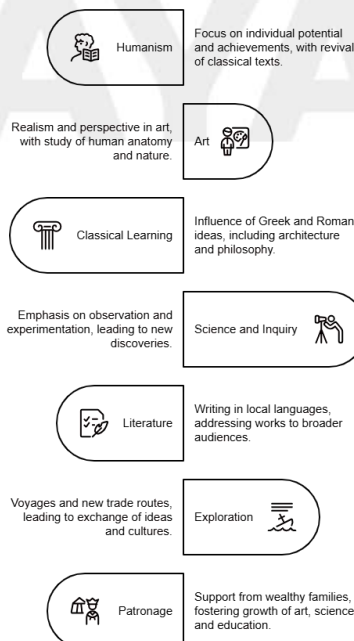
1. Enlightenment and Modern Ideas (Renaissance in Europe)

1. It is a philosophical movement of 17th and 18th century which challenged authority and presented new rational ideas on political, cultural and scientific subjects.

2. Characteristics

- Awareness among people and their importance
- Temperamental change and materialistic outlook
- Development of humanism
- Rationality over orthodoxy
- Scientific outlook to superstitions
- Universities at Paris, Oxford
- Youth became restless and impatient
- Regional language development
- Literature free from influence of church
- New inventions and discoveries
- Discovery of man and discovery of world
- Growth of secularism and decline of clerical dominance in social life.
- Emphasis on individualism and dignity of man, which later influenced liberal democratic ideas.
- Development of critical thinking and questioning spirit that laid the foundation for scientific revolutions and later constitutional revolutions.

Renaissance Characteristics



3. Causes of the Renaissance in Europe

- **Fall of Constantinople (1453)**
 - The Ottoman capture of Constantinople led many Greek scholars to flee to Italy and other parts of Europe.
 - They brought classical manuscripts, reviving interest in Greek and Roman learning.
- **Growth of Trade and Towns**
 - Expansion of trade, especially with the East (spices, silk), created wealthy merchant classes.
 - Cities like Florence, Venice, and Genoa became centers of commerce and patronage.
- **Rise of Wealthy Patrons**
 - Rich merchant families (e.g., Medici in Florence) sponsored artists, writers, and scholars.
 - Patronage encouraged experimentation and artistic freedom.
- **Rediscovery of Classical Texts**
 - Contact with Arab scholars during Crusades and trade led to the recovery of ancient Greek and Roman works.
 - Classical humanist ideas promoted individualism and secular learning.
- **Invention of Printing Press (1450)**
 - Johannes Gutenberg's press enabled mass production of books.
 - Spread of ideas became faster and more affordable, encouraging literacy and critical thinking.
- **Decline of Feudalism**
 - Growth of centralized monarchies and decline of feudal lords reduced the rigid medieval social structure.
 - More mobility and openness to new ideas.
- **Church Weakening & Criticism**
 - Events like the Great Schism and growing corruption in the Church (e.g., sale of indulgences) led to questioning of religious authority.
 - Opened doors to secularism and humanism
- **Influence of Islamic Civilization**
 - Transmission of knowledge in science, mathematics, and philosophy from the Arab world enriched European learning.
- **Spirit of Inquiry and Exploration**
 - Desire to explore new lands (Age of Discovery) reflected a broader curiosity and spirit of experimentation.

4. Italy became the birthplace of Renaissance due to ancient achievements and knowledge, development of social class, atmosphere of liberal and free thinking, rich country, important cities, etc.

5. Impact of Renaissance in Europe

- **Rise of Humanism**

- Focus shifted from God and religion to humans and their potential.
- Promoted secular values and individual dignity.

- **Development of Art and Architecture**

- Realism, perspective, and human anatomy were emphasized (e.g., works of Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo).
- Gothic style declined; classical Greco-Roman styles revived.

- **Growth of Scientific Temper**

- Encouraged observation, experimentation, and questioning of old beliefs.
- Laid foundation for the Scientific Revolution (e.g., Copernicus, Galileo).

- **Advancement in Literature**

- Use of vernacular languages grew (e.g., Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*).
- Themes focused more on human experiences and emotions.

- **Religious Reforms**

- Critical attitude towards Church corruption contributed to the Protestant Reformation (e.g., Martin Luther's 95 Theses).
- Rise of new Christian denominations weakened papal authority.

- **Spread of Education and Literacy**

- Printing press made books affordable and accessible.
- Literacy rates rose, leading to a more informed society.

- **Economic and Social Changes**

- Growth of merchant and middle classes.
- Decline of feudal system, rise of urban centers.

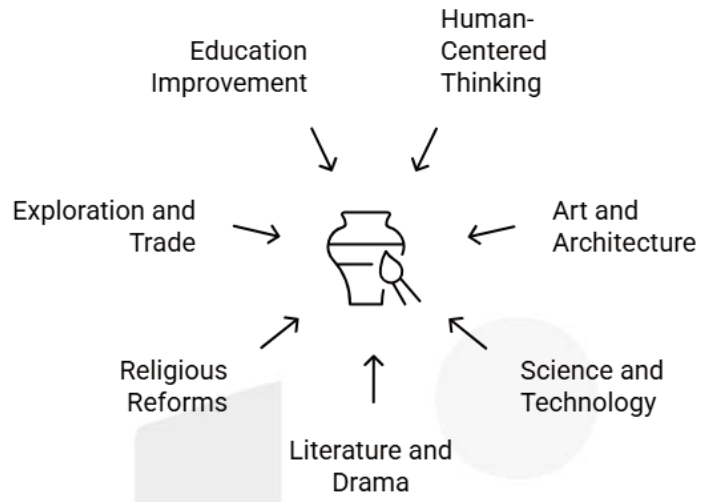
- **Political Impact**

- Strengthened nation-states as monarchs supported art and learning to legitimize their rule.
- Diplomacy and modern governance structures began to emerge.

- **Spirit of Exploration**

- Inspired curiosity about the world, contributing to the Age of Discovery (e.g., Columbus, Vasco da Gama).

Renaissance Transformation



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2. American Revolution

1. Regional conditions

- Northern colonies were hilly, snowy, and unfit for cultivation.
- Middle colonies were industrial and highly developed.
- Southern colonies had a hot climate, suitable for cultivation, and slavery was prevalent there.

2. Causes of the American Revolution

• Political Causes

- Colonists had no representation in British Parliament ("No taxation without representation").
- British policies undermined colonial self-government and assemblies.

• Economic Causes

- Heavy taxation through laws such as:
 - **Sugar Act (1764)** — tax on sugar and molasses.
 - **Stamp Act (1765)** — tax on legal documents, newspapers, etc.
 - **Townshend Acts (1767)** — duties on imports like tea, glass, paint.
- Strict enforcement of Navigation Acts, restricting colonial trade.

• Social and Intellectual Causes

- Influence of Enlightenment ideas (e.g., John Locke's theories of natural rights and social contract).
- Growth of a distinct American identity among colonists.

• Military Factors

- Presence of British troops in colonies after the French and Indian War created tension.
- Boston Massacre (1770) and other violent clashes fueled anger

• Restrictive Acts

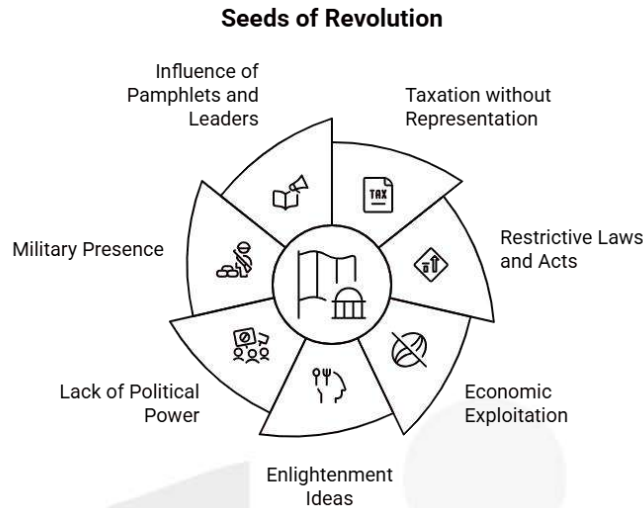
- **Intolerable Acts (1774)** — punitive laws after Boston Tea Party, closed Boston Port, reduced self-government.
- Quartering Act — colonists forced to house British soldiers.

• Role of Propaganda and Leaders

- Pamphlets like Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* mobilized public opinion.
- Leadership by figures such as George Washington, Samuel Adams, and Thomas Jefferson united resistance.

• Immediate Triggers

- Boston Tea Party (1773) — protest against tea tax.
- Battles of Lexington and Concord (1775) — first military engagements.



3. Continental Congress and War

- Inter Continental conference of Congress at Philadelphia declared independence on 4 July 1776.
- France and Spain joined, Holland also declared war while Russia, Denmark, Sweden remained neutral.
- War ended in 1783 with the Paris pact which gave independence to 13 colonies.

4. Causes of British failure

- Underestimated Americans.
- Overconfidence.
- Intellectual sympathy to Americans.
- British traders not in favour of war.
- Difficult to send provisions to army.
- No local cooperation.
- Theatres of war scattered over 1000 km.
- Not familiar with geographical conditions.
- Unpopularity of George III.
- George Washington's efficient leadership.
- Participation of France, Spain, Netherlands.
- Guerrilla warfare.

5. Significance

- Slavery did not disappear.
- People's interest in politics increased, public discussions and free expansion of newspaper and pamphlets.
- Change in the social and economic activities.
- Philosophy of individualism and equality.
- Importance of education recognised.

- Initiative to improve the condition of women.
- Affected the whole world.
- Not revolution in its form but in effects.
- Not only emerged a new nation but also a new era for human race.
- Promotion of democracy.
- Abolition of conventional property rights.
- Capitalistic economy.
- Boost to navigation.
- Landlords left and settled in Canada and their estates got fragmented which gave boost to agriculture.
- Industries free from mercantilistic restrictions.
- Blow to absolute monarchy, aristocratic supremacy and divine rights of King.
- Right to vote.
- Written constitution, secularism.
- Paved way to French Revolution.
- Inspired South America against Portugal and Spain.
- Revolution in Ireland.
- Unfavourable to India as British crushed French and concentrated in India but gave inspiration to nationalist movement in India.

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3. French Revolution

Multiple phases

- Fought many times: 1830, 1848, and 1870.
- 1789 to 1815 — 4 phases: revolution, war, tyranny, and Empire.

Causes

1. Political set up

- Absolute monarchy of Louis XIV.
- No representative council or parliament.
- Intolerance
- Bankruptcy.
- Selfishness.
- Social inequality.
- No uniformity in administration.
- No courts.
- Selling of posts.
- Latin language.
- No local self-government, all centralisation from Versailles.

2. Social set up

- Complex and diversified society based on feudalism, inequality, and prerogative.
- Three classes: clergy, nobility, and common class.
- Clergy and nobility comprised 6% of population but had 80% of property with no tax.
- Farmers were victims of nobility — 80% income to pay taxes.

3. Economic set up

- Extravagance of ruling class.
- Faulty taxation system.
- Wrong financial policies of government.
- Expensive wars.
- No restriction on grants and luxurious life.
- Defective commercial policy.

4. Intellectual enlightenment

- Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau's liberal ideas in society.
- Laissez-faire.
- Thought-provoking writing through satire, humour, and criticism.
- Scientific explanation.
- Human-centric thinking.
- Intellectual consciousness.

5. Immediate causes

- Soldiers coming from American Revolution.
- Colonne's (Finance Minister) proposal to tax all masses to improve the condition and he was dismissed.
- Parliament refused to clear modified resolution and matter was sent to estate general. Here everyone had one vote; king doubled the composition of third section but didn't raise the voting right.

National Council and Tennis Court Oath

- Third chamber became national Council and took Tennis Court Oath with the major role of Mirabeau.
- King tried to suppress and thus attack on Bastille on 14 July 1789 took place.

Paris Commune and early changes

- Paris commune was set up, flag was adopted, national guards were appointed and this similar system in all cities was implemented.
- Seat shifted from Versailles to Paris.
- Constitution assembly was set up.

First constitution

- First constitution in 1791 which had many flaws.
- It rose hopes but could not fulfil.

Second phase

- Jacobeans versus Girondists.
- Rise of Robespierre.

Third phase

- Tyranny led by violent middle-class, reign of terror.
- Thermidorian reaction; Robespierre guillotined.

Fourth phase

- Napoleon capitalised this for strengthening through Italian campaign, Egyptian campaign.
- Poor performance of government thus public lost faith.

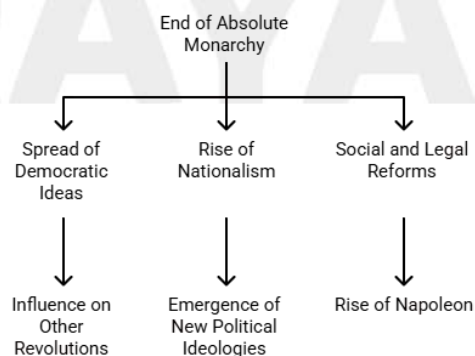
Leadership changes

- Started by aristocrats and ended by military dictator.
- There was continuous change as change in circumstances and leader.

Significance

- Rejuvenated political, social, religious, economic systems.
- Liberty, equality, and fraternity.
- Rise of Napoleon.
- Greek independence.
- Unification of Italy, unification of Germany.
- Eradication of Holy Roman Empire.
- Church could not revive its bygone glory.
- Irish nationalism.
- Condition of farmers improved.
- Jurisdiction of law improved.
- Taxation made more rational.
- Opened the eyes of the world.
- New ideology in politics and society.
- Presented fresh outlook towards life.
- End of autocracy and despotic Bourbon Dynasty.
- End of feudalism, privilege classes.
- Declaration of human rights.
- King's assassination turned many European nations against it. To avert influence, banned free press in other countries.
- Demand for political rights.
- Separated religion from politics.

Impact of the French Revolution



4. Napoleonic Era (1799–1815)

Background and Rise of Napoleon

- The French Revolution (1789) led to political instability, economic hardship, and social chaos in France.
- The Directory (1795–1799) was weak and corrupt, failing to stabilize France.
- Napoleon Bonaparte, a popular military leader known for Italian and Egyptian campaigns, overthrew the Directory through the Coup of 18 Brumaire (1799).
- Proclaimed First Consul (1799), later crowned himself Emperor of the French in 1804, marking the beginning of the Napoleonic Empire.

Major Political Developments

- Establishment of Consulate (1799–1804) — centralized power in Napoleon's hands.
- Transition to Empire (1804) — symbolic return to monarchy but with revolutionary legitimacy.
- Use of plebiscites to gain popular support and legitimacy.

Administrative and Legal Reforms

- **Centralized administration:** Prefects appointed in departments; strong centralized bureaucracy.
- **Napoleonic Code (1804):** Unified civil law, emphasized equality before law, abolished feudal privileges, promoted meritocracy. Basis for many modern legal systems worldwide.
- **Education reforms:** Lycée system established to create a trained bureaucratic and military elite loyal to state.
- **Concordat with the Pope (1801):** Re-established Catholic Church's position but kept church under state control.
- **Economic measures:** Bank of France established, tax system reformed, infrastructure development to stimulate economy.

Military Campaigns and Expansion

- Successful campaigns: Austerlitz (1805), Jena (1806), Wagram (1809).
- Formation of **Continental System** (1806): Economic blockade against Britain, aimed to weaken its trade but harmed Europe's economy too.
- Invasion of Spain (1808): Sparked guerrilla warfare and rise of nationalism.
- Russian Campaign (1812): Major defeat; harsh winter, scorched earth policy led to huge French losses.
- Sixth Coalition formed against France after Russian defeat; Battle of Leipzig (1813) — major setback.

- Allied forces entered Paris in 1814; Napoleon abdicated, exiled to Elba.
- Returned in "Hundred Days" (1815), defeated at Battle of Waterloo; final exile to Saint Helena.

Impact on France and Europe

On France

- Consolidation of many revolutionary gains (legal equality, abolition of feudalism).
- Strengthened central state, efficient administration.
- Rise of militarism and expansionism; heavy human and economic cost.

On Europe

- Spread of revolutionary ideas: nationalism, liberalism, legal equality.
- Redrawing of political boundaries; dissolution of Holy Roman Empire (1806).
- Stimulated unification movements in Germany and Italy.
- Triggered conservative backlash — Congress of Vienna (1815) restored balance of power, monarchies, and aimed to contain revolutionary ideas.

Global Impact

- Influenced independence movements in Latin America (e.g., Simon Bolivar inspired by Napoleonic ideas).
- Spread of civil law traditions globally (many nations adopted or adapted Napoleonic Code).
- Strengthened ideas of nation-state, self-determination.

Criticism and Analysis

- Napoleon seen both as "Child of Revolution" (preserving revolutionary reforms) and "Destroyer of Revolution" (authoritarian, crowned himself emperor).
- Viewed as modernizer and reformer but also as a dictator.
- His wars caused massive loss of life (estimated 3–6 million deaths across Europe), economic devastation.

Legacy

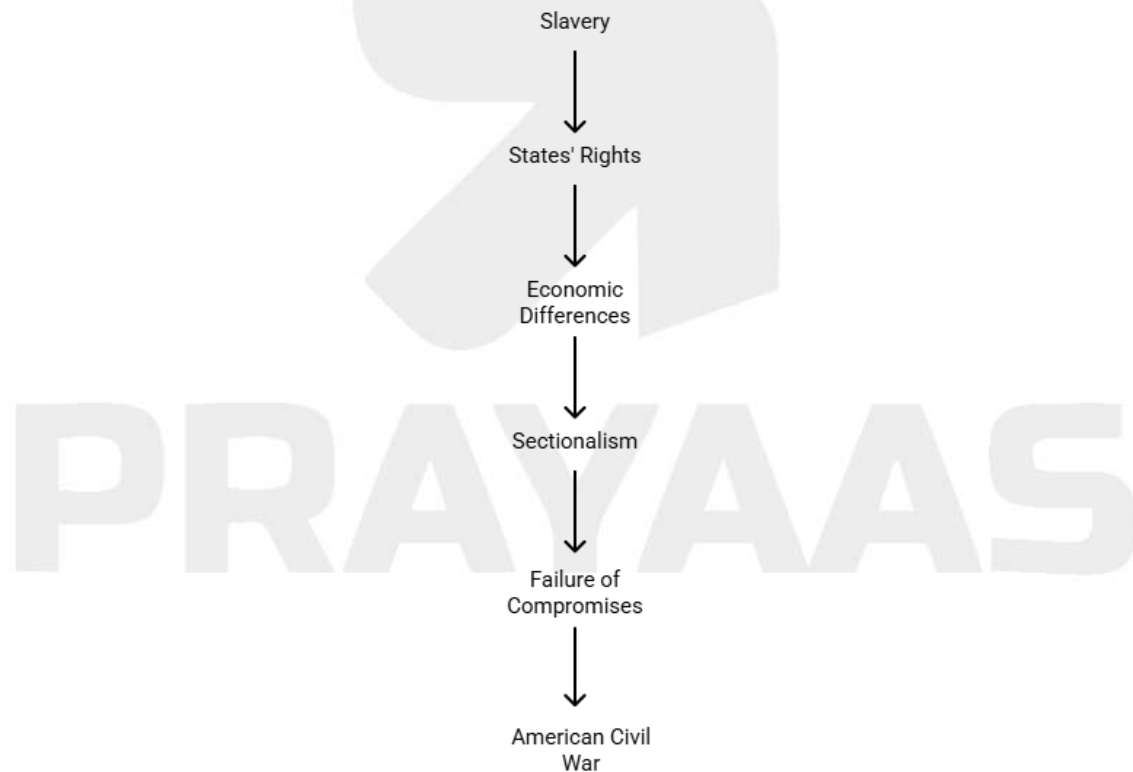
- Napoleonic Code remains a foundational legal document.
- Set precedent for strong centralized state governance in Europe.
- Inspired nationalist and liberal movements globally.
- Altered European diplomatic and political landscape permanently.

5. American Civil War (1861–1865)

Background and Context

- The American Civil War was fought primarily over the issues of **slavery, states' rights, and sectionalism** between the Northern states (Union) and Southern states (Confederacy).
- The Southern economy relied on plantation agriculture and slave labor; the North was more industrialized and supported abolition.
- **Missouri Compromise (1820)** and **Compromise of 1850** attempted to maintain balance but failed to resolve tensions.
- The **Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)** and violent conflicts ("Bleeding Kansas") intensified sectional divide.

Causes of the American Civil War



Immediate Causes

- Election of **Abraham Lincoln (1860)**: South perceived him as a threat to slavery despite his moderate stand.
- Secession of Southern states: Starting with South Carolina, 11 states formed the **Confederate States of America**.
- Attack on **Fort Sumter** (April 1861): Marked the official start of war.

Major Events and Developments

- **Emancipation Proclamation (1863):** Lincoln declared slaves in Confederate areas free; gave moral dimension to war.
- Key battles: Antietam (1862), Gettysburg (1863), Vicksburg (1863), Atlanta (1864).
- Role of generals: Ulysses S. Grant and William Tecumseh Sherman for the Union; Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson for Confederacy.
- Union's naval blockade weakened Confederate economy.
- **Gettysburg Address (1863):** Reaffirmed commitment to liberty and equality.

Factors for Union Victory

- Strong industrial base and infrastructure.
- Larger population and better resources.
- Effective leadership (Lincoln's strategic vision, Grant and Sherman's military campaigns).
- Weak international support for Confederacy — European powers remained neutral.

Consequences and Impact

On United States

- **Abolition of slavery:** 13th Amendment (1865) formally abolished slavery in the US.
- Strengthening of federal government power over states.
- Economic shift: Boost to Northern industries; Southern economy devastated.
- Social tension: Rise of **racist groups** (Ku Klux Klan), segregation laws ("Jim Crow") in later years.
- Beginning of **Reconstruction Era** (1865–1877): Rebuilding South, integrating freed slaves into society, political struggles.

On Politics and Society

- Rise of Republican Party dominance in national politics for several decades.
- African Americans briefly gained voting and political rights, though later suppressed.
- Strengthened democratic values and national unity in the long run.

On World

- Example for abolitionist movements globally.
- Strengthened global image of US as champion of democracy and freedom (though contradictions persisted).

Significance and Legacy

- Transformed the US from a loose federation into a more cohesive nation-state.
- Set stage for future civil rights movements.
- Reaffirmed principle of indivisible Union.
- Questioned limits of states' rights versus federal authority — an ongoing theme in US politics.

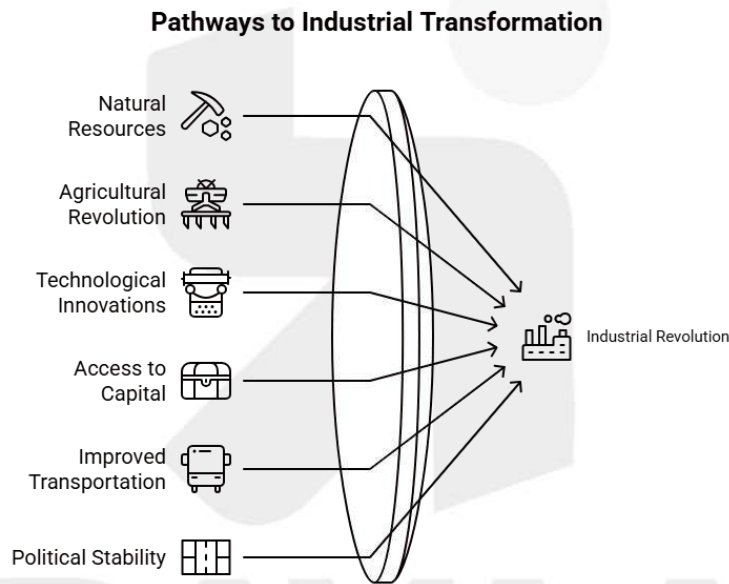


6. Industrial Revolution

Introduction

- The Industrial Revolution refers to the transition from manual production methods to machine-based manufacturing processes that began in Britain in the mid-18th century and later spread to Europe, North America, and other parts of the world.
- It marked a major turning point in human history, affecting every aspect of daily life, from economic systems and social structures to the environment.

Causes



Economic and Commercial Factors

- Accumulation of capital from trade and colonial exploitation.
- Emergence of capitalist class seeking profit and efficiency.
- Expansion of overseas markets (Africa, Asia, Americas).

Agricultural Revolution

- Enclosure movement in Britain consolidated land, increasing agricultural productivity.
- Introduction of scientific farming techniques and mechanisation (seed drill, crop rotation).

Technological Innovations

- Development of steam engine by James Watt (1769).
- Advancements in textile machinery (spinning jenny, power loom).
- Inventions in iron and steel (puddling process, Bessemer converter).

Political Stability and Legal Environment

- Stable parliamentary democracy in Britain encouraged investments.
- Protection of property rights, patent laws promoted innovation.

Geographical Advantages

- Abundant coal and iron ore resources in Britain.
- Navigable rivers and ports aiding cheap transport.

Social and Cultural Factors

- Protestant work ethic promoting hard work and thrift.
- Culture of scientific inquiry and rational thinking.

Features

- Shift from agrarian to industrial economy.
- Growth of factories and mass production.
- Mechanisation and division of labour (Adam Smith's pin factory example).
- Urbanisation and rise of new industrial cities (Manchester, Birmingham)
- Development of transportation networks — railways, canals, steamships.

Technological Innovations

Textile Industry

- Flying shuttle (John Kay).
- Spinning jenny (James Hargreaves).
- Water frame (Richard Arkwright).
- Power loom (Edmund Cartwright).

Metallurgy and Mining

- Coke smelting of iron (Abraham Darby).
- Steam pumps for mining.

Transport

- Steam locomotive (George Stephenson's Rocket).
- Steamships enhanced overseas trade.

Chemical Industry

- Use of alkalis in bleaching and dyeing.
- Discovery of synthetic dyes later in 19th century.

Socio-Economic Impact

Positive

- Massive increase in production and productivity.
- Rise of middle class and consumer culture.
- Fall in prices, increased availability of goods.
- Urban growth and improved connectivity.

- Strengthened capitalist economy; laid foundation for modern economic systems.
- Stimulated global trade and economic integration.

Negative

- Poor working and living conditions, especially for industrial workers.
- Exploitation of women and child labour.
- Emergence of slums, sanitation problems.
- Widening economic inequalities.
- Environmental degradation (pollution, deforestation).
- Alienation and loss of traditional artisan livelihoods.

Impact on Society and Politics

- Strengthened demands for political reforms (Chartist movement in Britain).
- Rise of trade unions and labour rights movements.
- Spread of socialist and Marxist ideas as a critique of capitalism.
- Beginning of modern class struggle discourse (proletariat vs bourgeoisie).

Global Impact

- Stimulated imperial expansion for raw materials and markets (colonialism in Asia and Africa).
- Created global economic dependencies (e.g., India de-industrialised to serve as raw material supplier).
- Industrial model exported to Europe, North America, Japan (Meiji industrialisation).

Criticism and Alternative Views

- Seen as a period of 'creative destruction' — economic growth at cost of social justice.
- Marxist historians highlight it as an era of capitalist exploitation and class oppression.
- Environmental historians point to irreversible ecological damage.

Relevance to India

- Indian textile industry declined (de-industrialisation) as cheap machine-made British textiles flooded Indian markets.
- India became a supplier of raw materials (cotton, jute, indigo) and market for British goods.
- Strengthened colonial economic policies of drain of wealth (as described by Dadabhai Naoroji).
- Inspired Indian intellectuals and reformers to envision indigenous industrialisation and self-reliance (Swadeshi movement).

Linkages with Contemporary Times

- Industrial Revolution laid foundation for modern capitalist economy, globalisation, and technological revolutions.
- Present-day industrial policies, debates on automation and AI echo earlier concerns of mechanisation vs employment.
- Modern environmental challenges (climate change) have roots in unsustainable industrial practices that started during this period.
- Ongoing discussions about inclusive growth, social security for workers, and sustainable development models.



7. Imperialism and Colonialism

Definitions

- **Imperialism:** Policy of extending a country's power and dominance through diplomacy or military force, often to exploit resources and markets.
- **Colonialism:** Political, economic, and cultural domination of one nation over another territory and its people; generally involves settlement and direct control.
- *Imperialism is the ideology, colonialism is the practice.*

Historical Background

- While ancient empires (Roman, Persian, Maurya) practiced territorial expansion, **modern imperialism peaked in the 19th and early 20th centuries**, especially during the "Scramble for Africa" and Asia.

Causes of Imperialism

Economic Causes

- Search for raw materials (cotton, rubber, minerals).
- New markets for industrial goods due to surplus production after Industrial Revolution.
- Investment opportunities for surplus capital.

Political Causes

- National prestige and competition among European powers ("Balance of Power").
- Desire to control strategic territories and trade routes (e.g., Suez Canal).

Social and Cultural Causes

- White Man's Burden ideology — belief in "civilising mission" (Rudyard Kipling).
- Missionary activities to spread Christianity and European values.

Technological Factors

- Superior military technology (machine guns, steamships).
- Advances in medicine (quinine against malaria) enabled deeper penetration into tropical regions.

Forms of Imperialism

- **Colonial Imperialism:** Direct political rule (e.g., British Raj in India).
- **Economic Imperialism:** Control through economic dominance without direct governance (e.g., Latin America under US influence).
- **Cultural Imperialism:** Imposition of language, religion, education systems.

- **Settler Colonialism:** Migration and settlement of metropolitan populations (e.g., Australia, Canada, South Africa).

Impact on Colonies

Political Impact

- Artificial borders disregarding ethnic, tribal, linguistic divisions (e.g., Africa).
- Destruction of indigenous political institutions.
- Rise of nationalist movements in response to oppression.

Economic Impact

- Integration into global capitalist economy as raw material suppliers and markets for finished goods.
- Decline of indigenous industries (e.g., Indian handicrafts and textiles).
- Development of infrastructure (railways, ports), but often geared to serve colonial interests.

Social and Cultural Impact

- Spread of Western education, legal systems, and Christianity.
- Breakdown of traditional social structures and value systems.
- Emergence of new middle classes who later led anti-colonial struggles.

Environmental Impact

- Exploitation of natural resources, deforestation, monoculture farming.
- Disruption of local agricultural and ecological systems.

Impact on the World

- Intensified global economic integration and emergence of global trade networks.
- Contributed to world wars due to imperial rivalries (e.g., scramble for colonies as a factor in WWI).
- Created foundation for present-day global inequalities.

Ideological Justifications

- **Social Darwinism:** Survival of the fittest applied to nations and races, justifying domination.
- **Civilising Mission:** Moral duty to "uplift" colonised people.
- **Mercantilism:** Colonies as economic assets to serve mother country's interests.

Criticism of Imperialism

- Viewed as economic exploitation, leading to underdevelopment of colonies (Dependency Theory — Andre Gunder Frank).

- Led to widespread human rights abuses (forced labour, famines, cultural genocide).
- Cultural alienation and loss of indigenous knowledge systems.

Responses and Resistance

- Rise of nationalist movements: Indian National Congress (1885), Chinese Boxer Rebellion (1900), African resistance movements.
- Intellectual critique: Dadabhai Naoroji's "Drain Theory"; writings of Frantz Fanon (psychological impacts of colonisation).

Connection to India

- India became the "jewel in the crown" of British Empire.
- Economic drain: India's resources financed British industrialisation.
- Destruction of traditional industries, forced cash crops (indigo, opium).
- Western education produced a new elite that later spearheaded freedom struggle (e.g., Gandhi, Nehru, Tilak).
- Infrastructure and administrative legacy, but fundamentally exploitative.

Long-term Consequences

- Rise of global South-North economic divide.
- Creation of new nation-states after decolonisation (post-1945).
- Lingering ethnic conflicts due to arbitrary colonial boundaries.
- Foundations for neo-colonialism (economic and cultural dominance without direct rule).

Relevance Today

- Neo-imperialism through multinational corporations, economic coercion, cultural influence ("soft power").
- Global calls for reparations and restitution of cultural artifacts.
- Continued debates over legacy: whether colonial infrastructure and institutions were "positive contributions" or tools of subjugation.

8. Russian Revolution / Bolshevik Revolution (1917–1921)

Introduction

- The Russian Revolution refers to a series of events that dismantled the Tsarist autocracy and led to the establishment of a communist government under the Bolsheviks, marking the world's first successful socialist revolution.
- It consisted mainly of two phases: the **February Revolution (March 1917, as per Gregorian calendar)** and the **October Revolution (November 1917, Gregorian calendar)**.

Background and Context

Political Factors

- Absolute autocracy under Tsars, especially Nicholas II.
- Lack of democratic institutions, suppression of dissent.
- Influence of Rasputin, corruption in royal court.

Social Factors

- Rigid feudal society: Nobility and clergy dominated, while peasants suffered extreme poverty and oppression.
- Rise of working class (proletariat) with miserable conditions in factories.
- Ethnic and national minorities faced discrimination within the Russian Empire.

Economic Factors

- Backward agrarian economy, low industrial growth compared to Western Europe.
- Heavy taxation burden on peasants.
- Economic mismanagement and shortages, especially during World War I.

Intellectual and Ideological Factors

- Spread of Marxist ideas advocating class struggle and overthrow of capitalism.
- Influence of socialist thinkers and leaders like Lenin, Trotsky, and Marxist literature.
- Failure of moderate reform attempts (e.g., 1905 Revolution and creation of Duma).

Immediate Causes

- Heavy military losses in World War I demoralised army and public.
- Acute food shortages, strikes, inflation.

- February 1917 — Mass protests in Petrograd; army mutinied; Nicholas II abdicated.

Major Events

February Revolution (March 1917)

- Spontaneous uprisings led by workers, soldiers, and peasants in Petrograd.
- Collapse of monarchy; Provisional Government formed under Alexander Kerensky.
- Soviets (workers' councils) emerged as parallel power structures.

October Revolution (November 1917)

- Bolsheviks led by Lenin and Trotsky seized power in Petrograd.
- Overthrew the Provisional Government in a relatively bloodless coup.
- Established a socialist government promising "Peace, Land, and Bread."

Civil War (1918–1921)

- Red Army (Bolsheviks) vs. White Army (monarchists, liberals, foreign interventionists).
- Red Army, under Trotsky, emerged victorious despite foreign interventions (Britain, France, USA, Japan).
- Consolidation of communist power and suppression of opposition.

Key Policies and Reforms

- **Land Decree (1917):** Land redistributed to peasants; feudal ownership abolished.
- **Workers' Control Decree:** Factories taken over by workers' committees.
- **Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (1918):** Russia exited World War I, ceding large territories to Germany (later reversed).
- **War Communism:** State control over industry, forced grain requisitioning from peasants, nationalisation of banks.
- **New Economic Policy (NEP, 1921):** Partial reintroduction of private trade and small-scale private industry to revive economy.

Impact and Significance

On Russia

- End of centuries-old Tsarist autocracy; establishment of world's first socialist state.
- Creation of USSR in 1922, consolidating various Soviet republics.
- Nationalisation and planned economy models established.
- Significant improvements in literacy and healthcare in later decades, but also rise of authoritarianism.

On World

- Inspired global communist movements and revolutions (China, Vietnam, Cuba).
- Rise of ideological bipolarity: capitalism vs communism, setting stage for Cold War.
- Spread of anti-imperialist sentiments across Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

On Society

- Abolition of feudal privileges and titles.
- Promotion of gender equality in laws (e.g., right to vote, right to work).
- Mass executions and repression under "Red Terror."

Criticism

- Authoritarian centralisation under Bolsheviks; suppression of other socialist groups (Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries).
- Large-scale human rights violations during Red Terror and forced collectivisation later.
- Creation of a one-party state leading to Stalinist dictatorship.

Relevance to India

- Inspired Indian leaders and revolutionaries (e.g., M.N. Roy, Bhagat Singh) to adopt socialist and communist ideas.
- Strengthened anti-colonial, anti-imperialist discourse within national movement.
- Sparked formation of Communist Party of India (1925).
- Gave ideological boost to peasant and workers' movements in 1920s and 1930s.

Legacy

- Established Marxism-Leninism as an alternative to capitalism and liberal democracy.
- Influenced decolonisation and national liberation struggles globally.
- Showed potential of mass movements in overthrowing entrenched regimes, though at cost of democratic freedoms.

9. Rise of Fascism in Italy

Background and Context

- After World War I, Italy faced severe economic, political, and social instability.
- Despite being on the winning side, Italy felt betrayed by the **Treaty of Versailles (1919)**, as its territorial ambitions were not fully met ("Mutilated victory").
- Post-war discontent provided fertile ground for extremist ideologies.

Causes

Political Causes

- **Weak liberal government:** Frequent changes in cabinets and unstable coalitions led to a crisis of legitimacy.
- **Failure to address veterans' and nationalists' demands:** Disillusioned ex-soldiers felt neglected.
- **Fear of socialism and communism:** Rise of socialist movements and factory occupations created panic among the middle and upper classes.

Economic Causes

- Post-war economic crisis: High unemployment, inflation, food shortages.
- Decline in industrial and agricultural production.
- Rising strikes and labor unrest threatened industrialists and landlords.

Social Causes

- Widespread dissatisfaction among war veterans, peasants, and the lower middle class.
- Growing distrust of parliamentary democracy and liberal institutions.

Psychological and Ideological Factors

- Nationalist resentment over "mutilated victory."
- Fascism's promise to restore Italy's ancient Roman glory appealed to nationalist sentiments.
- Emphasis on order, discipline, and strong leadership resonated with a society tired of chaos.

Emergence of Mussolini and Fascist Movement

- **Benito Mussolini**, a former socialist turned nationalist, founded the **Fasci di Combattimento** in 1919.
- Advocated for strong nationalism, anti-communism, militarism, and authoritarianism.
- Mobilised **Black Shirts (Squadristi)** to violently suppress socialist uprisings and intimidate opponents.

March on Rome (1922)

- A carefully staged mass demonstration by Fascists demanding power.

- King Victor Emmanuel III, fearing civil war and socialist takeover, invited Mussolini to form a government.
- Marked the official beginning of Fascist rule in Italy.

Consolidation of Power

- **Acerbo Law (1923):** Granted two-thirds majority to the party securing 25% votes, enabling Fascist parliamentary dominance.
- **Suppression of opposition:** Socialist and communist parties banned, press censorship, establishment of secret police (OVRA).
- **Lateran Treaty (1929):** Reconciled with the Catholic Church, gaining its support and legitimacy.

Features of Fascism in Italy

- **Authoritarian state:** One-party rule with centralized power in the leader ("Il Duce").
- **Ultra-nationalism:** Glorification of state above individual rights.
- **Militarism and expansionism:** Aggressive foreign policy aimed at creating a "New Roman Empire."
- **Corporatism:** Economy organized into syndicates representing different sectors, but essentially under state control.
- **Cult of personality:** Mussolini presented as infallible and father figure of the nation.
- **Suppression of civil liberties:** No freedom of press, speech, or assembly.

Impact on Italy

Positive (as projected by regime)

- Infrastructure development: Roads, railways, public buildings.
- Propaganda-driven sense of national unity and pride.
- Reduction of labor strikes through coercion.

Negative

- Loss of democratic institutions and civil liberties.
- Severe repression of dissent; imprisonment, exile, or execution of opponents.
- Economic policy failures: Overemphasis on autarky (economic self-sufficiency) proved unsustainable.
- Adventurist foreign policy led to military disasters (e.g., invasion of Ethiopia 1935, alliance with Nazi Germany, WWII entry).

International Impact

- Inspired similar authoritarian movements across Europe (e.g., Nazism in Germany, Franco's regime in Spain).

- Contributed to weakening collective security in Europe, ultimately paving the way for WWII.

Criticism and Analysis

- Mussolini's initial image as a "stabilizer" overshadowed long-term harm to democratic traditions.
- Fascism used mass mobilization and propaganda effectively, but fundamentally served elite and capitalist interests rather than the masses.
- Promoted violence and intolerance as political tools.

Legacy and Lessons

- Demonstrated dangers of exploiting economic and political instability to dismantle democracy.
- Importance of safeguarding institutions, civil liberties, and inclusive governance.
- Reminder of how charismatic leaders can manipulate public sentiment through hyper-nationalism and propaganda.

Relevance to India

- Highlights significance of protecting pluralism and constitutional democracy.
- Case study in how rapid economic and social discontent can be used by authoritarian ideologies.
- Connects to contemporary global debates on rise of populist and authoritarian leaders.

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10. Rise of Nazism in Germany

Background and Context

- After **World War I**, Germany was humiliated by the **Treaty of Versailles (1919)**:
 - Huge war indemnity (132 billion gold marks).
 - Loss of territories (Alsace-Lorraine, colonies).
 - Severe military restrictions.
- This created economic hardship and a sense of national humiliation ("stab-in-the-back" myth).
- The **Weimar Republic (1919–1933)**:
 - Weak democratic setup, frequent changes in government, no stable majority.
 - Seen as a "puppet regime" by many nationalists and conservatives.
- Hyperinflation crisis (1923) destroyed savings and faith in currency.
- Great Depression (1929) caused mass unemployment and social chaos.

Causes for the Rise of Nazism

Economic Causes

- Massive unemployment and poverty after the Depression (over 6 million unemployed).
- Collapse of businesses and agriculture, leading to disillusionment with democracy.

Political Causes

- Failure of Weimar democracy to provide stability.
- Article 48 of Weimar Constitution allowed President to rule by decree, weakening democracy.
- Fear of communism among middle and upper classes, industrialists, and landowners.

Social and Psychological Causes

- Deep sense of humiliation and betrayal from Versailles.
- Desire to restore German pride and unity.
- Popular appeal of strong leadership and charismatic personality.

Ideological Causes

- Nazi Party (National Socialist German Workers' Party, NSDAP) ideology emphasized:
 - Extreme nationalism.
 - Anti-Semitism (Jews blamed for Germany's defeat and economic woes).
 - Anti-communism.

- Lebensraum (living space) theory — expansion eastward to provide space for Germans.
- Glorification of Aryan racial superiority.

Rise of Hitler and Nazi Party

- Adolf Hitler joined Nazi Party in 1919; became its leader (Führer) by 1921.
- 1923 Beer Hall Putsch in Munich failed; Hitler imprisoned, wrote *Mein Kampf* outlining ideology.
- Shift to legal tactics post-1924 — participation in elections, propaganda campaigns, alliances with conservative elites.

Electoral Success

- Nazi vote share rose dramatically: 2.6% (1928) → 18% (1930) → 37% (July 1932).
- Supported by conservative elites, military, industrialists fearing communism.

Seizure of Power (1933)

- January 1933: Hitler appointed Chancellor by President Hindenburg.
- **Reichstag Fire (1933):** Used as pretext to suppress communists, pass the Enabling Act giving Hitler dictatorial powers.

Consolidation of Power

- **Enabling Act (1933):** Gave Hitler power to legislate without parliament.
- Abolition of trade unions; creation of German Labour Front.
- Ban on all political parties except Nazi Party.
- **Night of the Long Knives (1934):** Purged SA leadership and other rivals.
- After Hindenburg's death (1934), Hitler merged offices of Chancellor and President, becoming Führer.
- Cult of personality and intensive propaganda (Joseph Goebbels).

Features of Nazi Regime

- **Totalitarian control:** State controlled all aspects of life — politics, media, culture.
- **Militarism and aggression:** Massive rearmament, compulsory military service.
- **Racial policies:** Anti-Jewish laws (Nuremberg Laws 1935), state-sponsored violence (Kristallnacht 1938), paving way to Holocaust.
- **Economic policies:** Public works (Autobahns), rearmament reduced unemployment but at cost of militarization.
- **Suppression of dissent:** Secret police (Gestapo), concentration camps for political prisoners, Jews, other minorities.

Impact on Germany

Positive (propagated)

- Reduced unemployment significantly.
- Restored a sense of national pride and stability (superficially).
- Infrastructure and military modernization.

Negative

- Destroyed democracy and civil liberties.
- Persecution and extermination of Jews and other minorities — Holocaust (~6 million Jews murdered).
- Led Germany into WWII, resulting in massive destruction and loss of life.

Impact on World

- Directly caused WWII through aggressive expansion (annexation of Austria, Sudetenland, invasion of Poland).
- Holocaust became a symbol of extreme human rights violations.
- Inspired fascist movements elsewhere but also led to global reaffirmation of democratic and human rights values after 1945.

Criticism and Analysis

- Rise of Nazism shows dangers of economic distress and political instability breeding extremism.
- Exploited legal and democratic frameworks to establish dictatorship ("death of democracy from within").
- Deeply racist and ultra-nationalist ideology pushed humanity towards genocide and global conflict.

Legacy and Lessons

- Led to creation of UN, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).
- Nuremberg Trials established principles of accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- Strengthened global resolve to prevent recurrence of fascism and genocide.
- Important cautionary example of how charismatic populist leaders can manipulate masses.

Relevance to India

- Highlights importance of economic equity, political stability, and social cohesion for preserving democracy.
- Emphasizes constitutional safeguards against concentration of power and intolerance.
- Provides lessons on media ethics, propaganda, and safeguarding minority rights.

11. Chinese Revolution

Introduction

- The term "Chinese Revolution" generally refers to the series of revolutionary movements that culminated in the establishment of the **People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949** under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC).
- It transformed China from a semi-feudal, semi-colonial society into a socialist state.

Background and Context

Qing Dynasty Decline

- Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) weakened by internal corruption, peasant unrest, and external pressures.
- Humiliating defeats in Opium Wars and unequal treaties eroded sovereignty.
- **Taiping Rebellion (1850–64)** and **Boxer Rebellion (1899–1901)** highlighted deep social discontent.

1911 Revolution (Xinhai Revolution)

- Led by Sun Yat-sen's nationalist forces; overthrew Qing dynasty and established the Republic of China in 1912.
- However, China soon fragmented into **warlordism**, with regional military leaders vying for power.

May Fourth Movement (1919)

- Intellectual and cultural movement sparked by anger at Treaty of Versailles (which gave German concessions in China to Japan).
- Advocated modernisation, science, democracy, and anti-imperialism.
- Laid ideological groundwork for rise of Communist Party and nationalist movements.

Rise of the Communist Party of China (CPC)

- Founded in 1921 in Shanghai, inspired by the Russian Revolution (1917) and Marxist-Leninist ideology.
- Initially allied with Sun Yat-sen's **Kuomintang (KMT)** in the **First United Front (1924–27)** to fight warlords and foreign domination.

Split with Kuomintang

- After Sun's death, Chiang Kai-shek led KMT and turned against communists in **1927 Shanghai Massacre**, leading to civil war between KMT and CPC.
- CPC retreated to rural areas, gained support among peasants through land reforms and anti-feudal measures.

Long March (1934–35)

- CPC's strategic retreat over 9,000 km to escape KMT encirclement.
- Emergence of **Mao Zedong** as the central leader.
- Became a symbol of communist resilience and revolutionary spirit.

Second United Front (1937–45)

- Temporary alliance between KMT and CPC to resist Japanese invasion during **Second Sino-Japanese War**.
- CPC expanded influence among masses during war years.

Resumption of Civil War (1945–49)

- After WWII, civil war resumed between CPC and KMT.
- CPC's land reform policies, discipline, and mass mobilisation won popular support.
- KMT weakened by corruption, inflation, and loss of public trust.
- In 1949, CPC captured Beijing and other major cities.

Establishment of the People's Republic of China

- **October 1, 1949:** Mao Zedong declared formation of PRC from Tiananmen Square.
- Chiang Kai-shek and KMT retreated to Taiwan.

Key Causes for Success of CPC

- Strong peasant support through land redistribution.
- Effective guerrilla warfare strategy.
- KMT's corruption and failure to address socio-economic grievances.
- CPC's emphasis on nationalism and anti-imperialism resonated with Chinese masses.
- Soviet Union's support post-WWII.

Major Reforms and Initial Impact

- Land reforms: Confiscation of landlord estates, redistribution to peasants.
- Nationalisation of industries and banks.
- Social campaigns: Suppression of counter-revolutionaries, campaigns against old customs, foot binding abolished.
- Improved literacy and public health in early years

Global Impact

- Strengthened global communist movements, shifting Cold War dynamics.
- Formation of **Sino-Soviet alliance**, challenging Western bloc.
- Inspired revolutions in Asia (Vietnam, Korea) and elsewhere.
- Led to split with USSR in 1960s, resulting in separate Chinese path (Maoism).

Relevance to India

- India and China's independence (1947 & 1949) reshaped Asian geopolitics.
- PRC's support to anti-colonial struggles inspired Indian leftist movements.
- Early friendship (Panchsheel Agreement 1954) followed by 1962 border conflict.
- Maoist ideology later inspired radical leftist movements in India (Naxalbari, CPI(Maoist)).

Criticism and Analysis

- While successful in consolidating national unity and removing feudal structures, authoritarian control restricted political freedoms.
- Led to later disruptive campaigns (Great Leap Forward, Cultural Revolution), causing social and economic upheavals.
- Mass executions and purges during early years and subsequent movements.

Legacy and Long-term Significance

- Marked emergence of China as a unified, sovereign state after centuries of internal strife and foreign domination.
- Provided alternative model of development outside Western capitalist frameworks.
- Laid foundation for China's eventual rise as a global power.

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12. First World War (1914–1918)

Introduction

- The First World War, also known as the Great War, was the first global conflict involving over 30 nations.
- It marked a rupture in world history, ending the "long 19th century" of relative peace in Europe and ushering in modern warfare, mass mobilization, and total war.

Long-Term Causes ("Tinderbox Europe")

Imperialism and Colonial Rivalries

- Competition among European powers for colonies and global dominance (e.g., Scramble for Africa).
- German Weltpolitik aimed to challenge British and French colonial supremacy.

Militarism

- Arms race, especially between Britain (naval supremacy) and Germany (naval expansion via Tirpitz Plan).
- Glorification of military values and preparedness ("war as purification").

Alliance System

- Dual Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary) vs Entente Cordiale (France, Britain, later Russia).
- Secret alliances fostered mistrust and guaranteed a localized conflict could escalate.

Nationalism

- Ethnic tensions in Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires (e.g., Slavs seeking independence).
- Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism clashing in the Balkans.

Economic Rivalries

- Industrial competition, especially between Britain and a rapidly industrializing Germany.
- Economic protectionism and tariff wars further heightened tensions.

Immediate Cause

- **Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand** (heir to Austro-Hungarian throne) on 28 June 1914 in Sarajevo by Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb nationalist.
- Austria-Hungary issued an ultimatum to Serbia, backed by Germany ("blank cheque"), triggering a chain reaction due to alliance commitments.

Major Phases and Events

Initial Mobilisation

- Germany's Schlieffen Plan: swift attack through Belgium to quickly defeat France before turning east to Russia.
- Violation of Belgian neutrality brought Britain into war.

Trench Warfare on Western Front

- Stalemate from North Sea to Swiss border; horrific conditions, new military technologies (machine guns, poison gas, tanks).
- Battles of Verdun and Somme epitomized attritional warfare.

Eastern Front

- Russia initially advanced but suffered heavy defeats (Tannenberg, Masurian Lakes).
- Internal discontent leading to 1917 Russian Revolution and eventual withdrawal (Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, 1918).

Other Fronts

- Middle East: Arab Revolt, T.E. Lawrence, collapse of Ottoman front.
- Italian Front: Battles with Austria-Hungary (e.g., Caporetto).
- African and Asian theatres: Colonial troops and campaigns in German colonies.

Entry of USA (1917)

- German unrestricted submarine warfare and Zimmermann Telegram provoked US entry.
- Provided decisive manpower and economic resources.

Endgame

- German Spring Offensive (1918) failed; Allied counteroffensive ("Hundred Days Offensive") succeeded.
- Internal uprisings in Germany, abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II (November 1918).

Technological and Tactical Innovations

- Introduction of tanks, chemical warfare, aircraft reconnaissance and bombing.
- First use of large-scale mechanised logistics, telecommunication (field telephones, wireless).

Social and Economic Effects

On Europe

- Over 16 million deaths and 20 million wounded.
- Widespread physical and psychological trauma ("shell shock").

- Collapse of four empires: German, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian.
- Economic devastation, inflation, food shortages, and debt crises.

On Women

- Large-scale entry into workforce and public life; foundation for suffrage movements in UK, US, and other countries.

On Colonies

- Over 2 million soldiers from colonies fought (e.g., Indian, African, Indochinese troops).
- Raised political consciousness; sowed seeds of decolonisation movements.

Political Consequences

- Treaty of Versailles (1919): Harsh terms imposed on Germany (territorial losses, reparations, war guilt clause).
- Creation of League of Nations as first global attempt at collective security.
- Redrawing of maps in Europe and Middle East (Sykes-Picot Agreement, creation of new states like Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia).

Impact on Asia and India

- Economic hardships: heavy taxation and war contributions (money, men, materials) from India.
- Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms (1919) as a response to Indian support, but dissatisfaction led to Jallianwala Bagh massacre and rise of national movement.
- Japanese gains in Asia, growth of militarism.

Cultural and Intellectual Impact

- Disillusionment with liberal optimism ("Lost Generation").
- Rise of existentialist and modernist literature (e.g., T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*).
- Anti-war art movements: Dadaism, expressionism.

Historiographical Perspectives

- **Traditional view:** German aggression and militarism as primary causes.
- **Revisionist view:** All great powers contributed through imperialism and secret diplomacy.
- **Marxist interpretation:** War as an imperialist conflict driven by capitalist competition (Lenin's *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*).

Relevance Today

- Origin of modern international organizations and collective security concepts.

- Lessons on dangers of hyper-nationalism, alliance entanglements, and arms races.
- Basis for geopolitical instability leading to WWII.



PRAYAAAS

13. Second World War (1939–1945)

Introduction

- The Second World War was the most devastating global conflict in human history, involving over 60 nations and resulting in an estimated 70–85 million deaths (about 3% of the world's population at the time).
- It reshaped the global political order, dismantled empires, and laid the foundation for the Cold War.

Long-Term Causes

Treaty of Versailles (1919)

- Harsh reparations and humiliation imposed on Germany created resentment and economic distress.
- War guilt clause deeply hurt German national pride.

Rise of Fascist and Militarist Regimes

- Nazi Germany under Hitler, Fascist Italy under Mussolini, and militarist Japan pursued expansionist policies.
- Ideologies glorifying war, racism, and imperial conquest.

Economic Crises

- The Great Depression (1929) destabilized economies worldwide, contributing to radicalization and rise of extremist parties.
- Failure of democracies to resolve unemployment and poverty strengthened authoritarian leaders.

Failure of Collective Security

- Weakness of League of Nations in stopping aggression (e.g., Japanese invasion of Manchuria 1931, Italian invasion of Ethiopia 1935).
- Appeasement policy (Munich Agreement 1938) emboldened aggressors.

Aggressive Expansionism

- German desire for *Lebensraum* (living space) in Eastern Europe.
- Japanese ambition to dominate Asia and Pacific ("Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere").

Immediate Cause

- **German invasion of Poland** on 1 September 1939, following Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact (non-aggression treaty between Germany and USSR).
- Britain and France declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939.

Major Phases of the War

Blitzkrieg and Early Axis Victories (1939–41)

- Rapid German conquests: Poland, Denmark, Norway, France, Low Countries.
- Battle of Britain (1940): First major defeat of Hitler's military strategy.

Operation Barbarossa (1941)

- Germany's massive invasion of USSR, violating pact with Stalin.
- Initially successful but bogged down in Russian winter and Soviet counterattacks.

Pacific War

- Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (7 December 1941) brought USA into war.
- Rapid Japanese advances in Southeast Asia and Pacific islands.

Turning Points (1942–43)

- Battle of Stalingrad (1942–43): Crushing defeat for Germany.
- Battle of El Alamein (1942): Allied success in North Africa.
- Midway (1942): US naval victory against Japan.

Allied Offensives and Liberation (1944–45)

- D-Day landings in Normandy (June 1944) opened Western Front.
- Soviet advances from East; fall of Berlin in May 1945.
- Hitler's suicide (30 April 1945); unconditional German surrender on 8 May 1945.

End of Pacific War

- US dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima (6 August) and Nagasaki (9 August 1945).
- Japan surrendered on 15 August 1945 (formal signing on 2 September).

Technological and Tactical Innovations

- Blitzkrieg (lightning war) tactics.
- Extensive use of aircraft (strategic bombing), tanks, and mechanised infantry.
- Nuclear weapons: first and only use in war (Hiroshima and Nagasaki).
- Code-breaking (e.g., Enigma at Bletchley Park) played crucial roles.

Human and Social Impact

Casualties

- Over 70 million deaths, including civilian casualties due to bombings, starvation, and disease.

Holocaust

- Systematic genocide of ~6 million Jews and millions of other minorities (Roma, disabled, political prisoners).

Displacement

- Massive refugee crises; millions displaced across Europe and Asia.

Impact on Women

- Extensive participation in workforce, military auxiliaries; laid ground for future gender rights movements.

Economic and Political Impact

End of European Dominance

- Britain and France severely weakened; emergence of USA and USSR as superpowers.
- Beginning of decolonisation wave across Asia and Africa.

Division of Germany and Europe

- Germany divided into occupation zones, eventually into East and West Germany.
- Iron Curtain division, beginning of Cold War.

Formation of UN

- United Nations established in 1945 to replace League of Nations; aim to ensure collective security and prevent future conflicts.

New Economic Order

- Bretton Woods system established (IMF, World Bank).
- Marshall Plan for European reconstruction.

Impact on Asia and India

- Japan's defeat ended its imperial ambitions in Asia.
- Southeast Asian colonies inspired to demand independence (e.g., Indonesia, Vietnam).
- Indian National Army (INA) under Subhas Chandra Bose highlighted Indian aspirations for freedom.
- Weakened British economy and political will contributed to India's independence in 1947.

Cultural and Intellectual Impact

- Disillusionment with ideas of racial superiority, "might is right".
- Rise of existentialist thought in literature and philosophy (e.g., Sartre, Camus).
- Human rights became a global discourse (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).

Historiographical Perspectives

- **Orthodox view:** Aggressive policies of Hitler and fascist states caused the war.

- **Revisionist view:** Economic weaknesses and failures of Western democracies contributed to escalation
- **Marxist perspective:** Imperialist rivalries and capitalist crises as root causes.



14. Cold War (1945–1991)

Introduction

- The Cold War refers to the prolonged period of geopolitical, ideological, and economic confrontation between the **USA (and its allies)** and the **Soviet Union (and its allies)** after World War II.
- Characterized by absence of direct military conflict between the superpowers but intense rivalry, proxy wars, arms race, and ideological struggle across the world.

Causes of the Cold War

Ideological Conflict

- **Capitalism vs. Communism:** USA promoted liberal democracy and free-market capitalism; USSR propagated one-party socialism and state-controlled economy.
- Mutual suspicion fueled by fundamentally opposed worldviews.

Post-WWII Power Vacuum

- Collapse of old European powers (Britain, France) created a bipolar global structure.
- Division of Germany and Eastern Europe into Soviet and Western blocs.

Economic Rivalry

- US economic dominance (Marshall Plan) challenged by Soviet attempts at autarky and COMECON (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance).

Security Dilemmas

- Formation of military alliances: NATO (1949) vs. Warsaw Pact (1955).
- Soviet concern over capitalist encirclement; US fear of communist expansion (Domino Theory).

Historical Distrust

- Soviet resentment over delayed Allied opening of second front in WWII.
- Western suspicion over Soviet actions in Eastern Europe (forced communization).

Major Events and Phases

Initial Confrontation (1945–1953)

- Division of Germany and Berlin blockade (1948–49) — first major Cold War crisis.
- Establishment of NATO and nuclear arms race begins.
- Korean War (1950–53): First hot conflict of the Cold War.

Peaceful Coexistence & Competition (1953–1962)

- Khrushchev's policy of "peaceful coexistence" but continued rivalry.
- Hungarian Revolution (1956) crushed by USSR.
- Space race begins: Sputnik (1957), Yuri Gagarin (1961).
- Berlin Wall constructed (1961).

Height of Tensions (1962–1979)

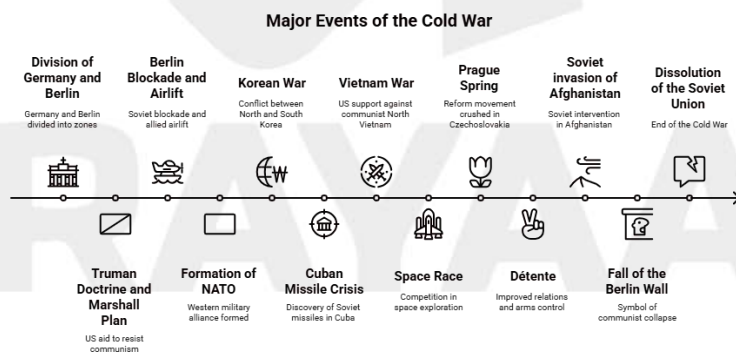
- **Cuban Missile Crisis (1962):** Brought world close to nuclear war, led to partial thaw afterwards.
- Vietnam War (1955–75): Major US intervention to contain communism.
- Détente period: Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I, 1972), Helsinki Accords (1975).

Renewed Hostility (1979–1985)

- Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979) reignited tensions.
- US boycott of Moscow Olympics (1980), USSR boycott of Los Angeles Olympics (1984).
- Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars").

Decline and End (1985–1991)

- Rise of Mikhail Gorbachev: policies of **Perestroika (restructuring)** and **Glasnost (openness)**.
- Fall of Berlin Wall (1989).
- Collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe (Velvet Revolutions).
- Formal dissolution of USSR in 1991



Nature and Characteristics

- **Bipolar world order:** Two rival power blocs dominating global affairs.
- **Proxy wars:** Indirect conflicts in third world countries (Korea, Vietnam, Angola, Afghanistan).
- **Arms and space race:** Nuclear weapons stockpiling, missile technology, space exploration.
- **Ideological propaganda:** Soft power contests through media, education, culture (Hollywood vs Soviet cinema).

Impact on the World

Political Impact

- Division of Europe (Iron Curtain), formation of military alliances.
- Rise of non-aligned movement (NAM) led by India, Yugoslavia, Egypt as an alternative path.

Economic Impact

- Marshall Plan aided rapid Western European reconstruction.
- Economic isolation and stagnation in Soviet bloc.

Social and Cultural Impact

- Spread of consumer culture in the West; state-centric controlled societies in the East.
- Global anti-war and peace movements during Vietnam era.

Technological Advancement

- Rapid innovations in military and space technology.
- Development of nuclear energy (both civilian and military).

Impact on Asia and India

- Partition of Korea (North and South), Vietnam (North and South), tensions in Taiwan Strait.
- US support to Pakistan; Soviet support to India during 1971 war (Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace and Friendship).
- India's leadership in NAM advocated non-alignment but maintained pragmatic relationships with both blocs.

Historiographical Perspectives

- **Orthodox view:** USSR expansionist and aggressive policies were the main cause.
- **Revisionist view:** US economic imperialism and aggressive containment policy provoked conflict.
- **Post-revisionist view:** Mutual misunderstandings and security dilemmas on both sides fueled the Cold War.

Cultural and Intellectual Influence

- Literature (George Orwell's *1984*), films (spy thrillers), sports (Olympic boycotts) used as ideological tools.
- Peace and disarmament movements gained global prominence.

Relevance Today

- Lessons on dangers of arms races and nuclear brinkmanship.
- Importance of multilateral institutions to manage global rivalries.
- Echoes in contemporary US–China rivalry (tech war, trade war, ideological contest).



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