

Question no 2

Introduction

The period 1815 and 1848 in Europe was shaped by a continuous struggle between the forces of continuity which were represented by conservatism and monarchical absolutism, and the forces of change, embodied in liberalism and nationalism. The conservative order established after the Congress of Vienna (1815) sought to preserve dynastic legitimacy and suppress revolutionary ideas. However, socio-economic transformations, ideological awakening and repeated political crises gradually weakened this conservative system, culminating in the revolution of 1848, which marked the decisive breakthrough of liberal and nationalist forces across Europe.

Forces of Continuity (Conservatism)

1. Congress of Vienna 1815

The Congress of Vienna aimed to restore the pre-French Revolution order by:

- ① Restoring hereditary monarchies.

- ② upholding legitimacy and balance of power
- ③ Preventing the spread of revolutionary ideologies

This settlement ignore the popular sovereignty and national aspirations, sowing long term instability

2. Metternich System and Reactionary Politics

Prince Klemens von Metternich led the conservative reaction, especially in Austria and Germany

- ① suppression of liberal ideas through censorship
- ② Surveillance and repression through secret police
- ③ Opposition to Constitutionalism and nationalism

The Censorship Decree (1819) exemplified this repression by restricting press freedom and universities

Forces of Change (Liberalism and Nationalism)

1- Liberalism

Liberalism demanded

- ① Constitutional government
- ② Rule of law
- ③ Civil liberties (press, assembly, equality before law)

It was largely supported by the middle class, professionals and intellectuals.

2- Nationalism

Nationalism emphasised

- ① self-determination
- ② unity of small states based on shared language, culture and history
- ③

It challenged multinational empires such as Austria, Russia and the Ottoman Empire.

Significant events and Movements that Led to Revolutions Of 1848

1 Congress of Vienna and Restoration system

After Napoleon's defeat, European powers restored absolute monarchies. Liberal constitutions were completely abolished. National aspirations of Italians, Germans, Poles and Hungarians were dissolved which led to the deep resentments against conservative regimes.

2- Metternich System and Conservative Repression

Austria under Prince Metternich led Europe's conservative Order. Cautious Decree (1819) suppressed press universities and political activity. Secret police and censorship became common. Political frustration pushed opposition underground.

3- Rise of Liberalism

Middle class people demanded constitutional government, rule of law, civil liberties and representative institutions. They were previously inspired by the enlightenment ideas and the French revolution. These liberal ideas dispersed despite repression.

4- Growth of Nationalism

Many ethnic groups wanted self-determination. Major

Nationalist movements that occurred in that era were, German unification, Italian unification, Hungarian nationalism and Polish independence. The national unity in the era of repression build revolutionary aspirations in people.

5. Impact of Earlier Revolutions 1820 - 1830

Earlier revolutions such as Spanish and Italian revolts (1820s) challenged the absolutism of French powers. The Greek War of Independence (1821-29) which succeeded against the Ottoman empire also became successful example of revolution and lastly the July Revolution in France (1830) which overthrew the Bourbon monarchy. These events proved that the revolutions were possible.

6. Industrialization and Social Distress

The rapid industrialization across the Europe caused poor working conditions, urban overcrowding and low wages for the working class. This made rise of working class Proletariat because of the rising socio-economic tensions in the Europe.

7. Spread of Socialist Ideas

Thinkers like Karl Marx, Engels and Louis Blanc criticized the capitalism. Hence, the workers demanded right to their unpaid surplus labour and social justice. These socialist movements added a new revolutionary force.

8. Economic Crisis and Famine (1845-1847)

Potato famine devastated central and western Europe. Food shortages led to high prices, inflation, unemployment and Hunger riots that triggered a mass economic and social resentment among the people.

9. Weakness of Monarchies

Rulers of the congress of Vienna were politically rigid but economically inefficient. They were not having any popular sovereignty hence they started to lose their legitimate governments.

10. February Revolution in France an immediate trigger

The February revolution in France overthrew the King Louis

phillepe and Second French Republic was formed in the France. This overthrowment of king in France sparked revolutionary waves across Europe. As King Metternich says

"When France sneezes rest of the Europe catches the cold"

— Prince Metternich

Conclusion

The revolutions of 1848 were caused by several social, economic and political factors. However, the major causes still were the forces of continuity, conservatism led by Metternich system and Congress of Vienna. These forces of continuity caused further resentment that gave birth to nationalist and liberalist forces to emerge and eventually cause revolutions of 1848.

Question no 4

Introduction

Benjamin Disraeli's assertion that "the great alliances have always been the most fertile cause of war" aptly explains the diplomatic environment of **Pre - World War I** Europe. The formation of rigid military alliances - the **Triple Alliance** and the **Triple Entente** was initially intended to preserve the peace through balance of power. However, instead of ensuring stability, these alliances generated **mutual suspicion, arms race and automatic military commitments** transforming localized disputes into a general European war in 1914. Thus, the alliance system created a framework of mistrust and inevitability that made World War I almost unavoidable.

Formation of Pre-War alliances

1. Triple Entente

Triple Entente was a defensive coalition bloc of Triple

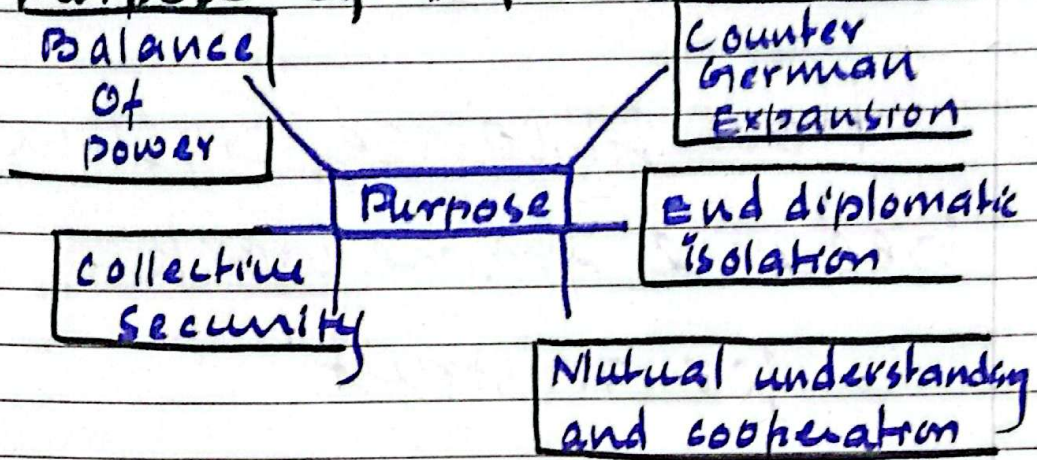
alliance. It was an informal understanding formed in 1907 between,

Britain + France + Russia



Triple Entente

Purpose of Triple Entente



2- Triple Alliance

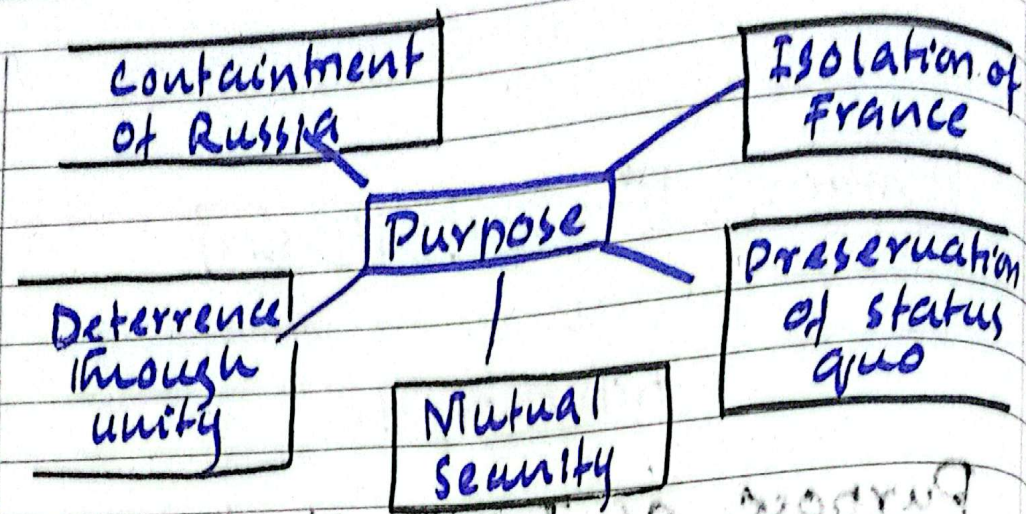
It was a military and diplomatic alliance formed in (1882) between

Germany + Austria-Hungary + Italy



Triple Alliance

Purpose of Triple Alliance



How Alliance System became framework for mistrust

The pre world war I alliance system turned European diplomacy from cooperation to confrontation. Instead of ensuring security, alliances institutionalized fear, suspicion and hostility, making war increasingly possible.

1- Division of Europe into hostile blocs

These alliances divided Europe into two hostile camps. It caused rigid polarization which destroyed trust among each other in Europe.

"US v/s them" narrative emerged between triple Entente and triple alliance.

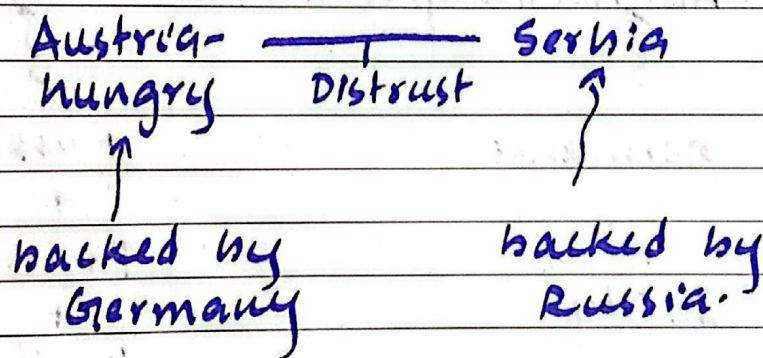
2- Perception of encirclement and insecurity

Germany perceived the Triple Entente as an attempt to encircle and contain it.

- ① France feared German Invasion
- ② Russia feared German and Austro-Hungarian invasion
- ③ Britain feared German naval growth

3- Balkan crises and Mutual Suspicion

In the Balkans, Austria-Hungary distrusted Serbia. Serbia had been relying on Russia and Austria-Hungary relied on Germany.

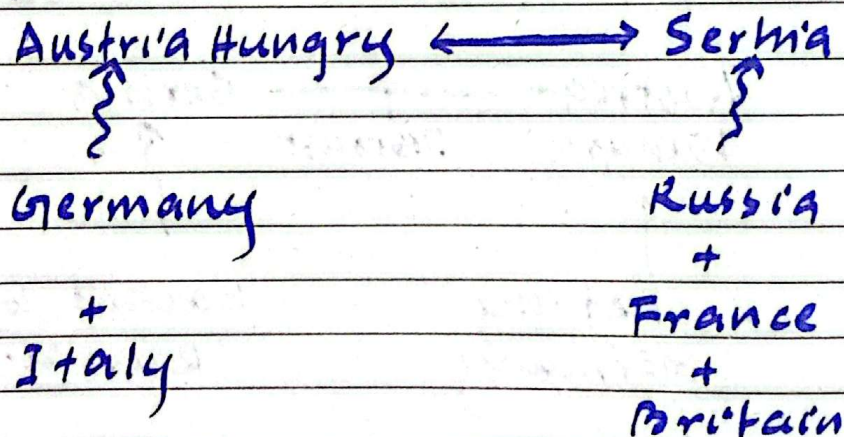


Alliance System Leading to World War I

The pre 1914 alliance system transformed Europe into a rigid and hostile power structure. Instead of preventing conflict, alliances expanded a local crisis into a global war by enforcing automatic military commitments, intensifying mistrust and mobilising war.

1- Alliance turned local conflicts into international war

The Balkan crisis of 1914 was initially a regional dispute between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. This led to escalation of war in international conflict



2- Automatic military commitments removed diplomatic flexibility

Alliances involved binding obligations. States were expected to defend their allies regardless of circumstances. Leaders feared loss of credibility if they failed to act on appropriate time.

Triple Alliance — Triple Entente
↓

- No negotiations
- Crisis management was impossible
- Diplomacy collapsed

3- The "Blank Cheque" and Escalation

Germany's unconditional support to Austria Hungary in July 1914 - the blank cheque emboldened Vienna to act aggressively against Serbia.

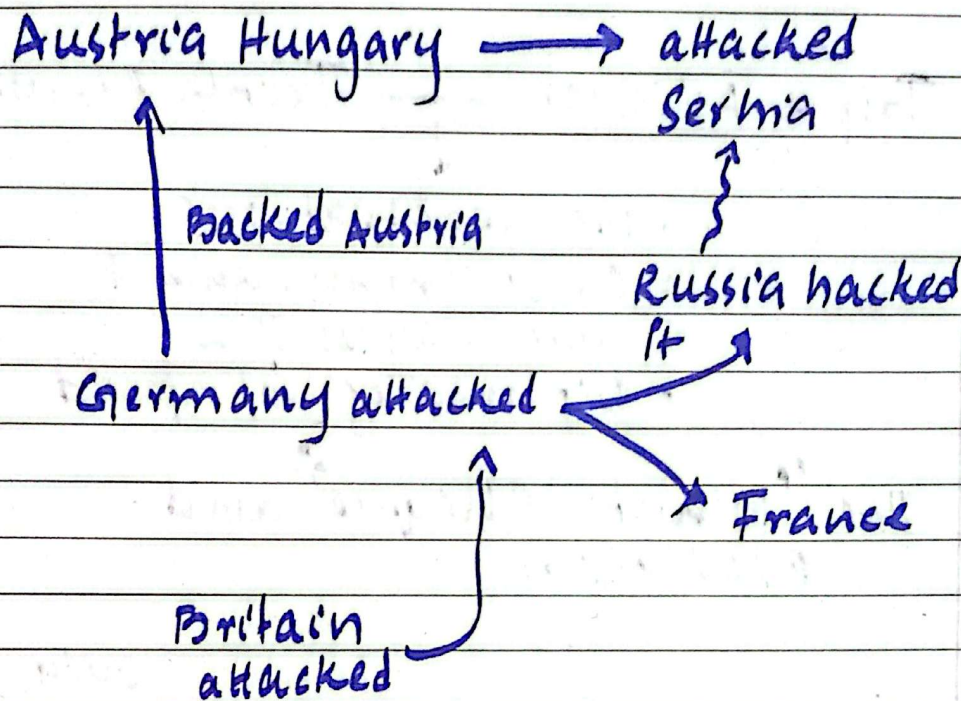
Austria Hungary issued ultimatum.

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Serbia's partial acceptance was rejected

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War escalation

1. Chain Reaction of Mobilization

once Austria-Hungary declared war, Russia mobilized Serbia, Germany mobilized against Russia and France, France supported Russia and Britain involved after German violation of Belgian neutrality.



This led to domino effect and led to World War I.

5- British entry and alliance obligations

Although Britain was initially hesitant but it entered into war to curtail Germany and because of the Alliance with the France. Britain committed

to Belgian neutrality that dragged it towards the war, turning it into World War.

Britain → Alliance with France

+

Commitment to Belgian neutrality

↓

involvement of Britain into World War-I

Conclusion

The alliance system caused the World War I in a structured way. by ensuring that no conflict could remain limited and isolated. Alliances transformed diplomacy into military moves, encouraged aggressive behaviour, and created an unstoppable chain reaction once violence began. Thus, the World War I was not merely triggered by the assassination of Sarajevo but produced by the alliance system that created large scale war.