

Lesson 23

World War -I and the Russian Revolution

Summary

There were imperialist rivalries among various European powers to gain control over more and more colonies. Militarism became very strong. Various European powers entered into alliances with one another to create a balance of power and to avoid the possibility of a war. During the same time the Nationalist movement was also growing in colonies to free themselves from the colonial powers. The strains of the First World War and the conflict within the Russian society led to the Russian revolution of 1917. This revolution created a new social and political system which was to be based on social justice

HOW WAS WORLD WAR I DIFFERENT FROM PREVIOUS WARS IN HISTORY



□ It connected the whole world in its violence and suffering.

• New technologies used in warfare, not seen earlier

• Huge mobilizations of men as soldiers, while women took on many jobs back in the cities and also as nurses in the battle zones.

REASONS FOR WAR

Hostility between Serbia and Austria

Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand, heir to throne of Habsburg Empire was murdered at Sarajevo in 1914

• Division of colonies in Asia and Africa created conditions of war.

• Germany became the main competitor of England.

Germany, Austria and Italy signed the Triple Alliance pledging mutual military assistance against rival powers.

England, Russia and France signed the Triple Entente in 1907.

Emergence of two mutually opposed groups divided Europe into hostile camps leading to tension and conflicts among European powers.

COURSE OF WAR

- World War I which started in August 1914 continued till November 1918.
- The year 1917 saw two important developments – one was the entry of

USA in the war in April and second was the withdrawal of Russia from the war in November

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, 1917

- The Russian Revolution was made in 1917, before the end of the War.

- This was the first socialist revolution in history and it was inspired by the ideals of communism.
- It happened because the condition of the Russian workers and peasants, and

non-Russians living in Russia had become quite miserable under the autocratic rule of Tsar Nicholas II.

THE OLD AND THE NEW

- Many sections of society were becoming dissatisfied with the oppressive rule of the Tsar.
- They had no parliamentary system or elections through which to express their opposition to the Tsarist policies, they had to adopt a revolutionary path.
- This was a major difference between other European countries and the Russian Empire

AGRICULTURE AND PEASANT DISCONTENT

□The agricultural backwardness and the peasant discontent became important factors for the revolution.

•There were continuous peasant uprisings during the 19th century, and in the early 20th century they became part of the general revolutionary movement.

INDUSTRIALISATION AND WORKERS' DISCONTENT

- Industrialization in Russia was late as compared to Western Europe, but it was at a much faster pace.
- The workers' movement in the Russian Empire was also much more militant and political than in other countries
- Workers movement also had a greater orientation towards socialism than in other countries.

police and subject to severe repression and punishment if found out.

- The important political groups were Populists (in late 19th century) and Social Revolutionaries, various types of Liberals and the Social Democrats (Marxists).
- Social Democrats had two parties, Bolshevik (meaning majority in Russian) and Menshevik(meaning minority).
- Lenin was the most important leader of the Russian revolution of 1917.
- Another was Trotsky both were Bolsheviks.

DISCONTENT AMONG NATIONALITIES

- Nationalities such as the Caucasians, the Polish, the Kazakhs, the Latvians, the Estonians and others played an important role in overthrowing the Russian autocracy.

STAGES OF THE REVOLUTION

LEADERSHIP AND VISION

- Many political groups were active during the first half of the 20th century, but they were illegal and had to work underground, hunted by the Tsarist

- There were three stages: the 1905 revolution, which was defeated
- The February 1917 revolution which resulted in the overthrow of the Autocracy
- The October 1917 revolution led by the Bolsheviks, which established a socialist state.

POLICIES AND IMPACT OF THE REVOLUTION

- Revolutionary Russia changed the policies of Tsarist Russia
- Its policies laid the foundations of socialism in Russia.
- The revolution created a new social and political system, based on social justice.
- The new constitution guaranteed free medical care, free and equal education for all, an unemployment allowance, equal access to culture and cultural advancement.
- A lot of measures were taken to make women equal participation in social and political life
- It had a great impact on the rest of the world, including the countries fighting for their national independence.

Evaluate yourself

Q.List the causes of World War-I.

Q. Describe the condition of the industrial workers which influenced the Russian Revolution.

Q. Explain the stages of the Russian Revolution.