

Introduction to the 20th Century

- • Called the 'Age of Extremes' by historian Eric Hobsbawm.
- • Rise of both fascism and democracy.
- • Advances in medicine, literacy, science, and cinema.
- • Countries experimented with socialism (USSR) and liberal democracy (USA).
- • Global division: industrial West vs. colonized Asia & Africa.

Causes of World War I

- • Aggressive nationalism fueled pride and hatred.
- • Imperialism led to competition for colonies and resources.
- • Secret alliances: Triple Alliance vs. Triple Entente.
- • Militarism: massive armament build-up among powers.
- • Immediate cause: assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914.

Consequences of WWI & Treaty of Versailles

- • WWI ended in 1918 with the defeat of Germany.
- • Treaty of Versailles in 1919 imposed heavy penalties on Germany.
- • New nations were created (e.g., Yugoslavia, Finland).
- • League of Nations was formed in 1920 to prevent future wars.
- • Failed to stop WWII due to lack of power and participation.

The Russian Revolution

- • In 1917, Tsarist rule ended; Bolsheviks seized power.
- • March and October Revolutions marked major turning points.
- • Lenin led the Bolsheviks to form USSR in 1922.
- • Aimed at equality, state control, and end of exploitation.
- • Inspired global socialist and communist movements.

The Great Depression (1929–1939)

- • Started with US stock market crash, spread globally.
- • Caused massive unemployment, poverty, and factory closures.
- • German economy hit hardest; led to political unrest.
- • Roosevelt's New Deal in USA aimed at relief and recovery.
- • Gave rise to the idea of Welfare State.

Rise of Fascism and Nazism

- • Fascism emerged in Italy under Mussolini (1922).
- • Nazism rose in Germany with Hitler (1933).
- • Emphasized nationalism, racism, and totalitarianism.
- • Used propaganda, violence, and cult of the leader.
- • Blamed Jews and others for Germany's problems.

World War II: Causes and Course

- • Treaty of Versailles angered Germany; Hitler sought revenge.
- • Germany invaded Poland in 1939 — war began.
- • Axis Powers: Germany, Italy, Japan; Allies: Britain, USSR, USA.
- • Battles like Stalingrad turned the tide against Germany.
- • Japan surrendered after atomic bombs on Hiroshima & Nagasaki.

Holocaust and Nazi Atrocities

- • Nazis aimed to create Aryan racial supremacy.
- • Jews, Gypsies, disabled, and others targeted and killed.
- • Concentration camps like Auschwitz used for mass murder.
- • Indoctrination and state terror controlled German society.
- • Millions suffered under Nazi dictatorship.

Aftermath and Global Changes

- • WWII ended colonial empires; many countries gained freedom.
- • Two superpowers emerged: USA and USSR.
- • UN was formed to maintain global peace and human rights.
- • Women gained more roles and rights after the wars.
- • Democratic ideas strengthened worldwide.

Legacy of the World Wars

- • Massive human loss: 10 million (WWI), 20–25 million (WWII).
- • Economic dislocation and social disruption.
- • War highlighted need for democracy, peace, and justice.
- • Fear of nuclear weapons began with Hiroshima/Nagasaki.
- • Lessons from wars led to creation of welfare states.