

ASPECTS OF TWENTIETH CENTURY WORLD

Unit – III

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1. Formation of the League of Nations

The Covenant of the League was worked out at the Paris Peace Conference and included in each of the treaties that were signed after the First World War. It was largely due to the pressure from President Wilson that this task was accomplished. In drawing up the constitution of this organization, the ideas of Britain and America prevailed.

The League which was formed in 1920 consisted of five bodies: The Assembly, the Council, the Secretariat, the Permanent Court of Justice, and the International Labour Organisation. Each member-country was represented in the Assembly. The Council was the executive of the League. Britain, France, Italy, Japan and the United States were originally declared permanent members of the Council. Each member had one vote and since all decisions had to be unanimous, even the small nations possessed the right of veto.

The secretariat of the League of Nations was located at Geneva. Its first Secretary General was Sir Eric Drummond from Britain. The staff of the secretariat was appointed by the Secretary General in consultation with the Council. The International Court of Justice was set up in The Hague. The court was made of fifteen judges. The International Labour Organisation comprised a secretariat and general conference which included four representatives from each country.

Objectives of the League

The two-fold objective of the League of Nations was to avoid war and maintain peace in the world and to promote international cooperation in economic and social affairs. The League intended to act as conciliator and arbitrator and thereby resolve a dispute in its early stages. If wars should break out despite arbitration, the members should apply sanctions to the aggressor first economic and then military.

The difficulty in achieving the objectives was increased from the beginning by the absence of three Great Powers namely USA (did not become a member), Germany (a defeated nation) and Russia. The latter two joined in 1926 and 1934. While Germany resigned in 1933, Russia was expelled in 1939.

Activities of the League

The League was called in to settle a number of disputes between 1920 and 1925. The League was successful in three issues. In 1920 a dispute arose between Sweden and Finland over the sovereignty of the Aaland Islands. The League ruled that the islands should go to

Finland. In the following year the League was asked to settle the frontier between Poland and Germany in Upper Silesia, which was successfully resolved by the League. The third dispute was between Greece and Bulgaria in 1925. Greece invaded Bulgaria, and the League ordered a ceasefire. After investigation it blamed Greece and decided that Greece was to pay reparations. Thus the League had been successful until signing of the Locarno Treaty in 1925. By this treaty, Germany, France, Belgium, Great Britain, and Italy mutually guaranteed peace in Western Europe. Thereafter Germany joined the League and was given a permanent seat on the Council.

Violations

One of the major problems confronting the European powers was how to achieve disarmament. In 1925 the Council of the League set up a commission to hold a Disarmament Conference to sort out the problem. But the proposed conference materialised only in February 1932. In this Conference, Germany's demand of equality of arms with France was rejected. In October Hitler withdrew Germany from the Conference and the League.

Japan attacked Manchuria in September 1931 and the League condemned Japan. So Japan also followed the example of Germany and resigned from the League. In the context of Italy's attack on Ethiopia, the League applied sanctions. As the sanctions came into effect, Italy resigned from the League in 1937. Thereafter the League was a passive witness to events, taking no part in the crises over the Rhineland, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland. The last decisive action it took was in December 1939 when Russia was expelled for her attack on Finland. The Assembly did not meet again and the League of Nations was finally dissolved in 1946.

2. Achievements and Failures of the League of Nations

Achievements of the League of Nations:

Political Achievements

About 40 political issues of both major and minor character were handled by the league during its existence. The league successfully settled the disputes relating to smaller states. But it failed where dispute between bigger states were involved.

Dispute over Aaland Islands

When in 1920 a dispute dropped up between Sweden and Finland over the issue of the Aaland Island, both appended to the league council for its settlement under the mediation of England. Sweden and Finland were not members of the league. According to the League Covenant the League had no right to intervene in the mutual disputes of states excepting its member states. However, in 1921 the council resolved the dispute by which Aaland Island was given to Finland but it took the responsibility of protecting the private properties of the Swedish nationals living there Apart from this the Island was neutralised and demilitarised.

Dispute over Eupen and Malmedy, 1920-21

In 1920-21 Germany protested to the council against the attribution of Eupen and Malmedy to Belgium. In September 1920, the council decided to recognise as final the transfer of the districts of Eupen and Malmedy to Belgium. On February 22, 1922 Germany was informed by the Secretary General that the decision was final.

Dispute over Upper Silesia, 1921

This was a border dispute between Germany and Poland in which France favoured Poland and Britain sympathised with Germany and which the conference of Ambassadors, a body consisting of 4 ambassadors to France - British, American, Italian and Japanese- and a representative of the French Government and a body which among other things was to draw out the boundaries left unsettled by the peace treating working as the successor to the Allied supreme council had failed to solve. The league council successfully recommended a boundary which was accepted to Germany and Poland.

Dispute over Vilna, 1920

Vilna had been the capital of Lithuania since 1323. Russia occupied it in 1795. After the First World War it was restored to Lithuania, but Poland occupied it in 1920. The League Council failed settling the dispute allowing Vilna to be annexed to Poland after a plebiscite of doubtful character in 1922. The council clearly demarcated the border between Poland and Lithuania and succeeded in maintaining peace between the two for a long time by recognising the union of Vilna with Poland.

Dispute over Corfu, 1923

In August 1923, certain Italian military officers were murdered in Greece. The Italian Government demanded apologies and full reparations for the crime from the Greek Government. As the latter failed to comply with the demands of Italy, she occupied the Island of Corfu. In September, 1923 the Greek Government referred the matter to the league council. Later the league council notified that the communication had been received from the conference of Ambassadors informing that the settlement of the dispute as a result of diplomatic negotiations.

Greco-Bulgarian Dispute, 1925

The border dispute between Greece and Bulgaria cropped up in 1925, Greece attacked Bulgaria when Greek general and a Greek soldier were shot dead by the Bulgarian troops. As a result of the league's intervention Greece was compelled to pay a huge indemnity for violating the border of Bulgaria. In this case the league could not give evidence of its integrity and impartiality.

The Chaco War, 1928

In 1928 trouble started in Gran Chaco, situated between Bolivia and Paraguay. Soon the matter surfaced and reached the council and the latter sent a telegram to both the parties, urging both the parties to reach an amicable settlement. Instantaneously, an immediate quarrel was reverted. However, in 1932, fresh quarrels started which could not be checked by the efforts of the neighbouring states. The league sent a commission of inquiry in January 1933. On June 12, 1936, the Inter American mediation led to a cessation of hostilities but it was not until 1938 that the matter was decided by arbitration.

Manchurian Dispute, 1931

Under the Russo Japanese Treaty of 1905, Japan was entitled to station 15,000 troops in Manchuria for the protection of the South Manchurian Railway with headquarters at Mukden. On 18th September, 1931, on the plea that the Chinese attempted to blow up the railway line seized the railway and captured all Chinese towns north of Mukden. By mid-November, Northern Manchuria was occupied and on January 4, 1932, the Japanese reached Shanghai. China appealed to the League Council which called upon the disputants to withdraw their troops. But as the Japanese did not comply, the council appointed a five-men commission

headed by Lord Lytton of England and other members from U.S.A., France, Germany and Italy.

In the meanwhile, Japan attacked Shanghai and China. Once again appealed to the Assembly which adopted a resolution on March 4, 1932 asking Japan to evacuate Shanghai. And under an Armistice of May 5, 1932 Japan quitted Shanghai but continued to hold on to Manchuria. The league could not do anything except that some of the powers of the league refused to recognise Manchukuo. Japan criticized it and subsequently left the league.

Italian Attack on Ethiopia, 1934-36

The dispute between Italy and Ethiopia cropped up with Italy's attack on a Ethiopian village of Walwal in 1934. In 1936 Italy attacked Ethiopia and the latter appealed to the league. The league council separately accused Italy of violating the terms of the league covenant. The council admitted this accusation. The council sanctioned only economic blockade against Italy but did not agree to risk any kind of military measure against her. Taking advantage of the League's extreme impotency, Italy occupied Ethiopia. In fact, from that moment world's confidence upon the league of nations was greatly under mined.

German Aggression and the League, 1935-39

A serious challenge was posed to the league by Germany. On October 14, 1933 Germany withdrew from the league and on March 16, 1935 she ordered conscription in violation of the Treaty of Versailles. On March 7, 1936 the Rhineland was remilitarized in violation of the Locarno Treaties in March 1938 Austria was occupied and in March 1939 Czechoslovakia was invaded and seized. The league took no effective action against Germany for all these violations except adopting resolutions and giving warnings. In September 1939 Germany invaded Poland and the World War-II started. By this time the league had almost become defunct.

In addition to the above cases the league also handled a lot of other cases. Besides maintaining international security the other political activities of the league were also important. The Mandates Commission, a body composed of eleven experts in colonial government, received annual reports from the Mandatory Powers. On the territories administered by them the Commission submitted these reports to the council with its comments and recommendations and the latter recommended these to the Mandatory Powers. The league also looked after the problem of the minorities and appointed a committee of three members of the council for this purpose. The Committee was to receive complaints from the minorities and

discuss the matter with the government of the concerned state, and generally succeeded in obtaining an understanding from the government to remedy the grievance complained of. However, if the committee failed to obtain satisfaction it could refer the petition to the council. In short the league worked through the method of persuasion and consent.

The league also successfully administered the Saar territory through a Governing Commission from 1920-1935, till a plebiscite was conducted there in January 1935. It also guaranteed the constitution of the free city of Danzig and appointed a High Commissioner to arbitrate on disputes between the Free City and Poland. Moreover, both the parties were given the right to appeal to the council against the decision of the High Commissioner.

Social Achievements

The social and humanitarian work of the league was in part a co-ordination of sporadic international activities which had begun before the war. In Article 23 of the league covenant it was provided that the league members would always endeavour to take steps collectively for the improvement of the public health all over the world. With a view to preventing and controlling disease everywhere in the world through international cooperation, the league Assembly had proposed to establish a permanent, Health organisation in 1923. It helped much in preventing the spread of Cholera and Plague in the East. In 1923 a Malaria Commission was appointed. Similar efforts were made to combat other diseases.

The Article 23 also laid down that "the members of the league will entrust the league with the general supervision over the execution of agreements with regard to traffic in women and children and traffic in opium and other dangerous drugs." The campaign against slavery was another important activity of the league. A slavery convention was concluded at Geneva in 1925 and in 1932 the league decided to set up a permanent Slavery Commission. It tried to improve the lot of the working people through the ILO, though the various conventions concluded by the ILO were generally not ratified by the member states. An advisory commission for the welfare of the children was also set up by the league.

The league also successfully solved the problem of the care and resettlement of millions of war prisoners and refugees. The chief contribution of the league in this regard was mainly that of coordination with the help of funds provided by the states and private charitable institutions. To assist the intellectuals in the war devastated areas the league appointed an International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation in 1922. In 1926, the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation was set up at Paris to coordinate "international

collaboration with a view to promoting the progress of general civilisation and human knowledge and notably the development and diffusion of science, letters and arts." This was achieved through conferences, lecturers, published materials to urge collective security, support of the league, elimination of inflammatory material from text books and also radio broadcasts etc.

Impressed by the humanitarian work of the league, Cordell Hull, the Secretary of state remarked in 1939. "The league of nations has been responsible for more humanitarian and scientific endeavour than any other organisation in history."

Economic Achievements

In the economic sphere the league provided for a new and elaborate machinery for international cooperation. It set up financial and economic committee comprising experts from various countries. These committees met annually at Geneva and directed the work of the financial and economic sections of the league. The Financial Committee of the league helped in tackling the problem of counterfeiting, falsification of commercial documents, double taxation and fluctuating value of gold. For international economic development, the league convened an international financial conference in Brussels in 1920 with a purpose to check inflation to control gold standard, to remove all impediments to international trade and commerce and to improve the international transport system. The Finance Conference made certain important recommendations to augment the mobility of labour, capital and commodities in all countries, to help industrial establishment of all states in a spirit of cooperation, to stabilise custom duties of all countries, and to keep an eye upon the agricultural improvement simultaneously with industrial development.

The Economic Committee of the league also did the preliminary work on a number of major international conferences viz. the World Economic Conference of 1927 and the Monetary and Economic Conference of 1933. To secure and maintain freedom of communications and of transit and equitable treatment for the commerce of all members of the league, the league created an Autonomous Communication and Transit Organisation which was concerned with the freedom of international transit, the collection of transit statistics, press facilities and accuracy of reporting the simplification of passport and other travel documents, the uniformity of high way traffic regulation, coordination of the national public works programmes etc.

"If measured by what other international organisations had accomplished in the past" holds Potter "the league's performance even in the security field rates very high, indeed very high than that of any other international institution with the exception of a very few highly special and limited agencies." Probably, the greatest contribution of the league was the influence it exercised in spreading the idea of international cooperation. Though politically a failure, the league had much to its credit in the social, economic and educational fields. Even in the political sphere it was able to reduce tension on many occasions and resolve disputes.

Failure of the League of Nations

Shortly after the formation of the league, the world was betrayed and belied and its hopes were found on rocks. It failed utterly to up keep the banner of peace and its failure was a foregone conclusion. Right from its inception, it was jeered as a "band of robber nations", "a disreputed daughter of a dishonoured mother", "a Trojan horse of allied diplomatic strategy" and "a dreamy discovery" as Hitler cynically would point out. The solemn words of the preamble that it should try to "achieve international peace and security by acceptance of obligations not to resort to war and by a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations in the dealings of the organised people with one another," never crystallized into reality. The crisis after crisis created tensions in the European landscape, but the league exhibited a shilly-shally attitude and lackadaisical apathy. It became a silent spectator when the Japanese attack on Manchuria, Italy's rape on Ethiopia, Germany's aggression on Austria, the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, the turbulence of the Spanish civil war and the invasion of Poland ate away the peace of Europe. That is why, an analysis of the causes that spelt the death knell of the league of nations is needed.

The very idea of the league was novel and experimental and no nation had a clear-cut vision about the working of it. The political arena preceding it was amply characterised by "PowerPolitics" and "International Anarchy". The league members showed no interest to harmonise and hence its failure was inevitable.

The clash between nationalism and internationalism entailed the doom of the league. Every nation was obsessed with her national self interest and when her national interest clashed with the international interest, the latter was sacrificed for the former. Thus the deeper influence of the national sovereignty prevented the development of unflinching allegiance to the international organisation, the league. Hence, it was founded on rocks and its failure became inescapable one.

The covenant of the league was an anathema for the league of nations. The treaty of Versailles with which the covenant was appended was an ill-fated document, combining with it, contempt, vengeance, idealism of Lloyd George and materialism of Clemenceau.

It was criticised as a dictated peace "and since the league of nations sprang out of the provisions of the peace treaty of Versailles, it was cynically seen as a "disreputed daughter of a dishonoured mother" to many it was an instrument of victorious allies to maintain the status quo like that of the concert of Europe, which was supposed to maintain the settlement arrived in 1815. Thus the league became the hope of a vanished world.

The champions of the league of nations submit an excuse that the league of nations was virtually a world organisation, but paradoxically enough, the major powers like USA, USSR, Germany, Turkey, Austria etc. did not represent here. So the league was not the gathering of free nations, but a congress of the victorious states. Even though Wilson was the architect of the league, his country, the USA withdrew from the league. It was almost unrealistic to hope that the league would become the hope of the world. Had the USA and USSR been the members, they might have sent soldiers to fight against the invaders and defended the citadel of the league. But it was a vain hope. Even, England evinced the lukewarm apathy towards the league and the league only became an important debating society, a bar of international diplomacy.

The league was also inherent with some loopholes which much handicapped the progress of the league. According to Prof. Morgenthau a grave constitutional weakness of the league was that it permitted the states to resort to war under certain conditions. The covenant made a distinction between the offensive and defensive war and permitted the latter by which it was assumed that war was the normal solution of international disputes. Moreover, the provision of taking decisions by a unanimous vote of the members of the council, except the parties to the dispute, proved unworkable. The league also lacked teeth, because no international force was provided to enforce its decisions. It could merely request the member states to act in a particular manner in a given situation, but its request was not binding on them. This sort of weakness of the league was exploited by the aggressive nations.

According to Anthony Eden, the equal status granted to all the members of the league, irrespective of their size and status was not a proper basis representation in an international forum. The idea of "one nation one vote" led to Liberia being treated as important as Soviet Union and Costa Rica as important as United Kingdom.

The failure of disarmament conferences also accelerated the tempo of the decline of the league. Of course the conclusion of the Locarno Pacts, the Geneva protocol of 1934 etc. were the distinct landmarks in the history of the disarmament conferences. But the disarmament conferences could not disarm the major militarist powers. While Italy, Germany and Japan went on increasing their strength and military manoeuvres the powers like Britain and the USA gave them the indirect support. Even if the economic sanctions were at the disposal of the league, they were hardly applied in case of any country except Italy where it was applied in a halfhazard manner. When the national interests were handicapped, the countries were reluctant to apply the same, taking it a liability. Thus, the policy of collective security which shirked military action never gave solid bedrock of security against man like Hitler or Mussolini. Hence the league met its own failure.

The league was a world organisation, contrived to replace the old system of "Power Politics" and 'international anarchy' by a new international cooperation. But to a surprise the league succumbed to the pressure of the old system of 'Power Politics'. Every nation tried to materialise its own interests using the league as a veritable instrument. If France wanted to seek the security through the league by crushing Germany to nadir, England viewed league as the preserver of balance of power and empire of disputes. The USA and USSR could not support the league, Germany and Italy left the league in lurch by abandoning it for world hegemony. As a matter of fact, what was everybody's business became nobody's interest and thus the league was lost in the process.

Above all, the militarism, ultra-nationalism and chauvinism of the powers like fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and militarist Japan became menace for the peace of the world. Hitler in Germany, Mussolini in Italy and Tojo in Japan emerged like messiahs with their watchwords of anti-Bolshevism, anti-Semitism, anti-capitalism and anti-communism. They came to wreck the league and their ultra-nationalism only hastened the process of its wreckage. They were bitterly dissatisfied with status quo and were swept away by a fever of romantic swashbuckling nationalism in attempts to change it by force which at first were successful.

However, while the militarists of Germany, Japan and Italy spearheaded the era of aggression, the danger might have been averted had the western powers become farsighted. But they were busy retaliating the inflow of Bolshevism. They wanted to see the collapse of Bolshevism at the hands of the dictators of Rome, Berlin and Tokyo and that is why, they pursued the policy of appeasement towards these dictators. Moreover, the fear of communism compelled them to adopt such appeasement policy.

Finally, in many cases like the crisis of Manchuria, Italy's rape of Ethiopia, Germany's attack on Austria, dismemberment of Czechoslovakia and Spanish Civil War, the League of Nations proved to be utterly ineffective organisation. All these crises entailed the doom of the League of Nations.

3. Great Depression; Liberal Ideas and Social Movement

The First World War led to the expansion of certain industries in the hope that the war-time boom would continue. However, when the War came to an end, the industries that grew to meet war-time requirements had to be abandoned or modified. The situation was made worse by the political complications caused by the Treaty of Versailles. A new wave of economic nationalism which expressed itself in protectionism or in tariff barriers affected world trade. The war also placed a heavy burden of debt on every European country.

Stock Market Crash in the US

The first huge crash occurred on 24 October 1929. This discouraged investors and consumers to such an extent that more and more people began to sell their shares and dispose of their stocks. But there were no buyers. This was followed by the failure of American banks. The American financiers were forced to recall their own funds invested abroad.

Breakdown of the International System of Exchange

Despite emergency measures such as cutbacks in expenditure and increased taxation, the situation did not improve in England. So England decided to leave the Gold Standard. Immediately a great number of countries left the gold standard. Each nation adopted a policy of protectionism and devaluation of currency. Devaluation forced creditors to stop lending. This led to a world-wide credit contraction. Thus the defensive measures adopted by various nations to safeguard their economic interests led to an unprecedented decline in world economic activity. As its effect was deep and prolonged economists and historians call it the Great Depression.

Repercussion in Politics

The Depression changed the political conditions in several countries. In England, the Labour Party was defeated in the general elections of 1931. In the USA, the Republican Party was rejected by the people in successive elections for about twenty years after the Depression.

Promoted Socialistic Ideas

Depression gave a rude shock to the belief of capitalism and in its place socialistic ideas gained currency. That is why sometimes the years between 1930 and 1939 are described as the "Pink Decade". In contrast to the depression in the capitalist countries the Soviet Union

continued to progress in the economic field. Between 1929 and 1936 she successfully completed the first two five year plans which pushed the production by more than four times. This prompted the people of the capitalist countries also to appeal to their governments to tide the depression and stimulate recovery. The New Deal of Roosevelt in America and the economic nationalism of Great Britain introduced state control even in the greatest capitalistic democracies in the world.

4. Ideologies of Nazism and Fascism

Fascism is a form of radical authoritarian ultra-nationalism, characterised by dictatorial power, forcible suppression of opposition and strong regimentation of society and of the economy, which came to prominence in early 20th-century Europe.

The Impact of War in Italy

The first of the nations of Western Europe to turn against the old ruling regime was Italy. During World War I the primary task of Italy was to keep the Austrians occupied on the Southern Front, while the British, French and Americans cornered Germany into submission along the battle lines in Flanders. The financial cost of the participation in the War was huge. Moreover, after the War, in the sharing of the spoils, Italy got less than she expected. The country suffered heavy losses in a war that was unpopular with both socialists and pro-Austrian Catholics. The nationalists were equally unhappy with the marginal gain in territory from the Treaty of Versailles. The War resulted in inflation. There were frequent protests and strikes. People held the rulers responsible for the humiliation at Versailles.

Emergence of Mussolini

In the elections held November 1919 in the aftermath of the Treaty of Versailles, Italian socialists, proclaiming that they were following Bolshevism (Communism in Soviet Russia), won about a third of the seats. Mussolini, son of a blacksmith and qualified as an elementary school master, in the end became a journalist with socialist views. A forceful speaker, Mussolini began to support the use of violence and broke with the socialists when they opposed Italy's entry into the War. When the Fascist Party was founded in 1919 Mussolini immediately joined it. As Fascists stood for authority, strength and discipline, support came from industrialists, nationalists, ex-soldiers, the middle classes and discontented youth. The Fascists resorted to violence freely. In October 1922, in the context of a long ministerial crisis, Mussolini organized the Fascist March on Rome. Impressed by the show of force, the King

invited Mussolini to form a government. The inability of the Democratic Party leaders to combine and act with resolution facilitated Mussolini's triumph.

Fascists under Mussolini

In the 1924 elections, after intimidation of the electors, 65 per cent of the votes were cast for the Fascists. Matteotti, a socialist leader, who questioned the fairness of the elections was murdered. The opposition parties boycotted the Parliament in protest. Mussolini reacted by banning opposition parties and censoring the press. Opposition leaders were killed or imprisoned. Assuming the title of Il Duce (the leader), in 1926 he became a dictator with power to legislate. He passed a law forbidding strikes and lockouts. Unions and employers were organized into corporations. In 1938 Parliament was abolished and was replaced by a body representing the Fascist Party and the corporations. This new arrangement bolstered Mussolini's dictatorial control of the economy, as well as enabling him to wield enormous power as head of the administration and the armed forces.

Mussolini's Pact with Pope

In order to give respectability to the Fascist Party, Mussolini won over the Roman Catholic Church by recognising the Vatican City as an independent state. In return the Church recognised the Kingdom of Italy. The Roman Catholic faith was made the religion of Italy and compulsory religious teaching in school was ordered. The Lateran Treaty incorporating the said provisions was signed in 1929.

Italy during the Great Depression

During the years of the Great Depression the much publicised public works of building new bridges, roads and canals, hospitals and schools did not provide solution to the unemployment problem. In 1935, Mussolini invaded Ethiopia. This was useful to divert attention of the people away from the economic troubles.

Nazism

Germany in the post-War

From 1918 to 1933 Germany was a republic. The factors which led to the eventual triumph of Fascism in Germany were many. Between 1871 and 1914 Germany had risen to dizzy heights of economic, political and cultural accomplishments. Germany's universities, its science, philosophy and music were known all over the world. Germany had surpassed even Britain and the US in several fields of industrial production.

Germany's defeat and humiliation at the end of World War I caused a deep shock to the of German people. The Great Depression further deepened their frustration and prompted them to turn against the Republican government.

Evolution of German Fascism

The origin of German fascism goes back to 1919 when a group of seven men met in Munich and founded the National Socialist German Workers' Party (abbreviated as Nazi Party). One of them was Adolf Hitler. During World War I, he served in the Bavarian army. A gifted speaker, he could whip up the passion of the audience. In 1923 Hitler attempted to capture power in Bavaria. His launch of the National Revolution on the outskirts of Munich landed him in prison. During his time in prison wrote *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), an autobiographical book containing his political ideas. In the Presidential election of 1932, the Communist Party polled about 6,000,000 votes. Alarmed capitalists and property owners tilted towards supporting fascism Hitler exploited this opportunity to usurp powers.

The Nazi State of Hitler

Republican government fell, as the Communists refused to collaborate with the Social Democrats. Thereupon industrialists, bankers and Junkers prevailed upon President Von Hindenburg to designate Hitler as Chancellor in 1933. The Nazi state of Hitler, known as Third Reich, brought an end to the parliamentary democracy.

Hitler replaced the flag of the Weimar republic by the swastika banners of National Socialism. Germany was converted into a highly centralised state. All political parties except the Nazi party were declared illegal. The army of brown-shirted and jack-booted storm-troopers was expanded. The Hitler Youth was created, and the Labour Front set up. Trade unions were abolished, their leaders arrested. Strikes were made illegal, wages were fixed by the government. Total state control was extended over the press, the theatre, the cinema, radio and over education.

The Nazi Party's propaganda was led by Josef Goebbels, who manipulated public opinion through planned propaganda. The Gestapo or Secret State Police was formed and run by Himmler.

Nazi Policy towards Jews

Along with the repressive measures, Hitler's government followed a policy of repressing Jewish people. The Jews were removed from government positions, excluded from the universities and deprived of citizenship. Jewish businesses were closed down, and their establishments were attacked. After the outbreak of World War II concentration camps, barracks surrounded by electrified fences and watch towers, were built where Jews were interred and used as forced labour. Later they were turned into extermination camps where industrial means of murder such as gas chambers were used to kill them in what the Nazis termed 'The Final Solution'.

Defiance of the Treaty of Versailles

In August 1934 Hindenburg died and Hitler, apart from being Chancellor, became both President and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. Hitler's foreign policy aimed at restoring the armed strength of Germany and annulling provisions of Versailles Treaty.