

CHAPTER 12

The World During the World Wars

Introduction

In this chapter, we shall talk about the history of the world in the first half of the 20th century, the causes and consequences of the two World Wars and the creation of an institution like the United Nations to ensure world peace and development.

The Twentieth Century

Eric Hobsbawm, a historian, called the 20th century 'The Age of Extremes'. On one hand, Fascism was growing strong because of its ideas of unquestioned power and hatred for other people. On the other hand, the need for democracy was also growing. The average life expectancy rate was growing higher because of new discoveries in the field of medicine. Literacy levels also became high i.e. more people had access to better education. New art forms like movies also became known. In the field of Science, new discoveries were made about life and atoms. More than hundred countries became independent all over the world.

Many great experiments happened in the 20th century. In some countries, socialist societies came up. In Socialist societies, people lived with Equality & Fraternity. Some countries adopted Liberal Democracy where people had political liberty and a Capitalist economy.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the world was divided into developed industrialised countries of the West (including Britain, USA, Germany, France, Italy, etc) and colonized countries of Asia, and Africa. These countries were under the control of developed nations.



Fig 12.1: Eric Hobsbawm



Timeline

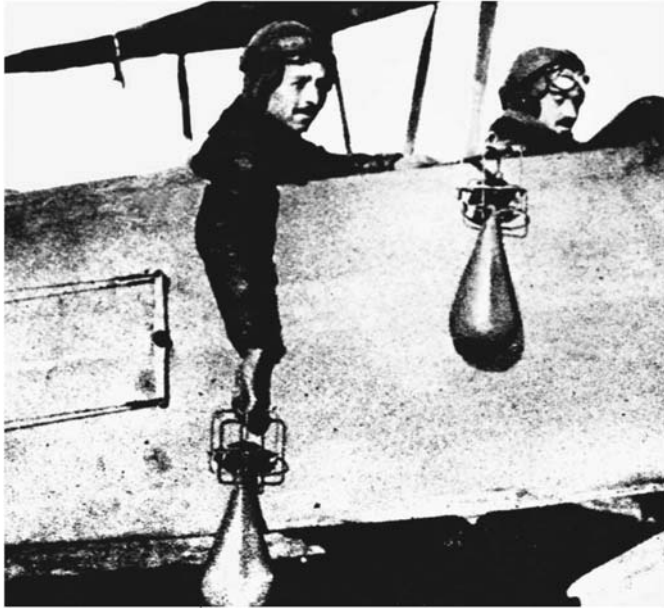


Fig 12.2: For the first time in history planes were used to drop bombs in WW I.

The industrialised countries had split into two enemy groups or blocks. Germany, Austria and Hungary were on one side and Britain, France and Russia were on the another side. Each group wanted to dominate over the world and control as many colonies and markets as possible which led to the occurrence of world wars.

The First World War began in 1914. It was really a World War because almost all the countries (imperial nations and their colonies) of the world took part in the war. China, Japan on the East and the US on the West took part in the war. The First World War ended

in 1918. Britain and France defeated Germany and its allies in the war.

Causes for the World Wars

Aggressive Nationalism

The ideology of nationalism was a positive impulse. Many newly formed modern nations were created in Europe because of people's strong feeling of nationalism. It was also the force behind the unification of Germany and Italy. But this ideology created pride in these nations and hatred against the neighbouring countries.

Italian Fascism and National Socialism of German Nazis were the other forms of aggressive Nationalism in destructive mode from 1923. Fascists promoted aggressive nationalism and the image of victorious Germany ruling over the world. They also mobilized the Germans against the other nations of Europe.

Imperialism

With the growth of industrial capitalism, European countries like Britain, Germany and US needed to access raw materials and markets for their products. They wanted to invest their growing capital in the colonies. Thus, by the end of the 19th century there was a race for colonies between the European powers. The newly emerged industrial powers (like Germany and Italy) wanted to re-divide the colonies

but the old industrial powers were not ready for this. This created a lot of tension often leading to wars.

Secret Alliances

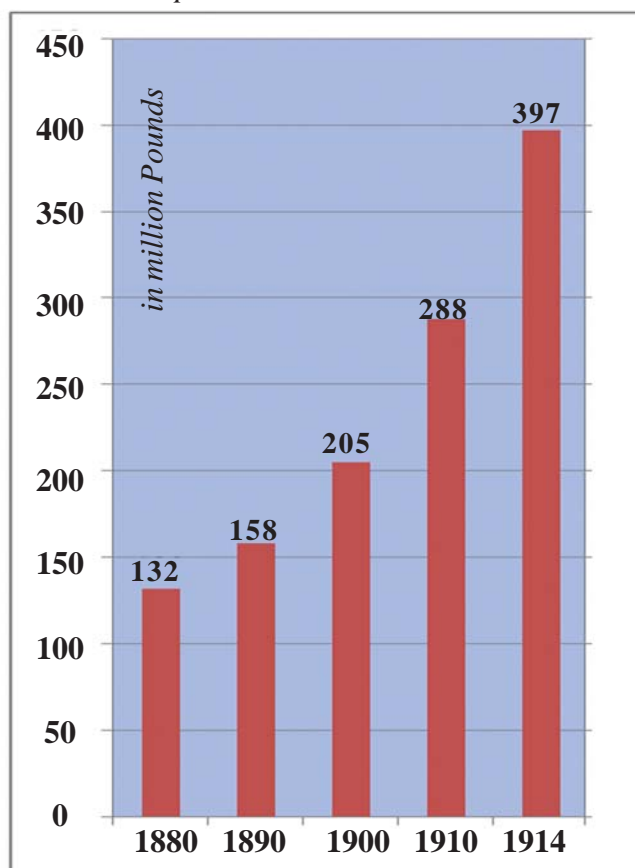
After defeating France in 1870, Bismarck, the German Chancellor, wanted to isolate France. He made a secret alliance with Austria in 1879 and Italy and Austria in 1882. Hence it was called Triple Alliance. France made a mutual alliance with Russia in 1891 and with Britain in 1904. To protect itself, Russia, France and Britain formed their Triple Entente in 1907. The Triple Alliance led by Germany and the Triple Entente made the European powers jealous and suspicious of one another. Instead of real peace, these alliances created an atmosphere of fear and 'armed peace' in Europe.

Militarism

Militarism is the belief that military power is the best way to ensure security and to solve problems. The military expenditure of the six powerful countries (viz. Germany, Russia, Austria, Italy, France and Britain) increased by over three times, i.e. from £ 132 million to £ 397 million during the years from 1880 to 1914.

There are three important things in the context of militarism. Firstly, all these countries had built massive standing armies for their defence. Secondly, they competed with each other in increasing their military weapons. They encouraged people to support wars. Thirdly, a large industry of weapons emerged which constantly promoted the idea of using war as a solution to diplomatic problems.

Graph 1 : The Armaments Race



Military expenditure by great powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Great Britain, Russia, Italy and France 1880-1914 (source The Times Atlas of World History, London 1978)

Balkan politics

There were many small kingdoms in the Balkan Peninsula. People belonging to many sects, languages were living there. They were being ruled under the Ottoman Turkey empire. After the fall of Ottoman Empire, Austria, Germany, Turkey, Russia competed for the supremacy over the area. Moreover, Russia and Turkey were trying to control the Black sea and the Mediterranean Sea region into their hands for a long time. So, there was always tense situation around the region. During the same time, Austria was trying to suppress the Serbian rebels in Bosnia, who were against to the rule of Austria.

Immediate cause

On June 28, 1914, a Bosnian Serb assassinated the crown prince Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria- Hungary. Austria asked Serbia for the explanation on this. Austria, declared war on Serbia after the unsatisfactory reply of Serbia on 28 July 1914. This was the immediate cause of the first world war. As Serbia was on the side of Britain, France, Russia alliance, they came to support her. Germany and its group also decided to jump into the war in support of Austria .This was called the First World War.

The countries which were participated on behalf of Austria were known as Central Powers where as the other group was called as Allied Powers. Central Powers got upper hand over the Allied Powers in the beginning of the war. Due to internal revolution, Russia, the Allied Power, withdrawn from the war by making treaty with Germany in 1917. On the other hand, US also jumped into the war on behalf of Allied countries when German troops sunk its commercial ship, Lusitania in 1917. Thus ,Allied Powers became victorious in the war.

The world after the First World War

The Treaty of Versailles, 1919

After the first world war, many discussions and treaties were done. Britain and its three allies imposed the terms and conditions of the treaty on the defeated powers. The Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Turkey empires were dissolved and broken up into small nation states. The German Empire too was broken up and replaced by a democratic republic. The Ottoman Empire was replaced by the Republic of Turkey and its colonies in Africa were divided among the victorious

powers. A large number of new countries were formed like Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Finland, etc.

The Treaty of Versailles imposed heavy penalty on Germany both in monetary terms – Germany had to pay war indemnity or compensation to the victorious allies – and in territorial terms, it lost a lot of its territory to France and other countries.

The League of Nations-1920

The League of Nations was the first ever international organisation which was formed as a consequence of the treaty of Versailles. It was established on Eleventh of January, 1920. It was formed to prevent wars by trying to settle disputes through negotiations, ensure disarmament or reduce manufacturing of arms etc. It also sought to work for development, labour welfare and health. It had about fifty eight members. It had limited success initially but failed to prevent the Second World War.

- How do you think organisations like the League of Nations help to resolve conflicts between two countries? What can they do to resolve the conflicts?

Date of the Russian Revolution

Russia followed the Julian calendar until 1 February 1918. The country then changed to the Gregorian calendar, which is followed everywhere today. The Gregorian dates are 13 days ahead of the Julian dates. So, by our calendar, the 'February' Revolution took place on 12th March and the 'October' Revolution took place on 7th November.

The Russian Socialist Revolution (1917-1922)

Russia was ruled by Tsars (emperors) in early 20th century. It was a vast area of land spread over two continents, Europe and Asia. Therefore it had been called a Euro-Asian power. It had the third largest population in the world, viz. 156 million, after China and India. It comprised of several nations like Russia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan etc. The livelihood of most Russians came from agriculture. Often there were struggles between peasants and feudal lords for control over land. The feudal lords owned most of the lands and most peasants paid rent for the land they tilled.

Tsar Nicholas II ruled over his vast Russian empire with the help of the army and bureaucracy. But the Russian economy had suffered a lot by the first World War. The Russian army was the largest in the world before World War I. Yet, by 1917, Russia had lost the lives of two million soldiers and civilians. It became the

Women in the February Revolution

'Women workers, often inspired their male co-workers ... At the Lorenz telephone factory,... Marfa Vasileva almost single handedly called a successful strike. Already that morning, in celebration of Women's Day, women workers had presented red bows to the men ... Then Marfa Vasileva, a milling machine operator stopped work and declared an sudden strike. The workers on the floor were ready to support her ... The foreman informed the management and sent her a loaf of bread. She took the bread but refused to go back to work. The administrator asked her why she refused to work and she replied, "I cannot be the only one who is satiated when others are hungry." Women workers from another section of the factory gathered around Marfa in support and gradually all the other women ceased working. Soon the men downed their tools as well and the entire crowd rushed onto the street.'



Fig 12.3: Lenin addressing workers in 1917

biggest loser of human lives in World War I. A large amount of food was supplied to the War front during the war. This led to the shortage of food in the cities. On March 8th 1917, around 10,000 women of the capital St Petersburg, took out a procession demanding 'Peace and Bread'. Workers also joined them in this protest. Tsar Nicholas II was really upset by these protests. He ordered the army to suppress the demonstrators, even by firing at them. Instead, the soldiers also joined the demonstrators. In just two days, the situation became so bad that the Tsar left his throne and escaped. Russians made a Provisional government. This was the first Russian revolution of 1917 and it was called as the March Revolution.

A bigger revolution took place later in October 1917 and it was not spontaneous. The liberals and aristocrats ruled Russia after the abdication of the Tsar. They decided to continue the War to save the honour of Russia. The common people were tired of the military action and economic shortage and did not want the War. They began organising themselves in councils which were called Soviets. These Soviets of soldiers, industrial workers and people in rural areas were united by a group of Russian Communist party called Bolsheviks. These groups represented the common people's power.

Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) was the leader of the Bolsheviks. Bolsheviks were able to get the support of the Soviets because they demanded for immediate and unconditional peace. They also demanded that all the land should be nationalized and redistributed to the peasants. Bolsheviks wanted control over prices and nationalisation of all factories and banks. The Soviets under the Bolshevik leadership seized power from the Provisional Government in October-November 1917. They immediately took steps to end the war and redistributed land. Russia could not return to complete peace because a civil war was started. This war was led by White armies of Russian monarchists and anti-communist soldiers with help from Britain, France, USA and Japan. They were all defeated by 1920. The Bolsheviks also announced the end of the Russian empire and permitted the various nations under it to become independent. However, gradually most of the nations that came under the empire of the Tsar agreed to join the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) which

The October Revolution and the Russian Countryside: Two Views

1) 'News of the revolutionary uprising of October 25, 1917, reached the village the following day and was greeted with enthusiasm; to the peasants it meant free land and an end to the war. ...The day the news arrived, the landowner's house was looted, his stock farms were "requisitioned" and his vast orchard was cut down and sold to the peasants for wood; all his far buildings were torn down and left in ruins while the land was distributed among the peasants who were prepared to live the new Soviet life'. From: Fedor Belov, The History of a Soviet Collective Farm

2) A member of a landowning family wrote to a relative about what happened at the estate:

'The "coup" happened quite painlessly, quietly and peacefully. ...The first days were unbearable.. Mikhail Mikhailovich [the estate owner] was calm...The girls also...I must say the chairman behaves correctly and even politely. We were left two cows and two horses. The servants tell them all the time not to bother us. "Let them live. We vouch for their safety and property. We want them treated as humanely as possible..."

...There are rumours that several villages are trying to evict the committees and return the estate to Mikhail Mikhailovich. I don't know if this will happen, or if it's good for us. But we rejoice that there is a conscience in our people...'

From: Serge Schmemmann, Echoes of a Native Land. Two Centuries of a Russian Village (1997).

- Read the two views on the revolution in the countryside. Imagine yourself to be a witness to the events. Write a short account from the standpoint of: 1) an owner of an estate 2) a small peasant 3) a journalist.

Central Asia of the October Revolution: Views

M. N. Roy played an important role in 'comintern' an international organisation set to promote communist revolution in the world. He was in Central Asia at the time of the civil war in the 1920s. He wrote:

'The chieftain was a benevolent old man; his attendant ... a youth who ... spoke Russian ... He had heard of the Revolution, which had overthrown the Tsar and driven away the Generals who conquered the homeland of the Kirgiz. So, the Revolution meant that the Kirgiz were masters of their home again. "Long Live the Revolution" shouted the Kirgiz youth who seemed to be a born Bolshevik. The whole tribe joined.'

M.N.Roy, Memoirs (1964).

Rabindranath Tagore wrote from Russia in 1930

'Moscow appears much less clean than the other European capitals. None of those hurrying along the streets look smart. The whole place belongs to the workers ... Here the masses have not in the least been put in the shade by the gentlemen ... those who lived in the background for ages have come forward in the open today ... I thought of the peasants and workers in my own country. It all seemed like the work of the Genii in the Arabian Nights. [here] only a decade ago they were as illiterate, helpless and hungry as our own masses ... Who could be more astonished than an unfortunate Indian like myself to see how they had removed the mountain of ignorance and helplessness in these few years.'

was set up by the Soviet government of Russia in 1922.

This started a great experiment of building a country without exploiters like feudal lords, Kings or capitalists. The USSR tried to build a society that was industrialised and modern and yet did not have inequality or exclusion of people on the basis of birth, gender, language, etc.

Rise of Stalin

After the death of Lenin in 1924, Stalin emerged as the leader of the Communist party. Over the next decades, he established his absolute control and put an end to all opposition. He used his undisputed power to build the economy of USSR. USSR began a programme of planned economic development with its Five Year Plans in 1928. This programme had a twin policy of fast industrialisation and collectivisation of agriculture.

Impact of Russian Revolution on the world

The experience of the USSR inspired people all over the world especially those

who were committed to the ideals of equality and national liberation. These people now became communists and tried for a communist evolution in their countries. Many Indian leaders like MN Roy, Tagore and Nehru were also inspired by it even though they did not agree with many aspects of communism like suppression of opposition political parties.

- Do a brief assessment of the Soviet experiment. How far was it successful in building a world based on equality, freedom and prosperity?
- Do you think it is justified to execute thousands of people for the sake of such experiments? Why?
- What were the criticisms raised against communist system?

Many people were also horrified by the violence used by USSR to suppress opposition and denial of multiparty democracy and freedom in the USSR. George Orwell wrote his famous satiric novel 'Animal Farm' to highlight how the ideals of Russian Revolution were suffering in USSR.

The Economic Depression–1929-1939

The Economic Depression began around the end of 1929 and lasted almost till 1939 when the Second World War started. During this decade, the economy declined worldwide because of a decline in demand and fall in prices. Factories were closed because the demand was low. Since the goods were manufactured in limited quantity, the prices increased. Because of expensive goods, people's purchasing power reduced. So the demand for goods further went down. This cyclical effect caused massive unemployment. The real incomes of ordinary people as well as governments across the world also declined. Initially a stock market collapsed in the US, but very soon it affected almost every country.



Fig 12.4 : A New Yorker offers to sell his roadster after losing his money in the stock market crash.

In America, as many as 25% people and nearly 33% people in many other countries were unemployed. As factories closed down and trade declined, cities became centers of decline. This led to reduced prices (up to 60%) for agricultural produce causing pauperisation of millions of farmers and stopping of cultivation.

This was the longest and worst economic decline faced by modern economy till today. The consequences of this were devastating. There was increasing poverty, desolation, homelessness etc.

Economists and politicians have discussed the causes of this decline, ways to get over it and possible ways of preventing it from happening again. Marxist economists argued that this kind of crises happened because of capitalism. They also thought that it could be prevented by the establishment of socialism. On the other hand, economists like JM Keynes argued that the state is responsible to keep the economy going. If it fails to do so, it can lead to situations of depression. Keynes argued that during economic decline, when demand decreases, the state should invest funds and generate employment which will help people



Fig 12.5: Famous photograph of Polish immigrant Florence Owens during Depression by Dorothea Lange. It depicts destitute pea pickers in California, March 1936. What would she be thinking?

to earn money and demand goods in the market. This generation of demand through state action will help the economy to revive.

Franklin Roosevelt, who became the President of US, announced “the New Deal” which promised Relief to the victims of depression, Reform of financial institutions and steps to ensure economic Recovery (The Three Rs) by undertaking large public works. However, when the war started, state expenditure on armies and armaments suddenly increased. This increased the factory production and demand for farm produce. He also introduced the much needed social security system in the US. It established a permanent system of universal retirement pensions (Social Security), and unemployment insurance. It also gave welfare benefits for the handicapped and needy children in families without fathers. It established the framework for the U.S. welfare system. In fact, Great Britain had taken the lead in this direction even before the Depression when the war was still on. These basically consisted of unemployment insurance and old age pension schemes. Towards the end of the Second World War, Britain also adopted many social security measures like unemployment doles, sickness coverage, health schemes, child care etc. All this made up the idea of a Welfare State, a state which ensured a basic minimum dignified life for all citizens. It also took care of their most elementary needs like food, housing, health, child and old age care and education. The state had taken on the responsibility of providing employment to the able bodied citizens. In this way, the state tried to reduce the effects of the ups and downs of market based capitalism.

Economic Depression in Germany

German economy faced severe crisis after the war. It was under the burden of paying war damages etc. The German Government began to print currency notes on a large scale and this resulted in excessive inflation. It is said that people had to carry currency in carts to buy one loaf of bread!

The German economy was the worst hit by the Depression. By 1932, industrial production was reduced to 40 per cent of its 1929 level. Workers lost their jobs or were paid reduced wages. More than 6 million people were unemployed. On the streets of Germany, you could see men with placards around their necks saying, 'Willing to do any work'. Unemployed youths played cards or simply sat at street corners, or desperately queued up at the local employment exchange. As there were very few jobs, the youth took to criminal activities and there was total despair in society.

The economic crisis created deep anxieties and fears in people. The savings of middle classes, especially salaried employees and pensioners, diminished when the currency lost its value. Small businessmen, the self-employed and retailers suffered losses as their businesses got ruined. These sections of society were filled with the fear of pauperisation, an anxiety of being reduced to the categories of the working class, or worse still, the unemployed. Only organised workers could manage to survive themselves and their families. But unemployment reduced their bargaining power. Big businesses were in a crisis. The large peasant population was affected by a sharp fall in agricultural prices. Women were unable to fill their children's stomachs. So they were filled with a sense of deep despair. This caused political instability as government after government failed and could not provide a stable rule.

- Imagine yourself to be a worker who lost his job suddenly and has no employment for the next few years. Write an account of a day in your life in first person.
- Imagine yourself to be a farmer who finds that the price of his crop has fallen to less than half. Write your reaction in three hundred words.
- What aspects of the Welfare State do you find functioning in India today?

Rise of Fascism, Nazism

Fascism was one ideology which developed in the period after the First World War, especially in the defeated countries. It emphasised the idea of national unity in order to expand and win over other nations. Fascists didn't allow anyone to conflict nor have different interests within the nation. They suppressed people with force in order to ensure absolute loyalty and obedience to a central power. They were against both communism and liberalism. Fascists wanted to build unity in their nations through a dictatorial state that promoted the mass mobilization of the majority community of the nation. Fascist movements shared certain common features, like the worshipping of the state, a devotion to a strong leader like Hitler, and an emphasis on extreme nationalism and military conquest. Fascism used political violence, war, and conquest as a means to achieve national revival. It also asserted that stronger nations have the right, and indeed a duty, to expand their territory by displacing weaker nations. It stood for state controlled capitalism and opposed socialism and communism. It also stood for abolition of all private industries.

This ideology was more popular in the defeated countries who were feeling insulted because of the conditions imposed on them by the Versailles treaty and the pressure of world-wide depression. It first began with the victory of Benito Mussolini in Italy in 1922; then Hitler and his Nazi Party came to power in Germany in 1933; General Franco came to power in Spain after a long military campaign against the democratic state in 1939; meanwhile Japan is also developed its own version of Fascist ideology i.e. militarism and started its military campaigns in China, Korea etc. All these dictators were, in some ways, followers of the Fascist ideology.

Hitler was a powerful speaker. His passion and his words moved many people. He promised to build a strong nation, undo the injustice of the Versailles Treaty and restore the dignity of the German people. He promised employment for those looking for work, and a secure future for the youth. He promised to remove all foreign influences and fight all foreign 'conspiracies' against Germany.

Hitler devised a new style of politics. He understood the importance of rituals and spectacle to mobilise the masses. Nazis held massive rallies and public meetings to demonstrate the support for Hitler and create a sense of unity among the people. The Red banners with the Swastika, the Nazi salute, and the ritual rounds of applause

after the speeches were all part of this display of power. Hitler mobilized his supporters by promising to establish the racial supremacy of Aryans (Germans) over the world. He also targeted minority communities like Jews as the main cause of all problems. He also attacked Communism and Capitalism terming both of them as Jewish conspiracies. He promised to build a strong state which would fight with both of them. He appealed especially to the middle class who felt threatened by capitalism and the Great Depression. Hitler was also opposed to working class movement led by the Communists and Socialists.

From Hitler's speech

Hitler argued that it is the right of the most powerful race to conquer the world;

'For this earth is not allotted to anyone nor is it presented to anyone as a gift. It is awarded by providence to people who in their hearts have the courage to conquer it, the strength to preserve it, and the industry to put it to the plough... The primary right of this world is the right to life, so far as one possesses the strength for this. Hence on the basis of this right a vigorous nation will always find ways of adapting its territory to its population size.

- Is Hitler's idea of World conquest correct? Do you think that the world should belong to those who have power and strength alone?

In such a situation, Nazi Party's propaganda gave some hopes of a better future. Hitler was the unquestioned leader of the Nazi party. In 1928, the Nazi Party had got less than 2.6 per cent votes in the Reichstag – the lower house of the German parliament. But by 1932, it had become the largest party in Germany with 37 per cent votes.

Hitler came to power and immediately took steps to establish an undemocratic and autocratic rule. He stopped the working of all democratic institutions like Parliament. This included arbitrary arrest of political opponents, especially the Communists and putting them in concentration camps.



Fig 12.6 : Jewish slave labourers in the Buchenwald concentration camp near Jena Germany in 1945

Indoctrination

Nazis tried to teach their children right from the beginning in only one way of thinking. Nazi ideology of racial superiority of Germany and the greatness of Hitler and hatred for Jews and other people. How was this done?

All boys between the ages of six and ten went through a preliminary training in Nazi ideology. At the end of the training they had to take the following oath of loyalty to Hitler: 'In the presence of this blood banner which represents our Fuhrer I swear to devote all my energies and my strength to the saviour of our country, Adolf Hitler. I am willing and ready to give up my life for him, so help me God.'

From W. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*

Robert Lay, head of the German Labour Front, said:

'We start when the child is three years old. As soon as he even starts to think, he is given a little flag to wave. Then comes school, the Hitler Youth, military service. But when all this is over, we don't let go of anyone. The labour front takes hold of them, and keeps hold until they go to the grave, whether they like it or not.'

Women under Nazis

In an address to women at the Nuremberg Party Rally, 8 September 1934, Hitler said: We do not consider it correct for the woman to interfere in the world of the man, in his main sphere. We consider it natural that these two worlds remain distinct...What the man gives in courage on the battlefield, the woman gives in eternal self-sacrifice, in eternal pain and suffering. Every child that women bring to the world is a battle, a battle waged for the existence of her people.

Hitler at the Nuremberg Party Rally, 8 September 1934, also said:

'The woman is the most stable element in the preservation of a folk...she has the most unerring sense of everything that is important to not let a race disappear because it is her children who would be affected by all this suffering in the first place...That is why we have integrated the woman in the struggle of the racial community just as nature and providence have determined so.'



Fig 12.7: Women accused of protecting Jews being publicly punished.

- Do you agree with the view that women should confine themselves to pain and suffering of bringing up the children?
- Do you think men and women can participate equally in all aspects of life including child rearing and work in factories, offices, and fields?

Resistance

Pastor Niemoeller, a resistance fighter, observed an absence of protest, an uncanny silence, amongst ordinary Germans in the face of brutal and organised crimes committed against people in the Nazi empire. He wrote movingly about this silence:

'First they came for the Communists,
Well, I was not a Communist
So I said nothing.
Then they came for the Social Democrats,
Well, I was not a Social Democrat
So I did nothing,
Then they came for the trade unionists,
But I was not a trade unionist.
And then they came for the Jews,
But I was not a Jew – so I did little.
Then when they came for me,
There was no one left who could stand up for me.'

- Nazi ideology depended on majoritarian principles. Jews were merely 0.75 percent of the population in Germany. Apart from Jews others who opposed Nazi's were also punished. How does the pastor capture this in above poem?

On 3rd March 1933, the famous Enabling Act was passed. This Act established dictatorship in Germany. It gave Hitler all powers to sideline Parliament and rule by his order. All political parties and trade unions were banned except for the Nazi Party and its affiliates. The state established complete control over the economy, media, army and judiciary.

Special surveillance and security forces were created to control and order society in ways that the Nazis wanted. Apart from the already existing regular police in green uniform and the SA or the Storm Troopers, they also formed the Gestapo (secret state police), the SS (the protection squads), criminal police and the Security Service (SD). These extra-constitutional powers of these

newly organised forces gave the Nazi state its reputation as the most dreaded criminal state. Gestapo had the authority to stop and detain people to torture chambers, round up and send them to concentration camps. They could also deport anyone at will or arrest people without any legal procedures. The police forces acquired complete powers to rule. These powers were used to arrest and torture millions of political activists, trade unionists and people of minority communities, especially the Jews. They did all this to build a state of horror and fear.

Hitler assigned the responsibility of economic recovery to the economist Hjalmar Schacht. Schacht 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. There was an improvement of

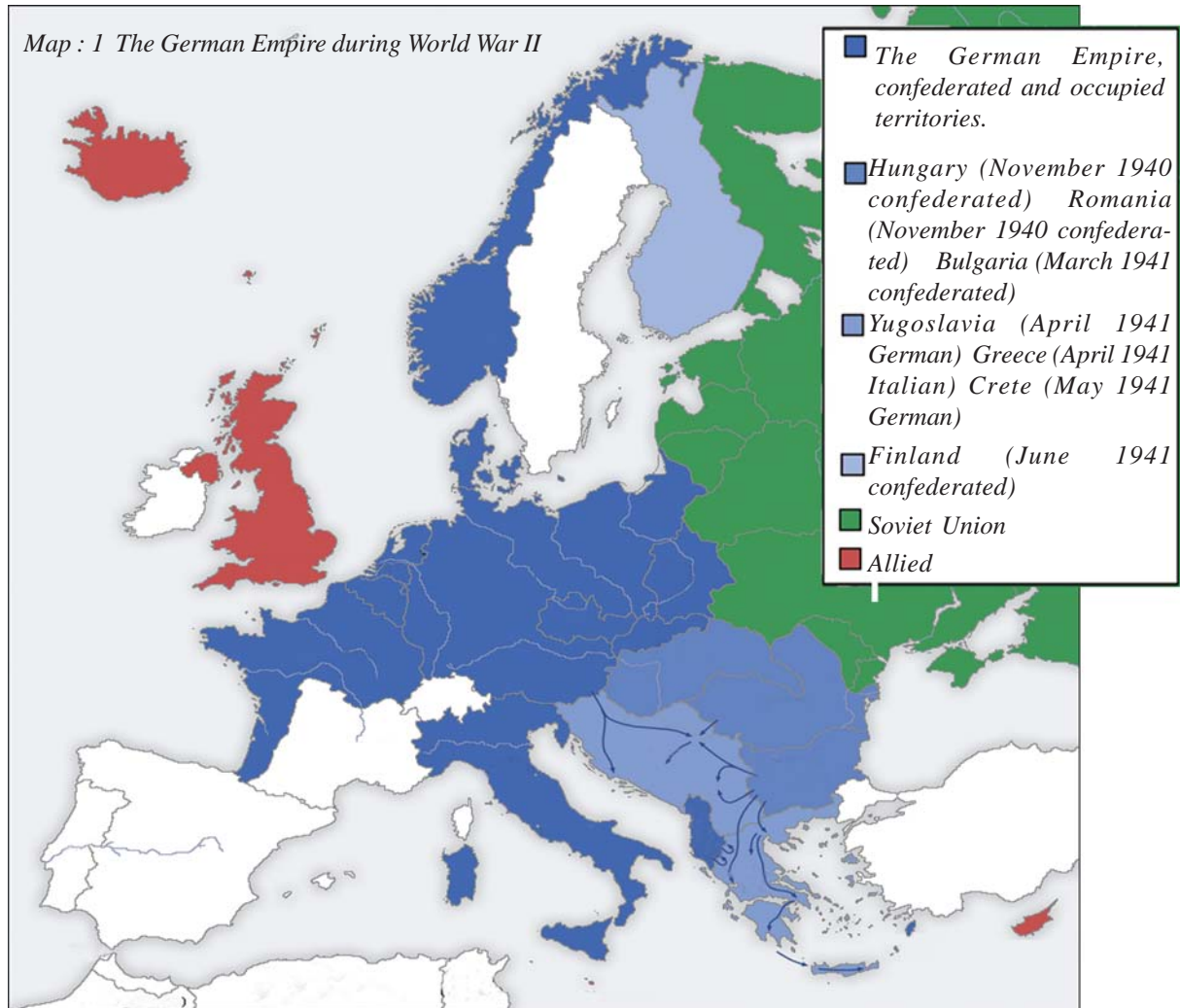


Fig 12.8: A cartoon depicting Hitler as man of peace as well as man of war.

living standards of a section of the Germans. This period also created sub-human conditions of life for those who were tortured by the racist regime. This was also followed by heavy investment in armament industry to create further employment. But this plan could be sustained only by going on war with the neighbours. For this, Hitler followed an aggressive foreign policy to recover the territories lost by Germany after the First World War. Then by 1939, he attacked Poland and as we saw earlier, this started off the Second World War.

As the War proceeded, the Nazi regime started its horrible programme of building the racial supremacy of Germans by mass killings of minority communities.

Under the shadow of the Second World War, Germany had started a genocidal war. In this war, the mass murder of selected groups of innocent civilians of Europe took place. The number of people killed included: about 60,000,000 Jews, 2,000,000 Gypsies, 10,000,000 Polish civilians, 70,000 Germans who were considered mentally and physically disabled besides innumerable political opponents or people of different religious faith. Nazis devised a horrifying means of killing people. They killed thousands of people in gas chambers in various killing centers like Auschwitz.

- In what ways was the Second World War a logical outcome of Hitler's ideology and economic policies?
- Find out more about "Holocaust" and Auschwitz camps and prepare a project report based on it.

Second World War – 1939-1945

Aggressive nationalism, militarism, imperialism, secret alliances were the reasons for the second world also. Along with these, the special contexts for the second world war were the following.

The Treaty of Versailles- Intensity of the terms

At the end of World War I, the Conference on Peace took place in Versailles in 1919. This was the biggest conference of that time as it was attended by delegations from 32 nations that covered three-fourths of the population of the world. The five victorious powerful countries of the time, viz. USA, UK, France, Italy and Japan, participated in this conference. But Socialist Russia and the defeated powers, for example, Germany, Austria and Turkey, were not invited to the Conference. To weaken Germany, the Treaty of Versailles imposed some territorial penalties and military cuts on it. Firstly, Germany was asked to return its colonies in Africa occupied in the 1880s and European areas like Alsace and Lorraine which they had occupied from France in 1871. Secondly, it was asked to pull down its army strength to 100,000 from 900,000 during World War I. It was also asked not to have submarines and restrict its naval strength to six battleships of less than 10,000

tonnes and a dozen torpedo missiles carriers and destroyers. It is not surprising, therefore, that Germans thought the Treaty at Versailles was a diktat imposed on them and they had no respect or responsibility for it.

Failure of The League of Nations

The Treaty of Versailles also set up the League of Nations to prevent wars in the future. Neither Russia nor Germany was invited to become members of the League. USA could not become a member as the US Congress (parliament) refused to sanction President Woodrow Wilson's proposal even though he was very active in the formation of the League. Hence, the League had only 58 members. These countries hoped that the League would help remove wars through 'collective security' and settle disputes and problems between countries through negotiation. An International Court of Justice was established by the league of nations to settle the legal disputes between nations.

Even though it showed a lot of promise and much was expected of it, it eventually failed to prevent Germany, Japan and Italy from violating international agreements and attacking other countries.

German challenge to vengeful domination

After Germany's defeat at the end of the First World War in 1919, the victorious Allies wanted to punish Germany for starting the war and cripple it so that it could not rise again. For Germany, the conditions forced on them by the Treaty of Versailles were slavish. This created an aversive desire in Germany which led to the rise of Hitler and his Nazi party. They wanted to get back the territories lost by them in the Treaty of Versailles. They also wanted to restore German control over Central Europe and end the restrictions on German arms. Germany rebuilt its industries under the Nazis and developed a massive army and armament industry which could only be served by a war.

Fear from Socialism and Russia

The disastrous results of the First World War caused great social changes all over Europe. The working class turned to ideologies of Socialism and Communism.

In Russia, a revolution took place in 1917 because of which Russia became a Communist state. Russia became Union of Soviet Socialist States (USSR) in 1922. One of the first acts of the new government was to end Russia's participation in the War and begin peace negotiations. The western capitalist countries like Britain were afraid that similar revolutions would start in other countries of Europe. So they encouraged Hitler and the Nazis to come together against USSR. This was the policy of 'appeasement' of Hitler. They wanted to please Hitler to get his support against USSR.

Immediate cause

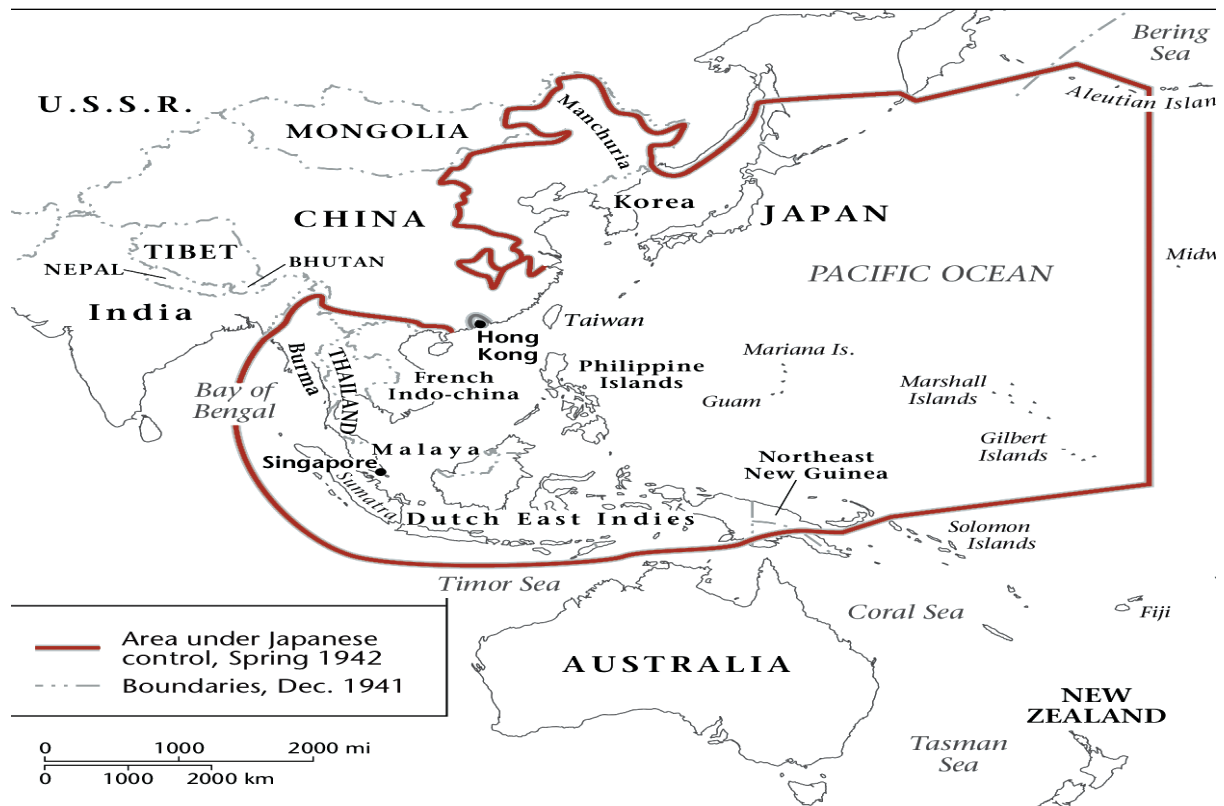
The immediate provocation for World War II was when the German Army entered Poland on September 1, 1939. Hitler, the dictator of Germany, invaded Poland as a punishment for refusing to handover the port of Danzig to Germany. Hitler thought that the takeover of Poland would be a small military operation. But Poland had a defence pact with Britain. So, Britain joined the Polish side and France also joined them a day later. This marked the beginning of World War II.

As most of the Fascist countries supported each other and began military conquest of neighbouring countries, this led to the Second World War between the Axis Powers led by Germany, Italy and Japan on the one side and the Allied Powers led by England, US, France and USSR. In 1941, Japan, an ally of Germany attacked Pearl Harbour of USA. Hitler decided to attack USSR in 1942. With this, USA and USSR joined the war against Germany and Japan.

The Defeat and The End

The initial victories of the German armies were turned back after they were defeated in the famous Battle of Stalingrad in early 1943. People all over Eastern Europe welcomed Soviet forces as the liberators from the hated Nazi rule. They eventually captured Berlin, the capital of Germany. Hitler and his close associates committed suicide to avoid being captured and tried. Eventually Germany was divided into two parts: the eastern part was named German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the western portion was named Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).

Map 2 : Area Under Japanese Control 1942



The GDR came under the area of influence of USSR while the FRG came under the influence of USA.

In the far-East, Japan surrendered to USA after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. With this, the second world war ended in August 1945. US armies occupied Japan but allowed the Japanese Emperor to continue to rule. But Japan built a Constitutional Monarchy like England. Japan was to be ruled by the elected government responsible to the parliament (DIET).

Many of the Nazi generals and leaders were captured and put to trial in the famous Nuremberg trials. The Nuremberg Tribunal sentenced only

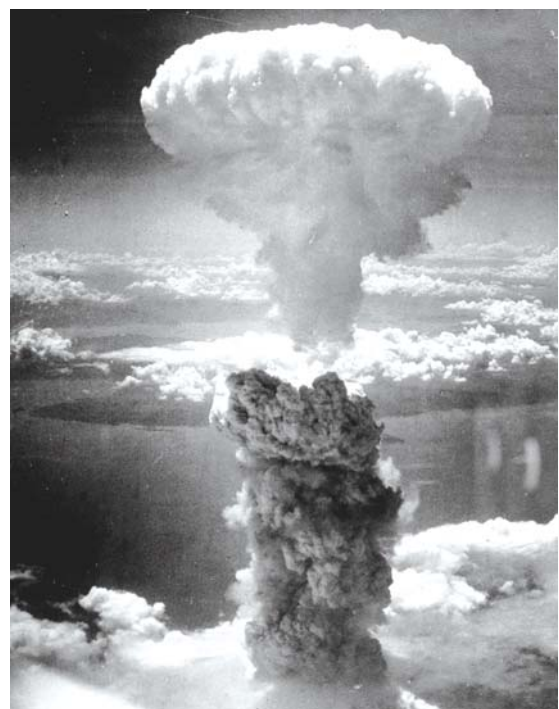


Fig 12.9: Atom Bomb in Nagasaki.

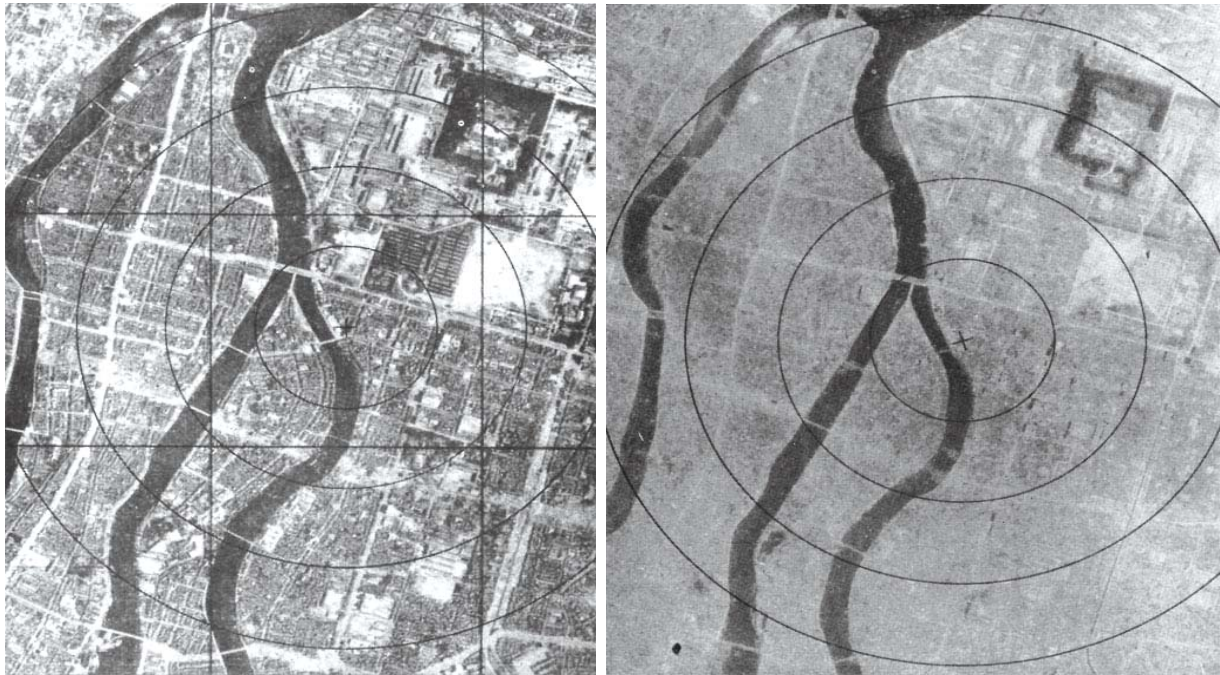


Fig 12.10: (Above) Atom Bomb in Nagasaki. The city of Nagasaki before and after the bomb.

eleven leading Nazis to death. Many others were imprisoned for life. Although justice happened, yet the punishment given to the Nazis was very little as compared to the brutality and extent of their crimes. The Allies did not want to be as harsh on defeated Germany as they had been after the First World War. In fact, given the economic collapse of Germany and Japan after the war, the USA came up with Marshall Plan to fund the economic revival of the two countries. Likewise, the USSR came up with a package for the revival of East European countries.

Consequences of the World Wars

The World Wars had a long lasting impact on the politics, society and economy of the world. These can be listed as follows.

- Discuss the nuclear bombing on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the horrors of a nuclear war. Do you think such weapons should be used even against a fascist enemy country?

The first half of the 20th century ended with the nightmare of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Hopes were also generated by the establishment of the UNO. Just as the First World War saw the end of large monarchic empires, the Second World War saw the end of large colonial empires of the Britain, France, Japan, Italy and Germany. By 1950, countries like India, China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Nigeria etc became independent. Britain, which was the most powerful country before the war, now became a secondary power. Two new super powers emerged on the

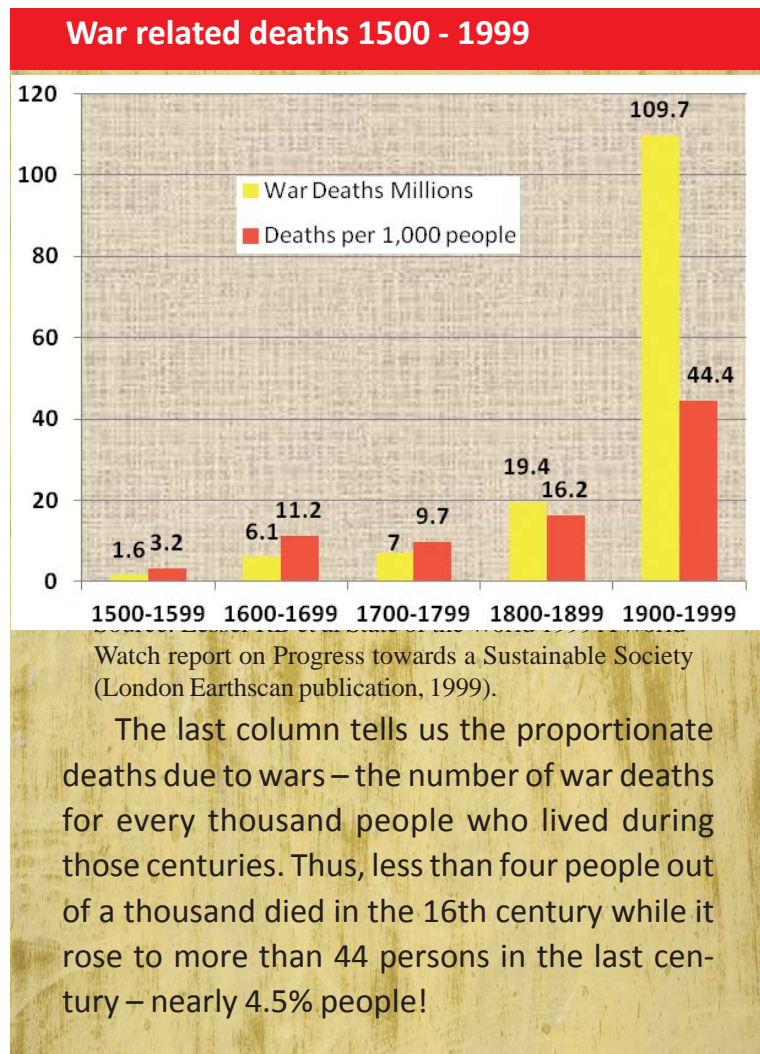
world scene, – the USSR and the USA. The USSR which faced enormous destruction and losses from Hitler’s war, gradually rebuilt its economy. Its victory, however, greatly increased its prestige in the world. It was now joined by the entire Eastern Europe and China to form a large ‘Socialist Camp’.

Enormous human cost

The first consequence of the two World Wars was widespread deaths and injuries. As stated earlier, almost 10 million people were killed in the First (they included about 75,000 Indian soldiers who fought in Africa and Europe on the British side) and 20 to 25 million in the Second World War. Most of those who died were men and almost all of them were under forty years of age. A deadly race of arms and weapons, particularly nuclear and chemical weapons, started after the World Wars. The world is still constantly living under the threat of total destruction of all life through even an accidental use of such weapons.

Democratic principles asserted

The world had understood the dangers of undemocratic government after the two wars. This led to an increasing need for democracy. With the First World War, several empires also ended (For example, the Austro Hungarian Empire, the Russian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and the German Empire etc). In countries like Russia occurred a socialist revolution while countries like Germany overthrew monarchy and became Republics. The Ottoman Empire was replaced by a democratic and secular state in Turkey.



Similarly, during the First World War, colonies became self governing. After World War II, the colonies got their independence and several new countries were born across Asia and Africa.

Change in balance of power

With World War I, the German, Austro- Hungarian, Russian and Turkish empires came to an end. The map of eastern and central Europe was redrawn on the basis of nationality, economic viability and military security. When World War II came to an end, the map of the world changed yet again as ex-colonies became independent nations.

Enfranchisement of women

After a long struggle for political right like right to vote, British women got these rights in 1918. In the long lasting wars like the World Wars, industrial production and other services are necessary. Because men were in the battle fields, more women had to work in factories, shops, offices, voluntary services, hospitals and schools. With the new confidence of becoming bread-winners, women began raising their voices for equality in all walks of life. Getting the right to vote was a big step in that direction.

New International organisations

The United Nations Organisation (UNO) was established after World War II. UN is a kind of world government based on four principles, viz. preserving peace, upholding human rights, respecting international law and promoting social progress. It works through agencies like UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO, ILO, etc. The UNO, despite being accused of becoming a tool of the great powers like USA, and Russia (USSR) has managed to prevent wars and maintain peace and stability. We learn more about UNO and how it worked in 19th chapter in detail.

Key words

1. Industrial capitalism
2. Nazism
3. Aggressive nationalism
4. Militarism
5. Fascism
6. Imperialism
7. Socialism
8. Communism
9. Revolution
10. Centralisation of power
11. Bolshevik

Improve your learning

1. Make a table to show allies, axis and central powers, participated with following countries on different sides of the world wars: Austria, USSR (Russia), Germany, Britain, Japan, France, Italy, USA. (AS₃)
2. How did the idea of nation states and nationalism influence desire for war during World Wars? (AS₁)
3. Write a short note on various causes of two World Wars. Do you think any of these features are prevalent even today in countries around the world? How? (AS₄)
4. Russian revolution brought in many changes in their society. What were they? And what challenges did they face? (AS₁)
5. Compare different points of view about Great Depression, which one would you agree with? Why? (AS₁)
6. In what ways were Jews persecuted during the Nazi Germany? Do you think in every country some people are differentiated because of their identity? (AS₄)
7. List the measures taken under idea of welfare state under Great Depression. (AS₁)
8. What challenges were faced by Germany during Great Depression and how did Nazi rulers and Hitler make use of it? (AS₁)
9. Read the para 3 of page 166 i.e; “This started a great experiment language, etc” and write your opinion on it. (AS₂)
10. Observe the map-2 of page 179 and answer the following questions. (AS₅)
 - i) Mention any two countries which are not under the control of Japan.
 - ii) Mention any two countries which are under the control of Japan and lying on its western side.
11. Locate the following in the map of the world. (AS₅)
 - i) Germany
 - ii) Italy
 - iii) Austria
 - iv) U.S.A.
 - v) China
 - vi) Russia
 - vii) Britain
12. Prepare a few slogans on the prevention of wars and promotion of peace. (AS₆)

Discussion:

Discuss the family conditions of war victims and their sufferings in classroom.