

World Wars

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3. The Second World War (1939 – 1945) – Causes, Course and Results.

The First World War (1914-1918)

❑ Long Term Causes

1. The Alliance System

- ✓ Initiated in the 1870's after German unification
- ✓ By 1914, Europe was divided into 2 rival camps i.e. the Triple Alliance led by Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy and the Triple Entente led by Britain, France and Russia
- ✓ The alliances encouraged nations to act rashly and with suspicion.

2. Imperialism due to: Colonial rivalry which created friction, disputes and mistrust among European nations.

3. The Arms Race i.e.

- Race for military supremacy, spearheaded by Britain and Germany
- Armies and navies were trained
- Mt led to a high state of military preparedness and aggressiveness, thus undermining world security.

4. Disputes over Morocco, in 1905-06 and 1911 intensified the enmity between Britain and France on the one hand, and Germany on the other. The disputes almost led to war.

5. Nationalism in the Balkans - Led to

Short-term / Immediate Cause of the War

The assassinated of the Austro-Hungarian heir, Franz Ferdinand and his wife were on 28th June, 1914, in Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital.

This created tension between Austria-Hungary and Serbia and sparked off the outbreak of the war i.e.

Note:

- 28th July 1914 - Austria Hungary declared war on Serbia
- 29th July 1914 - Russia mobilized her troops
- 1st August 1914 - Germany declared war on Russia
- 3rd August 1914 - Germany declared war on France.
- 4th August 1914 - Britain entered the war
- 6th August 1914 - Austria-Hungary declared war on Russia.

War Participants

Allies/Entente Powers

- Britain France
- Russia (withdrew in December 1917)
- Italy (Joined in May 1915)
- Serbia Belgium Romania (Joined in August 1916)
- USA (Joined in April 1917).

Central Powers /Axis Powers

- Austria Hungary
- Turkey - (Joined in November 1914)
- Bulgaria - (Joined in October 1915).

The war was fought on several fronts

The Western front - where the Germans engaged the British and French forces and later the Americans

The Eastern front - where the Germans battled the Russians

At sea - Britain used her navy to blockade German ports. Germans sank British ships and declared unrestricted submarine warfare.

Reasons why USA remained neutral up to 1917

- 1) Did not want to involve herself in the affairs of European nations
- 2) Presence of people of German descent in the USA and hence fear of revolt
- 3) Fear of war on American soil between of German descent and those of French, British Russian and others
- 4) The war had not interfered with the interests of US A prior to 1917.

Factors that prompted USA to join the War

1. Germany's declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare and thus sinking of USA ships.
2. The Zimmermann letter by Germans which incited the Mexicans to battle USA.

*Reasons for the Victory of the Entente Powers
(Defeat of Central Powers)*

1. The might of the allied sea power.
They enforced naval blockades which crippled the central powers
2. Mutinies in the German army, leading to her surrender
3. The allies had greater manpower, drawn from numerous nations in contrast to the Germans (only 4 states)
4. The allies had abundant wealth, food, raw materials and armaments

The Peace Settlement of 1919/ Versailles Treaty

Signatories: The Allies and their 5 main enemies

- a) Treaty of Versailles with Germany - June, 1919
- b) Treaty of St. Germain with Austria - September, 1919
- c) Treaty of Neuilly with Bulgaria - November, 1919
- d) Treaty of Trianon with Hungary - June, 1920
- e) Treaty of Lausanne with Turkey - July, 1923

Results of the Versailles Treaty

1. Germany was blamed for the outbreak of the war
2. Germany lost her overseas possessions which were managed by the League of Nations
3. Germany lost territory in Europe
4. Germany was to pay a huge war indemnity
5. Reduction of German armaments (no tanks, no conscription, no armored cars, no poison gas, to have a

6. The treaty forbid the union of Germany and Austria
7. An independent Hungarian state was created
8. Creation of Yugoslavia
9. Turkey lost her territories (to the League Nations)
10. It created a League of Nations.

- 1) Heavy casualties in terms of human lives
- 2) Destruction of towns, villages, schools, factories, roads, etc.
- 3) Starvation of numerous people
- 4) Disease outbreak e.g. influenza which killed more people
- 5) Costly war
- 6) It depleted the economic resources of participants who piled up huge debts

- 7) Africans who fought in the war developed nationalistic beliefs.
- 8) The overseas investments and colonies Germany were taken over by the League Nations
- 9) Led to insecurity and disruption of econ activities
- 10) Slowed down the pace of industrialization to shortage of industrial manpower
- 11) It created a refugee problem
- 12) Turkey was weakened and her

- 13) USA acquired a say in post-war European affairs and began its rise as a world power
- 14) Creation of new nations in Europe e.g. Yugoslavia Hungary
- 15) Establishment of the League of Nations
- 16) Development of military technology
- 17) Reduction of size of Germany as well as population
- 18) Germany and the other axis powers were to pay a huge war reparation.

The League of Nations

Formation

- ❖ It was established after the first world war by the allies and associates
- ❖ Other nations were granted membership later
- ❖ The league came into existence formally on 10th January 1920.
- ❖ Headquarters was in Geneva, Switzerland.

Objectives of the League of Nations

- 1) Maintenance of world peace
- 2) Peaceful settlement of disputes
- 3) Disarmament and reduction in arms manufacture
- 4) Combat diseases
- 5) Respect for the political independence and sovereignty of member countries
- 6) Eradicating trafficking in drugs, women, and children
- 7) Sort out the problem of refugee

Organs of the League of Nation

The Assembly

- Made up of representatives of all member states
- Held its sessions in Geneva
- Convened meetings once a year in September.

Functions:

1. Discuss the state of world affairs
2. Discuss the finances of the League
3. Decide on general policy e.g. on treaties
4. Discuss amendment to the League's

The Council

Membership - representatives of each of the 5 victorious powers i.e.

Great Britain, USA, France, Japan, Italy

(Permanent members of the council)

- ✓ One representative of each of 4 other nations (non-permanent members)
- ✓ convened meetings 3 times a year
- ✓ Sessions were held in Geneva.

Functions of the council

- a) Appoint the Secretary-General of the League
- b) Execute recommendations of the Assembly
- c) Convene disarmament conferences
- d) Deal with specific political disputes as they arose
- e) Supervise the work of various commission
- f) Settle disputes among the member

The Secretariat

- Led by the Secretary General
- Administrative body of the League
- Held its sessions in Geneva.

Functions

- 1) Dealt with correspondence
- 2) Registered treaties
- 3) Published reports and wrote resolutions
- 4) Prepared agendas,
- 5) Undertook research

Permanent International Court of Justice

- Comprised of 15 judges of various nationalities
- Sat at the Hague - Netherlands

Functions

- a) Interpreted treaties
- b) Settled international legal disputes.

Specialized Agencies and Commissions e.g. on

- a) Mandates
- b) Refugees
- c) Anti-slavery commission
- d) Disarmament
- e) Drugs
- f) Labour e.t.c.

Performance of the League of Nations

Achievements

1. Through the International Labour Organization (ILO), it was able to improve labour conditions worldwide
2. Convened disarmament conferences and tried to regulate the private manufacture of arms
3. Helped to eradicate slavery e.g. 1932 - it set up a permanent slavery commission
4. Helped in war reconstruction in various countries e.g. Austria, Hungary

6. Facilitated the repatriation of refugees
7. Through the International Health Organization helped to combat diseases and epidemics
8. Helped in the reduction of trade in dangerous! Drugs
9. Through the mandates commission, it supervised the mandated territories taken from Germany and Turkey
10. It arbitrated various disputes between member states e.g. Between Finland and Sweden over Aaland Islands
11. Between Iraq and Turkey over Mosul, Greece and Bulgaria

Problems/Weaknesses of the League of Nations

1. The League was too closely linked with the Versailles Treaty and hence impartial. It was controlled by the victorious powers. Small powers resented being a minority on the council
2. Shortage of funds to implement its programmes
3. Lack of commitment by member states
4. Due to the issue of sovereignty, it was difficult to pass decisions. Members

5. Relied on the goodwill of member states to obey rules. It had no military force of its own.
6. Failure of the world disarmament conference of 1932-1933, it did not achieve tangible results
7. USA refused to join the League. She refused to ratify the treaty of Versailles. Her absence deprived the League of economic strength.
8. Members of the League were preoccupied with their own National interests.
 - ✓ Certain other important powers were left out of the League e.g. Germany joined in 1926 but withdrew in 1933 due to the expansionist policies

9. Policy of appeasement followed by Britain and France. They stood and watched nations e.g. Japan, Germany and Italy become aggressive.
10. The League was unable to settle disputes and stop aggression e.g.
 - I. Failed to stop Japan's aggression when she invaded Manchuria
 - II. Failed to stop Germany's remilitarization
 - III. Failed to stop Italian invasion of Ethiopia
 - IV. Failed to prevent the Union of Austria and Germany in 1938
 - V. Failed to condemn German occupation of Sudetenland, in Czechoslovakia

11. The League did not forbid war. Its covenant did not guarantee peaceful settlement of disputes. War could be used as a last resort.
12. The League's supreme aim was to maintain world peace. It failed and the Second World War broke out only 20 years after the 1st world war had ended.

Causes

Long-term causes

- 1) **Rise to Power of Adolf Hitler** destabilized European peace. He wanted to restore German dominance in Europe.
- 2) **The Treaty of Versailles** had humiliated Germany and made her bankrupt thus Germany begrudged the allies.
- 3) **Nationalism** made nations concentrate on their own internal problems and thus hindering international cooperation.

4) **Economic Problems**

- ✓ Continued rivalry over colonies and wealth that led nations such as Japan, Germany and Italy to embark on territorial expansion.
- ✓ The effects of the Great Depression of the 1930s.

5) **Rise of dictators to Power e.g.**

- a) Hitler of Germany
- b) Joseph Stalin of Russia
- c) Benito Mussolini of Italy
- d) Emperor Hirohito of Japan.
- e) General Franco of Spain

6) The Weakness of the League of Nations

- ✓ It failed to stop aggression and remilitarization of Germany and Italy.

7) The Policy of Appeasement (Adopted by Britain and France)

- ✓ It was a policy of avoiding war with aggressive powers e.g. Germany, Japan and Italy by giving in to their demands.
- ✓ It encouraged aggression and dictatorship.

8) Alliances

- ✓ Which were established between nations

Immediate Cause of the War

Hitler's aggression on Poland

September 1939 - Hitler invaded Poland, then Belgium France and Britain dispatched ultimatums to Hitler to withdraw Hitler's refusal led to another European war.

Course of the War

- ❖ By 1940, Germany occupied and dominated Western Europe, with the exception of Britain
- ❖ Germany attacked the Soviet Union but was unsuccessful
- ❖ 6th August 1945 - the first atomic bomb was dropped at Hiroshima
- ❖ 9th August 1945 - a 2nd bomb was dropped after Nagasaki
- ❖ The surrender of Japan brought the war to an end.

**Reasons why the Axis Powers lost the War
(reasons why the Allied Powers won the War)**

- 1) The allies starved their enemies off supplies
- 2) The allies had superior military strength e.g. Air force, naval superiority
- 3) The Germans were fighting the war on many fronts i.e. Hitler's versus Britain and her empire Russian front In the Mediterranean e.t.c.
- 4) The combined resources of the British empire, USA, USSR

- 6) Some of the German territories turned against her
- 7) The allies had more supporters than the axis powers
- 8) The axis powers made mistakes and miscalculations e.g. German offensive on the USSR. It was a disaster for the Germans who were ill equipped for the Russian winter. Moreover, the Russians recovered quickly, rearmed and attacked Germany.



Atom bomb of Nagasaki.webm

Results of the Second World War

- 1) Enormous loss of lives. Survivors were maimed
- 2) Destruction of homes, industries, roads, railways
- 3) Displacement of millions of people
- 4) Led to improved military technology e.g. atomic bombs
- 5) Europe's domination of the rest of the world came to an end. Europe was weaker after the devastation caused by the war

- 7) Led to the emergence of USA and USSR as superpowers
- 8) Encouraged decolonization
- 9) Economies of war participants were destroyed and the pace of development slowed down
- 10) It created unemployment
- 11) It left bitter feelings and mistrust among war participants
- 12) Led to the division of Germany into East and West Germany
- 13) Led to the development of the Iron Curtain that geographically divided Europe into two

- 14) The major countries of Western Europe were exhausted from the strain of the 6 years war.
- 15) Defeat and humiliation of dictators, leading to a change of government in countries such as Italy
- 16) American occupation of Japan. Japan was to be occupied by the USA, democratized and demilitarized
- 17) Resettlement of Jews
- 18) Redrawing of the map of Europe and Africa
- 19) It stimulated important social changes e.g.
- 20) Germans were forced to leave Russia, Poland. Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia
- 21) Rebuilding of ruined cities

- 22) Soviet domination of Eastern Europe
- 23) Through the Marshall plan, USA got more involved in European affairs
- 24) Development of the Cold War
- 25) End of Nazism which was responsible for terrible atrocities/crimes
- 26) Disruption of world trade The war shattered the myth of European superiority
- 27) The war was costly. Colossal/huge sums of money were spent by warring nations
Formation of the United Nations Organization (UNO).

The End