

UNIT : III
I: I WORLD WAR- CAUSES AND RESULT
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World War I, also known as the Great War and First World War, was a deadly global conflict that originated in Europe. Beginning from 1914 and lasting until 1918, the First World War left with an estimated nine million combatant deaths and 13 million civilian deaths as a direct result of the conflict.

Origins of World War I

Towards the end of the 19th century, the growing rivalry between European nations became all too apparent. Germany, upon its unification in 1871, was becoming an industrial power and other nations of Europe, specifically France and Britain, felt threatened by this.

Around this time the fracturing Ottoman Empire gave birth to new countries in the Balkan region. One of them, Serbia, was gaining land and power at the expense of the empire of Austria-Hungary. To counter this threat, along with any future ones, the Austro-Hungarian Empire formed an alliance with Germany and Italy to defend each other.

In response, Britain, France and Russia formed the Triple Entente for the same purpose.

During the 1900s both Britain and Germany added bigger and better battleships to their naval arsenals. The rest of Europe also followed suit. By 1914, most of the European countries had their armies ready for war. All it needed was a spark to ignite it. That spark came when Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo, Bosnia on June 28, 1914.

Franz Ferdinand was the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary and the man who shot him was a Serb nationalist, Gavrilo Princip. Gavrilo was protesting against Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia. Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, prompting Russia to mobilize its army to defend Serbia. Germany, in turn, declared war on Russia and on France. To invade France a large German army marched through Belgium, violating its territorial integrity. This drew Britain into the war, since, in 1830, it had made an agreement to defend Belgium if it was ever attacked.

The making of a Global War

The war drew in many European powers at the time along with their overseas colonies. They were divided into two groups – the Allied Powers and the Central Powers. The Central Powers were made up of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey, while the Allies including France, Britain and its empire, Russia, Italy, Japan and from 1917, the United States of America. The war was fought along two main lines, or fronts. There was the Western Front, which ran from Belgium, through France to Switzerland, and the Eastern front which ran from the Baltic to the Black Sea. There were also sporadic fighting in the Middle East and along the border between Italy and Austria

What made World War I different?

The factor that made World War I different was the fact that it was fought from parallel lines of trenches separated from only a short stretch of ground known as “no man’s land”. Trench warfare was necessary as the power, speed and accuracy of the weapons used on both the sides made open battle impossible. When soldiers did leave the trenches to launch an attack, often only a few metres of the ground was gained and the cost of casualties was enormous. This led to a stalemate situation that lasted from the end of 1914 until the summer of 1918. Even the use of new weapons such as tanks, nerve gas and aeroplanes did little to change the situation.

The Tide Turns

At the end of 1917, following the Russian Revolution, Russia had started peace talks with Germany and German soldiers who had been fighting on the Eastern Front were able to join the fighting in the west. For a while, they outnumbered the Allied forces, but by 8 September 1918 over 1,20,000 well-trained and well-equipped forces of the United States joined the allies in France. This changed the balance power in favour of the Allies. By the End of October, all German occupied-France and Belgium had been reclaimed with Turkey and Austria-Hungary having been defeated.

End of the War

In Germany, people were running short of food and fuel. The German navy mutinied and there was widespread unrest. On November 9, the German ruler, Kaiser William II, abdicated and on November 11, 1918 an armistice was signed between Germany and the allies, bringing the fighting to an end. In January 1919, the Allies met at the Paris Peace Conference, which formally ended the war. It drew up the Treaty of Versailles, which imposed a harsh peace upon Germany and laid the responsibility of starting the conflict squarely on Germany's shoulders. As part of the treaty, Germany was forced to give up its colonies overseas and vast sums of money to its former enemies. It also had to return Alsace-Lorraine to France. The wider implications of the treaty would be one of the causes of World War II.

II. LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The League of Nations was an international diplomatic group developed post the end of World War I. It was a precursor to the United Nations where disputes between nations would not be solved by open warfare but rather by mediation and diplomatic means.

The League of Nations had a mixed record of success before it stopped operations during World War II

Origins of League of Nations

The Origins of the League of Nations was found in the Fourteen Points laid down by US President Woodrow Wilson which envisioned an organisation that would solve a dispute between members.

The League was approved and ratified by the Treaty of Versailles at the Versailles Conference on 28 April 1919. The first formal session of the League was held in Geneva in 1920. Though the League had no armed force of its own, economic sanctions and the imposition of a kind of quarantine of the offending state was considered a deterrent against aggression.

In practice, the League spoke with anything but a collective voice. Germany and the Soviet Union were both excluded and the United States refused to ratify the Versailles Treaty and never joined the League. The isolationist elements in the US Government felt that America would lose its autonomy should it become involved in international politics.

The League of Nations consisted of a council made up of four permanent powers – Britain, France, Italy and Japan – and four others chosen at intervals from the remaining member states. The first four were Belgium, Brazil, Spain and Greece, but Brazil became the first state to leave the League when it forced Italy to withdraw from its unilateral occupation of Corfu in 1923, was scored against one of the organization's own principal council members.

Issues faced by the League of Nations

The most serious test faced by the League came in the effort to impose a settlement of the Balkans and the Near East, the area whose instability was one of the causes of World War I.

Here there was an issue which was difficult to resolve. Italy had joined the war in 1915 after signing a secret convention in London promising her substantial territorial spoils in Dalmatia and Slovenia.

At the Paris Peace Conference, Woodrow Wilson rejected secret agreements and the London agreement was shelved. The Italian representative stormed out of the conference, but nothing could persuade the other Allies to concede all Italy wanted.

The second problem was Greece. A minor Allied power, Greece's ambitions were fired by the power vacuum which the defeat of Bulgaria and Turkey opened up in the Near East. The Greek premier, Venizelos, looked for compensation in mainland Turkey, where there were large Greek minorities, and in Thrace. Under the Treaty of Neuilly, which Bulgaria signed on 29 November 1919. Bulgaria lost its territorial gains in the Balkan Wars years before as a result.

The Soviet Union which was not a member of the league attacked a port in Persia in 1920, Persia appealed to the League for help. But the League refused to help to believe that the Soviets Union would not accept any of its rulings since it was a non-member state and in need of damaging its authority.

Other issues included the hard time other European countries had when handing over autonomy during the negotiation of disputes.

There scenarios in which the League had to intervene despite its reservations. For example, the League acted as a trustee of a tiny region between France and Germany called Saar from 1919 to 1935

The League became the 15-year custodian of the coal-rich area to allow it time to determine on its own which of the two countries it wished to join, with Germany being the eventual choice.

Disputes solved by the League of Nations

Poland would always face external aggressions against its independence. The first issue came during the occupation of Vilna by the Soviet Union in 1920 and its subsequent handover to Lithuania. Following a demand that Lithuania's independence is recognised, the League of Nations got involved.

Through careful mediation, Vilnia was returned to Poland. The League was also brought in as Poland grappled with Germany about Upper Silesia and with Czechoslovakia over the town of Teschen.

Reasons why the League of Nations Failed

The League did not have a standing army of its own, instead relied on the armies of its member nations for military intervention and any member nation that lent its army for such a cause there was always an unmitigated risk of it having demanding compensation for its trouble.

As such the league was powerless when the Japanese Empire blitzed its way across the Chinese mainland in 1937 or when Nazi Germany took over the whole of Czechoslovakia under the pretext of protecting the German minority population living there.

The representation of the League itself was an issue. Not all nations were represented under its banner the most conspicuous being the United States. Had the United States been a member, it

is speculated that the League of Nations would have had a better authority when it came to the support and disputes between member states.

When World War II finally broke out in September 1939, the League was virtually disbanded. In 1940 league members Denmark, Norway, Belgium, and France fell to the German onslaught. Switzerland, in a bid to maintain its neutrality at all costs, refused to host the League of Nations within its borders anymore. The reason being the League was perceived as an organisation of the allies. As a result, the League began to dismantle its offices.

Soon the Allies endorsed the idea of the United Nations, which held its first planning conference in San Francisco in 1944, effectively ending any need for the League of Nations to make a post-war return.

The League of Nations was officially dissolved on April 20, 1946

III.NAZISM IN GERMANY

Birth of the Weimar Republic

In the early years of the twentieth century, Germany fought the First World War (1914-1918) alongside the Austrian empire and against the Allies (England, France and Russia.). All resources of Europe were drained out because of the war. Germany occupied France and Belgium. But, unfortunately, Allies, strengthened by the US entry in 1917, won, defeating Germany and the Central Powers in November 1918. At Weimar, the National Assembly met and established a democratic constitution with a federal structure. In the German Parliament, deputies were elected on the basis of equal and universal votes cast by all adults including women. Germany lost its overseas colonies. The War Guilt Clause held Germany responsible for the war and damages the Allied countries suffered. The Allied armies occupied Rhineland in the 1920s.

The Effects of the War

The entire continent was devastated by the war both psychologically and financially. The war of guilt and national humiliation was carried by the republic and was financially crippled by being forced to pay compensation. Socialists, Catholics and Democrats, supported the Weimar Republic and they were mockingly called the 'November criminals'. The First World War left a deep imprint on European society and polity. Soldiers are placed above civilians but unfortunately, soldiers lived a miserable life. Democracy was a young and fragile idea, which could not survive the instabilities of interwar Europe.

Political Radicalism and Economic Crises

The Weimar Republic birth coincided with the revolutionary uprising of the Spartacist League on the pattern of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. They crushed the uprising with the help of a war veterans organisation called Free Corps. Communists and Socialists became enemies. Political radicalisation heightened by the economic crisis of 1923. Germany refused to pay, and the French occupied its leading industrial area, Ruhr, to claim their coal. The image of Germans carrying cartloads of currency notes to buy a loaf of bread was widely publicised evoking worldwide sympathy. This crisis came to be known as hyperinflation, a situation when prices rise phenomenally high.

The Years of Depression

The years between 1924 and 1928 saw some stability. The support of short-term loans was withdrawn when the Wall Street Exchange crashed in 1929. Great Economic Depression

started and over the next three years, between 1929 and 1932, the national income of the USA fell by half. The economy of Germany was the worst hit. Workers became jobless and went on streets with placards saying, 'Willing to do any work'. Youth indulged themselves in criminal activities. The middle class and small businessmen were filled with the fear of proletarianisation, anxiety of being reduced to the ranks of the working class or unemployment. Politically also the Weimar Republic was fragile. The Weimar constitution due to some inherent defects made it unstable and vulnerable to dictatorship. One inherent defect was proportional representation. Another defect was Article 48, which gave the President the powers to impose emergency, suspend civil rights and rule by decree.

Hitler's Rise to Power

Hitler rose to power. He was born in 1889 in Austria and spent his youth in poverty. In the First World War, he enrolled for the army, acted as a messenger in the front, became a corporal, and earned medals for bravery. Hitler joined a small group called the German Workers' Party in 1919. He took over the organisation and renamed it the National Socialist German Workers' Party, which later came to be known as the Nazi Party. In 1923, he planned to seize control of Bavaria, march to Berlin and capture power. During the Great Depression, Nazism became a mass movement. After 1929, banks collapsed, businesses shut down, workers lost their jobs and the middle classes were threatened with destitution. In such a situation, Nazi propaganda stirred hopes of a better future.

Hitler was a powerful speaker and his words moved people. In his speech, he promised to build a strong nation, undo the injustice of the Versailles Treaty and restore the dignity of the German people. He also promised employment for those looking for work and a secure future for the youth. He promised to weed out all foreign influences and resist all foreign 'conspiracies' against Germany. Hitler started following a new style of politics and his followers held big rallies and public meetings to demonstrate support. According to the Nazi propaganda, Hitler was called a messiah, a saviour, as someone who had arrived to deliver people from their distress.

The Destruction of Democracy

President Hindenburg offered the Chancellorship, on 30 January 1933, the highest position in the cabinet of ministers, to Hitler. The Fire Decree of 28 February 1933 suspended civic rights like freedom of speech, press and assembly that had been guaranteed by the Weimar constitution. On 3 March 1933, the famous Enabling Act was passed which established dictatorship in Germany. The state took control over the economy, media, army and judiciary. Apart from the already existing regular police in green uniform and the SA or the Storm Troopers, these included the Gestapo (secret state police), the SS (the protection squads), criminal police and the Security Service (SD).

Reconstruction

Economic recovery was assigned to the economist Hjalmar Schacht by Hitler who aimed at full production and full employment through a state-funded work-creation programme. This project produced the famous German superhighways and the people's car, the Volkswagen. Hitler ruled out the League of Nations in 1933, reoccupied the Rhineland in 1936, and integrated Austria and Germany in 1938 under the slogan, One people, One empire and One leader. Schacht advised Hitler against investing hugely in rearmament as the state still ran on deficit financing.

The Nazi Worldview

Nazis are linked to a system of belief and a set of practices. According to their ideology, there was no equality between people, but only a racial hierarchy. Racism of Hitler borrowed from thinkers like Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer. The argument of Nazi was simple: the strongest race would survive and the weak ones would perish. The Aryan race was the finest who retained its purity, became stronger and dominated the world. The other aspect of Hitler's ideology related to the geopolitical concept of Lebensraum, or living space. Hitler intended to extend German boundaries by moving eastwards, to concentrate all Germans geographically in one place.

Establishment of the Racial State

Nazis came into power and quickly began to implement their dream of creating an exclusive racial community of pure Germans. They wanted a society of 'pure and healthy Nordic Aryans'. Under the Euthanasia Programme, Helmuth's father had condemned to death many Germans who were considered mentally or physically unfit. Germany occupied Poland and parts of Russia, captured civilians and forced them to work as slave labour. Jews remained the worst sufferers in Nazi Germany. Hitler hated Jews based on pseudoscientific theories of race. From 1933 to 1938 the Nazis terrorised, pauperised and segregated the Jews, compelling them to leave the country.

The Racial Utopia

Genocide and war became two sides of the same coin. Poland was divided and much of north-western Poland was annexed to Germany.

People of Poland were forced to leave their homes and properties. Members of the Polish intelligentsia were murdered in large numbers, Polish children who looked like Aryans were forcibly snatched from their mothers and examined by 'race experts'.

Youth in Nazi Germany

Hitler was interested in the youth of the country. Schools were cleansed and purified. Germans and Jews were not allowed to sit or play together. In the 1940s Jews were taken to the gas chambers. Introduction of racial science to justify Nazi ideas of race. Children were taught to be loyal and submissive, hate Jews and worship Hitler. Youth organisations were responsible for educating German youth in 'the spirit of National Socialism'. At the age of 14, boys had to join the Nazi youth organisation where they were taught to worship war, glorify aggression and violence, condemn democracy, and hate Jews, communists, Gypsies and all those categorised as 'undesirable'. Later, they joined the Labour Service, at the age of 18 and served in the armed forces and enter one of the Nazi organisations. In 1922, the Youth League of the Nazis was founded.

The Nazi Cult of Motherhood

In Nazi Germany, children were told women were different from men. Boys were taught to be aggressive, masculine and steel hearted and girls were told to become good mothers and rear pure-blooded Aryan children. Girls had to maintain purity of the race, distance from Jews, look after their home and teach their children Nazi values. But all mothers were not treated equally. Honours Crosses were awarded to those who encouraged women to produce more children. Bronze cross for four children, silver for six and gold for eight or more. Women who maintained contact with Jews, Poles and Russians were paraded through the town with shaved

heads, blackened faces and placards hanging around their necks announcing ‘I have sullied the honour of the nation’.

The Art of Propaganda

Nazis termed mass killings as special treatment, final solution (for the Jews), euthanasia (for the disabled), selection and disinfections. ‘Evacuation’ meant deporting people to gas chambers. Gas chambers were labelled as “disinfection-areas”, and looked like bathrooms equipped with fake showerheads. Nazi ideas were spread through visual images, films, radio, posters, catchy slogans and leaflets. Orthodox Jews were stereotyped and marked and were referred to as vermin, rats and pests. The Nazis made equal efforts to appeal to all the different sections of the population. They sought to win their support by suggesting that Nazis alone could solve all their problems.

Ordinary People and the Crimes Against Humanity

People started seeing the world through Nazi eyes and spoke their Nazi language. They felt hatred and anger against Jews and genuinely believed Nazism would bring prosperity and improve general well-being. Pastor Niemoeller protested an uncanny silence, amongst ordinary Germans against brutal and organised crimes committed in the Nazi empire. Charlotte Beradt’s book called the Third Reich of Dreams describes how Jews themselves began believing in the Nazi stereotypes about them.

Knowledge about the Holocaust

The war ended and Germany was defeated. While Germans were preoccupied with their own plight, the Jews wanted the world to remember the atrocities and sufferings they had endured during the Nazi killing operations – also called the Holocaust. When they lost the war, the Nazi leadership distributed petrol to its functionaries to destroy all incriminating evidence available in offices.

IV: FASCIUM IN ITALY: -

Fascism is a form of far-right, authoritarian ultranationalism marked by forcible suppression of opposition, dictatorial power, and strong regimentation of society and economy. The movement came to prominence following the end of World War I in the early 20th century, where it first took root in Italy before spreading to other European nations

Definition of Fascism

The Italian term *fascismo* is derived from *fascio* meaning “a bundle of sticks”, ultimately from the Latin word *fasces*.

Political scientists and historians have debated for long about the exact nature of fascism, with each definition having unique elements and many other definitions being criticised for either being too broad or too narrow

According to many scholars, fascism and its adherents have always attacked communism, conservatism and liberalism, drawing support mainly from the far-right to be in power

The common definition of fascism is that of historian Stanley G Payne, which is widely accepted by contemporary scholars as reliable. His definition breaks down fascism in three concepts

One common definition of the term, frequently cited by reliable sources as a standard definition, is that of historian Stanley G. Payne. He focuses on three concepts:

1. Fascism is anti-liberalism, anti-communism and anti-conservatism
2. The goals of fascism are the creation of a nationalistic dictatorship that will regulate economy and structure social relations within a modern, self-determined culture to transform a nation into an empire
3. Fascism gathers support through romantic symbolism, mass mobilization, a positive view of violence and promotion of authoritarian leadership.

What are the tenets of Fascism?

The tenets of Fascism are as follows:

1. Nationalism (with or without expansionism): Nationalism is a key foundation of fascism. The fascist view of a nation is that of a single organic entity that binds people together by their ancestry and is a natural unifying force of people. The ideology seeks to resolve economic, social and political problems by achieving a millenarian national rebirth exalting the nation above all else and promoting traits of unity, strength and purity

2. Totalitarianism: Absolute control by the state is the hallmark of fascism. It opposes liberal democracy and rejects multi-party systems in favour of one-party systems that will, in its view, benefit the nation. In order to achieve this a fascist state pursues policies of social indoctrination through propaganda in education and the media and regulation of the production of educational and media materials. Such steps are undertaken to purge ideas that are not in line with the views of the state

3. Economy: Fascism presented itself as an alternative to both socialism and free-market capitalism. Fascism advocated economic control with self-sufficiency as a major goal. It advocated a resolution of domestic class conflict within a nation to secure national solidarity

Fascist economics supported a state-controlled economy that accepted a mix of private and public ownership over the means of production. Economic planning was applied to both the public and private sector and the prosperity of private enterprise depended on its acceptance of synchronizing itself with the economic goals of the state. Fascist economic ideology supported the profit motive but emphasized that industries must uphold the national interest as superior to private profit.

4. Action: Fascism emphasizes direct action which supports political violence and believes in its legitimacy as a core part of its politics. The basis of fascisms support of violent action is connected towards social Darwinism, which believes that a perceived superior race has all the right to dominate races that are thought to be weaker.

A brief history of Fascism

The period following World War I in 1919 was marked by weak governments and economic hardship. Events such as the Russian Revolution and the Great Depression had further made economic prosperity a distant dream in post-war Europe. This was more evident in Italy and Germany. The Weimar Republic of Germany had inherited a country reeling from defeat and the harsh sanctions imposed on it by the Versailles treaty. The economic hardship in 1929 further aggravated matters as inflation rendered the German currency virtually useless

This stopped the German government from paying war reparations under the Versailles treaty. France in a bid to force the Germans to repay the debt owed briefly occupied the Ruhr valley.

Events such as these were fertile grounds for Hitler and his Nazi party (the German variant of Fascism) to offer an alternative. Hitler promised to do away with the ‘injustices of the Versailles treaty’ and usher in a new era of prosperity. Benito Mussolini of Italy also rose to power in similar conditions. The Fascist movements in both countries met their end after the defeat of Germany and Italy in 1945 during World War II. But the ideology was alive in Spain under General Franco and under General Pinochet of Chile who ruled the country until the 1970s.

Today fascism exists as fringe movements in contrast to its past mobilisations. Even though such movements have yet to make any mark in national elections, they are gaining momentum due to ongoing issues of war, immigration and other crises that have affected their nations as of late.

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