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# RENAISSANCE

The Enlightenment represents the clime of the intellectual revolution in philosophy. It began in England about 1680 and quickly spread to most countries of northern Europe. It was not without influence in America. But the supreme manifestation of the Enlightenment was, however, in France. The period of its real importance was the eighteenth century. Few other movements in history have had such great effects in moulding men's thoughts on shaping the course of their actions as the Enlightenment. The Philosophy of enlightenment was built around a number of significant concepts than. Firstly, reason is the only infallible guide to wisdom. All knowledge has its roots in sense perception, but the impressions of our senses are but the raw materials of truth, which has to be refined in the crucible of reason before it can have value in explaining the world or in showing the way to improvement of life. Secondly, the universe is a machine governed by inflexible laws which man cannot override. The order of nature is absolutely uniform and not subject in any way to miracles or to any other form of divine intervention. Thirdly, the best structure of society is the one which is the simplest and most natural. The life of the noble savage is preferable to that of a civilized man with its outworn conventions which serve to perpetuate the tyranny of priests and rulers. Every artificial thing was to be removed from religion government and economic institutions which should be reduced to a form consistent with reason and natural liberty. Fourthly, there is no such thing as original sin. Men are not inherently deprived. Only the scheming priests and depots who are eager for making war drive them to acts of cruelty and meanness. If men are allowed to follow freely the guidance of reason and their own instincts, the infinite perfectibility of human nature, and therefore of the society itself, would be easily realised. Though the inspiration for the Enlightenment has come partly from the nationalism of Descartes, Spinoza and Holbes, the real founders of the movement were Sir Issac Newton and Jon Locke. It is true that Newton was not a philosopher in the ordinary sense of the term. But his work has a great significance for the history of thought. He brought the whole world of nature under a precise mechanical interpretation. This was his greatest achievement. His theory of gravitation was held to be valid not only on this earth but throughout the vast expanse of the solar system. From this it was an easy step to the conclusion that every event in nature is governed by universal laws which can be formulated as precisely as

mathematical principles. While the discovery of these laws is the business of science, it is the duty of man to allow them to operate unhindered. The old medieval idea of a universe guided by benevolent purpose now gave place to the idea that man lived in a world in which procession of events was automatic. Newton's philosophy did not reject the idea of a God, but it deprived him of his power to guide the star in their courses or to order the seen to remain stationary. Locke's influence was quite different from that of Newton. He was the originator of a new theory of knowledge which served as the cornerstone of the Enlightenment. He maintained that man's knowledge originates from sense perception. This is known as the theory of sensationalism. He was the first modern philosopher to develop it in systematic form, though Hobbes had already asserted it earlier than Locke. He asserted that the human mind at birth is a blank tablet, containing nothing inscribed on it. The (human mind) does not even contain the idea of God or any notions of right and wrong. Anything gets registered in the mind of the new-born child only after the child begins to have experiences, to perceive the external world with its senses. The simple ideas which result directly from sense perception are merely foundations of knowledge. Man, however, cannot live intelligently on the basis of the simple ideas. These simple ideas must therefore be integrated and fused into complete ideas. This is the function of reason or understanding. Reason has the power to combine, coordinate, and organise the impressions received from the senses. It will thus be seen that sensation and reason are both indispensable, one for furnishing the mind with the raw materials of knowledge and the other for working them into a meaningful form. It was this combination of sensationalism and rationalism which became one of the basic elements in the philosophy of the Enlightenment. Locke is also known for his defence of the religious toleration and for his liberal political theory. The Enlightenment blossomed fourth in its fullest glory in France during the eighteenth century under the leadership of Voltaire and other critics of the established order. Voltaire's first philosophic work was "Letters on the English" which he wrote in Britain where he lived for three years, acquiring a deep admiration for British institutions. In this work, he popularised the ideas of Newton and Locke. Most of his later writings the Philosophical Dictionary, Candide, his histories and many of his essays were also concerned with exposition of the doctrine that the world is governed by natural laws and that reason and concrete experience are the only dependable

peasants who jump-started the Revolution. Rather, it was the wealthy commoners—the bourgeoisie—who objected most vocally to the subpar treatment they were receiving. The bourgeoisie were generally hardworking, educated men who were well versed in the enlightened thought of the time. Although many of the wealthier members of the bourgeoisie had more money than some of the French nobles, they lacked elite titles and thus were subjected to the same treatment and taxation as even the poorest peasants. It was the bourgeoisie that would really act as a catalyst for the Revolution, and once they started to act, the peasants were soon to follow. All of these were educated and believed that no group in society should be privileged by birth. Rather, a person's social position must depend on his merit. These ideas envisaging a society based on freedom and equal laws and opportunities for all, were put forward by philosophers such as John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau. In his *Two Treatises of Government*, Locke sought to refute the doctrine of the divine and absolute right of the monarch. In *The Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu proposed a division of power within the government between the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. This model of government was put into force in the USA, after the thirteen colonies declared their independence from Britain. The American constitution and its guarantee of individual rights was an important example for political thinkers in France. Another great writer was Voltaire, who employed his sharp tongue and sarcastic pen in a tirade against the existing order in general and against Christianity in particular. His writings became the gospel of the French Revolution. In his writings he advocated "enlightened despotism" and created a thundering sensation throughout France. The most prominent among the French philosophers was Rousseau. In his "Social Contract" which became the Bible of the French Revolution he says, "Man is born free but he is everywhere in chains". He denounced the existing government as illegitimate and promulgated the theory of popular sovereignty and popularized the notion of liberty, equality and fraternity. Rousseau carried the idea forward, proposing a form of government based on a social contract between people and their representatives. Montesquieu had only denounced the autocracy of the crown, while Voltaire had vehemently criticized the clergy and exposed the social evils. But Rousseau did something constructive for the regeneration of the society. His "Social Contract" also instilled in the people a strong desire to

raise the banner of the revolt against the established monarchy.

**The Influence of the American War of Independence on France:** When the people of America rose in revolt against the English rule and fought the War of Independence, it was France which rushed to the help of the Americans with men and money. It resulted in a great blow to the finances of France. Though France became bankrupt, the French people became rich in their thoughts and were convinced that the melancholic state of affairs of the France could be made good by a revolution. The success of a revolution and the American War of Independence opened their eyes and their thoughts and actions found a happy blend there. According to Webster, "The War of American Independence became an eye-opener for the nations of Europe and in particular gave leaders to the French Revolution".

### **COURSE OF THE REVOLUTION:**

**The Estates-General, 1789:** In the wake of Calonne's dismissal, Louis XVI brought back Swiss banker Jacques Necker, who had previously served a ten-year stint as Director General of Finance. After assessing the situation, Necker insisted that Louis XVI call together the Estates-General, a French congress that originated in the medieval period and consisted of three estates. The First Estate was the clergy, the Second Estate the nobility, and the Third Estate effectively the rest of French society. On May 5, 1789, Louis XVI convened the Estates-General. Almost immediately, it became apparent that this archaic arrangement—the group had last been assembled in 1614—would not sit well with its present members. Although Louis XVI granted the Third Estate greater numerical representation, the Parliament of Paris stepped in and invoked an old rule mandating that each estate receive one vote, regardless of size. As a result, though the Third Estate was vastly larger than the clergy and nobility, each estate had the same representation—one vote. Inevitably, the Third Estate's vote was to be overridden by the combined votes of the clergy and nobility. The members of the third estate demanded that voting now be conducted by the assembly as a whole, where each member would have one vote. This was one of the democratic principles put forward by philosophers like Rousseau in his book 'The Social Contract'. When the king rejected this proposal, members of the third estate walked out of the assembly in protest. The fact that the Estates-General hadn't been summoned in nearly 200 years probably says a thing or two about its effectiveness. The First and Second Estates—clergy and nobility, respectively—were too closely related in

# **INDUSTRIALISATION**

## **INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION**

The Industrial Revolution was a transformation of human life circumstances that occurred in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (roughly 1760 to 1840) in Britain, the United States, and Western Europe due in large measure to advances in the technologies of industry. The Industrial Revolution was characterized by a complex interplay of changes in technology, society, medicine, economy, education, and culture in which multiple technological innovations replaced human labour with mechanical work, replaced sources like wood with mineral sources like coal and iron, freed mechanical power from being tied to a fixed running water source, and supported the injection of capitalist practices, methods, and principles into what had been an agrarian society. The Industrial Revolution marked a major turning point in human history, comparable to the invention of farming or the rise of the first city-states—almost every aspect of daily life and human society was, eventually, in some way altered. As with most examples of change in complex systems, the transformation referenced by “Industrial Revolution” was really a whole system effect wrought through multiple causes, of which the technological advances are only the most apparent. Industrial Revolution started in the United Kingdom in the early seventeenth century. The Act of Union uniting England and Scotland ushered in a sustained period of internal peace and an internal free market without internal trade barriers. Britain had a reliable and fast developing banking sector, a straight forward legal framework for setting up joint stock companies, a modern legal framework and system to enforce the rule of law, a developing transportation system. In the latter half of the 1700s the manual labour based economy of the Kingdom of Great Britain began to be replaced by one dominated by industry and the manufacture of machinery. It started with the mechanization of the textile industries, the development of iron-making techniques and the increased use of refined coal. Once started, it spread. Trade expansion was enabled by the introduction of canals, improved roads and railways. The introduction of steam power (fueled primarily by coal) and powered machinery (mainly in textile

manufacturing) underpinned the dramatic increases in production capacity. The development of all-metal machine tools in the first two decades of the nineteenth century facilitated the manufacture of more production machines for manufacturing in other industries. The effects spread throughout Western Europe and North America during the nineteenth century, eventually affecting most of the world. The impact of this change on society was enormous. Industrial Revolution, its emergence in England was primarily the result of the many reasons. A few are briefly enumerated here. A major increase in population; An agricultural revolution, which was linked to population growth and the application of new techniques and machinery in cultivation; the application of new techniques of production in the cotton and iron and steel industries; the gradual abandonment of cottage industry and a focus of production in factories, where it could be more rigorously supervised.

Character of British society also is stated to have stimulated the rise of entrepreneurship. The pursuit of wealth in trade and manufacture or in the professions led to the accumulation of fortunes which gave individuals rank and status. Utter rejection of such fortune as “tainted” was not a feature of English society, as it was in Europe. Nobles themselves invested in activities which linked their estates to manufacturing.

In both France and Germany, the construction of railways in the mid-nineteenth century was crucial to the growth of industrial capital. The development of industrial capitalism in other countries (Russia, and Hungary for instance) in the late nineteenth century was primarily the result of capital investments from the established industrial nations. However, towards the end of nineteenth century, increasing importance of markets in colonies and underdeveloped regions of the world cannot be denied for all these nations.

## **Agricultural Revolution and Industrial Revolution**

“Agricultural revolution”, which grew out of the commercial agriculture of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century was a major factor responsible for the development of industrial capitalism in England,

manufacturing industry increasingly came to require it. Industry was increasingly rationalized. Here, rationalization implied the subordination of production to calculation—a development which had been less important earlier, since hired labour and technology were rarely concentrated in one place, where the influence of the capitalist could exert itself effectively. Among the consequences of such change were economies of scale, where, as production increased, each unit of manufacture became cheaper in terms of costs of production. A diminution of dependence on natural forces (climate, cardinality) followed from the integration of markets. Major changes in ecological balance resulted from the scale of demand and production: well known here is the deforestation of large sections of the United States and Russia, and the destruction of wild herds in the United States. An important feature was also the rigorous subordination of economic activity to the troughs and booms of the trade cycle, whose nature varied in accordance with alterations in investment and consumption. 'Gradualist' argument which stressed continuities with earlier demographic regime and slow growth of industrial productivity has been criticized for not taking into account the substantial contributions of female and child labour and for not taking a connected regional picture of emerging industrialization. The peculiar importance of youth labour in the industrial revolution are highlighted in several instances of textile and other machinery being designed and built to suit the child worker. The spinning jenny was a celebrated case; the original country jenny had a horizontal wheel requiring a posture most comfortable for children aged nine to twelve. Indeed, for a time, in the very early phases of mechanization and factory organization in the woollen and silk industries as well as in cotton, it was generally believed that child labour was integral to textile machine design. Bureaucratization can be said to encompass the processes both of the centralization and expansion and of the professionalization of all institutions. Bureaucratization has been a result & cause of and similar to industrialization. Generating and exploiting material resources took the form of industrialization; doing the same with human resources took the form of social mobilization. Entirely new institutions and professions were required for these activities; and the emergence of professional bureaucracies takes place against this background. The first of these were the direct servants

of the state, the civil servants and the armed forces. Bureaucratization was accompanied by a campaign against "corruption" and in the cause of "efficiency."

### **Geographical Spread of IR United States**

As in Britain, the United States originally used water power to run its factories, with the consequence that industrialization was essentially limited to New England and the rest of the Northeastern United States, where fast-moving rivers were located. However, the raw materials (cotton) came from the Southern United States. It was not until after the American Civil War in the 1860s that steam-powered manufacturing overtook water-powered manufacturing, allowing the industry to spread across the entire nation.

Samuel Slater (1768–1835) is popularly known as the founder of the American cotton industry. As a boy apprentice in Derbyshire, England, he learned of the new techniques in the textile industry and defied laws against the emigration of skilled workers by leaving for New York in 1789, hoping to make money with his knowledge. Slater started Slater's mill at Pawtucket, Rhode Island, in 1793, and went on to own thirteen textile mills. While on a trip to England in 1810, Newburyport, Massachusetts merchant Francis Cabot Lowell was allowed to tour the British textile factories, but not take notes. Realizing the War of 1812 had ruined his import business but that a market for domestic finished cloth was emerging in America, he memorized the design of textile machines, and on his return to the United States, he set up the Boston Manufacturing Company. Lowell and his partners built America's first cotton-to-cloth textile mill at Waltham, Massachusetts. After his death in 1817, his associates built America's first planned factory town, which they named after him. This enterprise was capitalized in a public stock offering, one of the first such uses of it in the United States. Lowell, Massachusetts, utilizing 5.6 miles of canals and ten thousand horsepower delivered by the Merrimack River, is considered the "Cradle of the American Industrial Revolution." The short-lived, utopialike Lowell System was formed, as a direct response to the poor working conditions in Britain. However, by 1850, especially following the Irish Potato Famine, the system was replaced by poor immigrant labour.

### **Continental Europe**

The Industrial Revolution on Continental Europe came later than in Great Britain. In many industries, this involved the application of technology developed

Europe'. The nature of the Russia state, therefore, became increasingly incompatible with the new demands that the new and changing social and economic forces engendered. Serfdom was abolished in 1861. Even as peasant agriculture became commercialized and there emerged a 'kulak' rich peasant strata, the fundamental conflict in the countryside on the urgent questions of land, rents, wages and rights over commons remained that between the landed aristocracy, which still held the major portion of the land, and the peasantry as a whole. Expropriation of landed estates and land for the peasants was a demand that neither the Tsarist autocracy nor any other political group, except the Bolshevik, was prepared to endorse. At the same time, timing and nature of Russian industrialization also created scope for a workers movement that was both very militant and political. Freedom from national oppression in the Tsarist Empire coincided with the victory of the socialist revolution. Apart from the alienation felt by the peoples of the Baltic region, Central Asia, Transcaucasia and other areas as a result of political and cultural discrimination, the economic backwardness that Tsarist economic policies entailed for these regions ensured that they remain predominantly agricultural with a strong stake in the land question. The Bolsheviks supported land for the peasant as well as the right to secession and a voluntary union. The peasantry in these areas, therefore, played a crucial role in the victory of the socialist alternative to the tsarist autocracy, completely bypassing all liberal solutions to nationalist aspirations.

### **The Russian Revolution: In Stages**

Lenin was the most important leader of the Bolshevik party. The Bolsheviks did not simply transfer Marxism to Russia. They found viable answers to their specific revolutionary problematic in Russia within the framework of Marxism. The 'hegemony of the working class' was necessary in the first bourgeois-democratic stage of the revolutionary, strategy was the 'alliance of the working class and the peasantry' in the context of a two stage revolution and the leading role of the working class, while transforming their strategy to bring them about. The Russian Revolution may be said to have gone through three distinct stage and took almost twelve years to complete. The first stage led to the creation of a parliament, called the Duma. The second stage, known as the February revolution in 1917, led to the

establishment of a Provisional Government at the centre though the rule of the tsar still prevailed. Finally, the Revolution completed its third and final stage in October 1917 when the rule of the tsar was overthrown and a peoples' republic was established. The first major assault on the autocracy occurred in 1905, sparked off by firing on a peaceful demonstration of workers on 9 January 1905. This day came to be known as Bloody Sunday. The workers and peasants began to demand a 'democratic republic'. They also created the first soviets, grass-root, elected political organizations of workers, peasants and soldiers, which Lenin later called the 'embryos of revolutionary power' and which eventually formed the basis of the post revolutionary state, and from which the socialist state derived its name USSR. The February Revolution of 1917 began with a demonstration of women workers over shortage of bread in Petrograd. Later, it spread to other cities and to the countryside. Strikes by all sections of society, peasant uprisings, and revolutionary action by the soldiers sealed the fate of the autocracy. The Russian autocracy was overthrown and replaced by a provisional Government dominated by the liberal bourgeoisie. The Revolution achieved political freedom for the first time. Fundamental and civil rights were created. New post-February revolution regime could not continue for long. The peasants were disappointed that they did not get any land, and the entire working people and soldiers were disappointed that the war still continued. The Bolsheviks easily emerged as closest to the popular mood with their slogans of: Land for the peasant, immediate end to war, Workers' control over industries, Right of nationalities to selfdetermination, and above all Bread.

### **Early Changes**

The early legislation aimed at destroying the legal and economic bases of capitalism and in laying the foundation for socialism. One of earliest measures was the abolition of private resources in industry, and the establishment of workers' control. A second major intervention was in agriculture. By the Land Decree of November 1917 landlordism was abolished, and the entire land nationalized and given over to peasants for hereditary use under individual production. The land communities, the village gatherings and peasant soviets acted as autonomous organs of social and political transformation in the countryside. Within the space of a few years millions of acres of land changed

on the Niger and at Fashoda. Moreover, by 1882 France had to forego its control over Egypt to Britain. The Treaty of San Stefano (which concluded the Russo-Turkish war) was placed before a Congress of all the major European powers— Britain, France, Turkey, Russia, Italy and Germany—in June 1878 at Berlin. Russia's gains were reduced while Austria stood to gain by being allowed to occupy and administer Bosnia and Herzegovina. Britain got Cyprus and France was promised a free hand in Turkey's North African territory of Tunisia. However, Italy and Germany did not gain any territories as a result of this Congress. But what was even more alarming for Britain was Russia's expansion in the Central Asian region prospect of a Russian takeover of Afghanistan, which was a buffer state within the Britain sphere of influence. In 1885, Russian forces occupied a part of Afghan territory. The British Prime Minister asked Parliament to vote him eleven million pounds for resisting the Russians. But once again the Tsar, Alexander III, realizing that it was better to exercise discretion, decided to withdraw and to turn his energies instead towards expansion in China.

### Power Combinations

Austria-Hungary was steadily losing its importance during this period. However, for Germany it was a natural ally, especially against Russia. Though the alliance of the Three Emperors (Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary) known as the Dreikaiserbund had been forged in June 1881 and renewed in 1884, it finally broke down in 1887. As differences between Russia and Germany increased, Austria-Hungary as well as Italy drew closer to Germany. This process culminated in the formation of the Triple Alliance in 1882. By the 1890s Russia was experiencing great isolation. So was France. This brought the two together in a Dual Alliance in 1893. Thus, in the 1890s, two sets of European alliances existed. In 1904 the Entente Cordiale or Anglo-French agreement was signed. It settled all their main differences over colonies. France recognized British interests in Egypt while Britain in turn endorsed French interests in Morocco. This agreement was only a "friendly understanding", not an alliance. But Germany's aggressive postures, especially in Morocco, brought the French and the British closer to each other. It also brought Germany and France very close to war in 1906 and it was only an international conference at Algericas, in which the independence of Morocco was reaffirmed, which defused the issue. In 1905 Russia suffered an ignominious defeat at the hands of Japan. This humbled Russian aspirations and the Anglo-

Russian Agreement of 1907 settled the long-standing rivalries between the two powers over Afghanistan, Persia and Tibet. Thus a Triple Entente of Britain, France and Russia, to rival the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy, had materialized. **Balkan Problem** The outbreak of a revolution in Turkey in 1908 by a group of liberal patriots, who called themselves the "Young Turks", overthrew the Sultan's rule. As fallout of these developments, Austria decided to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina, which it had been administering since 1878. This brought protests from Russia. It demanded that Austria's action be brought before an international conference. The Serbians, who had nurtured hopes of acquiring Bosnia-Herzegovina some day, joined the Russians in their protest. But Germany and Austria held that they would not agree to a conference unless the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina was recognized beforehand. Ultimately, they had their way largely because Russia, after its defeat at the hands of Japan, was in no position to go to war against Austria-Hungary and Germany at this juncture. This incident revealed the might of Germany and its growing ability to strongly assert itself, though on this occasion on behalf of Austria. This tendency had ominous forebodings for the future. Italy entered into a secret understanding with Russia in 1909 whereby it promised to support Russia's interests in the Straits of Dardanelles in return for Russia's support for Italian designs in Tripoli (Libya).

### Run Up to the War

In 1889 England had adopted a "two-power standard" whereby the British would have a naval fleet 10% stronger than the combined navies of the two next-strongest powers. Germany had in 1898 embarked on a course of naval expansion which made it the secondstrongest naval power in the world by 1914. This was galling for England which felt that Germany did not really require a navy, especially since it already had such a powerful army. A naval build-up could only mean that it wished to challenge Britain's naval supremacy sometime in the future. The naval rivalry worsened relations between Germany and Britain considerably. 1912, Italy suddenly decided to take the plunge and annexed Tripoli. It had secured the consent of all the major powers in this campaign and hence there was no major Moroccan-type crisis this time. In October 1912 Greece and Serbia invaded the Ottoman Empire and decisively defeated it. By the Treaty of London of May 1913, the Ottoman Empire

without clearly warning Hitler. Poland was at fault for not forming a common front with the Soviet Union and then for not submitting 'peacefully' to German demands. Mussolini was blamed for support and encouragement of Hitler, before joining the Western allies in 1943. The Soviet Union was responsible for propagating the idea of an 'inevitable' conflict between communism and capitalism/fascism, but most of all for entering into a non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany in August 1939 and so giving it a 'green light' for attack on Poland while simultaneously annexing several territories itself. This temporary alliance was reversed when Hitler ordered an invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 and his armies advanced towards Moscow and other cities before being halted at Stalingrad in the winter of 1942-43.

In East Asia and the Pacific militarist Japan took on an aggressive role with all its neighbors to build on Economic Co-Prosperity Zone, antagonizing the US, another Pacific Ocean power that tried to deny Japan access to oil and other raw materials. When Japan destroyed part of the US fleet anchored at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii on 6 December 1941, and Hitler declared war on the US on 11 December 1941, the US entered a new global war against both Japan and Germany, which ended only with their 'unconditional surrender' in 1945.

## Reasons of World War 2

The treaties (of Versailles, Riga, Lausanne, Locarno, etc.) simply, redrew the map of Europe. Four great empires, the Russian Romanov, the Hohenzollern, the Habsburg, and the Ottoman faced defeat and collapsed. Germany became a republic, suffering from the stigma of defeat and burdened by allied reparations. The victorious western democracies gained territories. France, for instance, gained Alsace-Lorraine which was with Germany since 1871. Discontent over the severity of the Allied peace terms and squabbles over the newly drawn frontiers contained seeds of future conflicts.

The idea of a world organization for maintaining peace in the globe was proposed by Woodrow Wilson, the American President. But it did not generate much hype as the treaty of Versailles, the cornerstone of this organization the League of Nations-was not ratified even by America. Moreover, the defeated powers were also not invited to become members. Germany was allowed to join the League only in 1926.

League sponsored Disarmament Conference in Geneva (1932-34) failed to reach any agreement. Cracks began to appear in global peace in the early 1930s. The League lacked the executive powers to impose peaceful solutions. Japanese Militarism, Italian Fascism and German Nazism became increasingly strident in their demands.

In 1931, Japanese forces seized Manchuria, a region of China rich in natural resources, and made in a puppet state called Manchukuo. Italian forces invaded Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and conquered it by May 1936. In Germany, Hitler started a program of military build-up in violation of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. In March 1936, he notified to the western powers the existence of a German Air Force (Luftwaffe). In the same year, Germany and Italy formed an alliance, called the Rome-Berlin Axis, which was joined in 1940 by Japan.

Germany abrogated the disarmament clauses of the Treaty in December 1933 and proceeded to build an army, air force and navy machine oriented to the future that virtually overran Europe in 1940-41. Germany recovered the Saar region by plebiscite in January 1935, overturned the free city status of Danzig between 1934 and 1936, and remilitarized the Rhineland in March 1936.

Months of negotiations and increasing tension culminated in a four power conference of Britain, France, Germany and Italy in Munich on 29 September 1938 renouncing war and permitting German military occupation of most of Czechoslovakia.

In March 1938, German army moved into Austria to achieve union (Anschluss) with Germany. In 1938, Hitler sought the control of Sudetanland, a region of Western Czechoslovakia dominated by German speaking people. Britain wished to preserve peace at all costs, by meeting Hitler's demands and following a policy of appeasement.

In September 1938, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and French Premier Daladier agreed to turn over the Sudeten-land to Germany and forced Czechoslovakia to accept the agreement (which became known as the Munich Agreement). The failure of appeasement soon became clear. Hitler violated the Munich Agreement in March 1939 and seized the rest of Czechoslovakia. Similar treatment was meted out to Poland later on.

In Spain in 1936, a 'popular front' of republicans, socialists, anarchists and syndicates assumed power.