

## World History Preview



# WORLD HISTORY

## GS Mains Paper I

For Civil Services Exams

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## **Chapter 1 First World War**

### **Introduction**

The First World War began in the year 1914. It was first war that involved whole of the continent of Europe. The European powers also involved their respective colonies for their selfish motives and consequently resources and manpower of many nations of the world got involved in it.

### **Causes of World War – I**

#### **1. Formation of Military Blocks**

There were two military blocks in the world. First block formed in 1882 was called Triple Alliance consisting of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy and second block called Triple Entente comprised of England, France and Russia. There were bilateral military agreements between the three nations of Triple Entente.

#### **2. Possession of colonies**

Possession of colonies was the major cause behind First World War. Before WW-I, almost all the potential colonies were already acquired. Extension of national boundaries required possession of colonies of other nations.

#### **3. Acquisition of Bosnia by Austria-Hungary (Bosnia Crisis) (1908)**

Austria-Hungary took advantage of lawlessness in Ottoman Empire and acquired Turkish province of Bosnia. Bosnia was also sought by Serbia because nearly three million Serbs were part of Bosnia.

Germany supported Austria-Hungary whereas Serbia was supported by Britain, France and Russia. Under pressure of Germany, Austria-Hungary was allowed to retain Bosnia.

#### **4. Acquisition of Morocco by France (Moroccan Crisis)**

Morocco was acquired by France. At the same time Germany also sought to acquire Morocco. This event led to war-like conditions between Germany and France. Britain sided with France. Finally, Germany decided to withdraw from Morocco and was compensated by giving other territories in Africa.

#### **5. First Balkan War (1912)**

Under the First Balkan war, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece formed Balkan League and captured large territory of Ottoman Empire consisting of Albania and Macedonia.

In both Albania and Macedonia, there were large numbers of Serbs. As a result, Serbia wanted both these territories. International conference was held. Under Germany and Austria-Hungary pressure, Albania was made independent nation. This

decision was resented by Serbia. However, Macedonia was given to Serbia. Bulgaria resented award of Macedonia to Serbia.

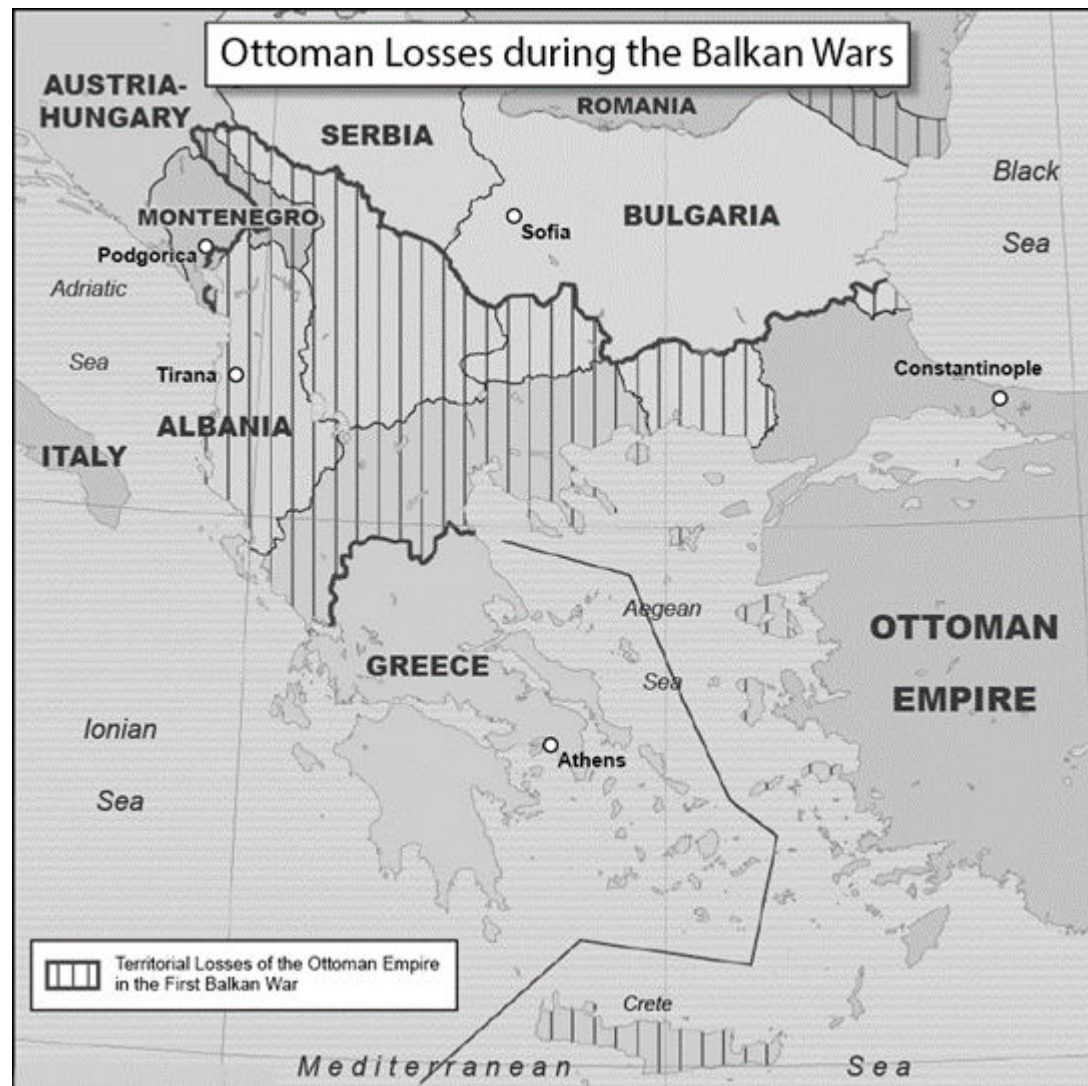
**Balkan States:** Balkan region is a Peninsula shaped region in the south-eastern Europe. It is located between the Adriatic Sea, Mediterranean Sea, the Aegean Sea and Black Seas. It consists of nations such as Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Moldova, Romania, and Bulgaria. Greece forms the part of the peninsula, but is not considered in the Balkan nations.



## **6. Second Balkan War (1913)**

Bulgaria attacked Serbia to gain Macedonia. However, Serbia was supported by Greece, Romania and Turkey. As a result, Serbia emerged victorious and powerful. The emergence of powerful Serbia led to further distrust between Austria-Hungary (one nation at that time) and Serbia. Austria-Hungary believed that Serbia will instigate revolt in its (Austria-Hungary) territories namely Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and seek the control of these territories.

Ottoman Empire: Ottoman empire was ruled by Muslim Sultan, who was considered not just the political leader of Muslims but also their religious leader. In 1900, it comprised of present Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania, Armenia, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, Greece, and parts of Ukraine.



## **Beginning of WW I**

Austrian Archduke (chief duke, usually the son of the Emperor of Austria) named Franz Ferdinand, nephew of Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph visited Bosnia's capital Sarajevo. He was would-be Emperor of Austria-Hungary. While addressing people, he was killed by Serb terrorist Gavrilo Princip who was member of secret society "Black Hand".

Austria-Hungary considered this as a deliberate action undertaken on behalf of Serbian government. Consequently, on 28<sup>th</sup> July 1914, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. Serbia was supported by Russia. Russia started mobilization of troops. Germany gave ultimatum to Russia to stop mobilization of troops. Russia did not comply with this warning. As a result, on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1914, Germany declared war on Russia. Russia had military alliance with France, so it was expected that France would join the war to support Russia. On this anticipation, Germany attacked France on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1914.

Germany also attacked Belgium on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1914 on account of two reasons:

- Acquisition of Belgium would assist Germany in acquiring France and
- Belgium might provide assistance to France during War.

On 6<sup>th</sup> August Britain declared war on Germany. Britain entered into war on account of following reasons:

- Britain had bilateral military alliances with Russia and France.
- Britain also guaranteed protection of Belgium in case of any aggression towards Belgium.
- Thirdly, British and French investors had invested huge amount of capital in Russia. Safety of Russia was essential to safeguard British and French investment.
- Without support of Britain, France and Russia would be easily captured by Germany. As a result, Germany would emerge as a dominant power in Europe.

On 12<sup>th</sup> August 1914, Britain and France declared war on Austria-Hungary.



**Central Powers:** The Central Powers consisting of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria –also known as the Quadruple Alliance.

**Allied Powers:** The Powers known as the Allies in World War I were Great Britain, France, Russia and Italy. Italy initially had a treaty with Germany, but recanted and secretly joined the Allied Powers.



### Fronts in World War

WW-I was confined to Europe. There were two main fronts:

- **Western front:** It was the key battleground during the war. This front extended through northern France and Belgium. Western Front settled down into static trench warfare. On one side were the Germans, on the other side were Belgian, French, British and troops of colonies.

- **Eastern front:** The Eastern Front encompassed at its greatest extent the entire frontier between the Russian Empire and Romania on one side and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Bulgaria, the Ottoman Empire and the German Empire on the other. It stretched from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Black Sea in the south, included most of Eastern Europe and stretched deep into Central Europe as well.

The nature of war at the 'Eastern front' was different than that on the 'Western Front', which was being fought in Belgium and France of Western Europe. Fighting was much more mobile than the trench-based warfare in the Western front. Casualties were also very high in the Eastern front.

### Course of the War

In 1914, Germany acquired Belgium. On Eastern front, Serbia was able to dispel attack from Austria-Hungary with the assistance of Russia.

In 1915, Germany also acquired Poland, but failed to acquire France. German troops fought against British and French troops along same line of defence.





Also on Eastern Front, Germany captured Straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles leading to blockade of Russia.



**Change of sides by Italy:** Italy had military-alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary. At beginning of World War I, Italy kept out of the war. Italy was lured by Britain and France that it can gain Italian speaking provinces from Austria-Hungary. As a result, Italy joined allied powers. However, Italy failed to gain any territory.

In 1916, Romania entered into WWI. It launched massive attack on Austria-Hungary. However, Germany seized oil and wheat supplies of Romania, leading to its surrender.

Russian economy was exhausted by 1917. Moreover, the hardships faced by people of Russia led to Russian Revolution in 1917 and withdrawal of Russia from World War I.

### **US Entry in WW-I**

USA entered the First World War in 1917. The main reasons were:

1. After withdrawal of Russia, US entered into WWI. US had supplied food, credit and even military assistance to Britain and France. Financial recovery of this assistance was possible only if allied forces would win the war.

2. US was supplying various commodities to Britain and France even through passenger ships. As a result, Germany initiated indiscriminate attack on all ships coming to Western Europe from US. This led to adoption of convoy system in which merchant vessels and military vessels sailed together.

German submarine (U-boats) attack on American ships created public opinion in America that America should participate in WW-I to take revenge from Germany.

### **End of WW-I**

Austria-Hungary was also exhausted and decided to withdraw from WWI. Germany made last attempt in 1918 to capture France. It was widely believed that Germany had lost the war.

Germany was not invaded but its army faced mutiny. Also, there were revolts by local population within Germany. Under such conditions Germany was made to sign Treaty of Versailles in 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1919.

### **Paris Peace Conference**

First World War ended on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1918. To solve the various issues after the war, a conference of the representatives of the Allied powers met at Paris in 1919 to arrange the terms of peace. "The Big Three" i.e. France, Britain and the USA mainly carried the post-war settlements. France was represented by Georges Benjamin Clemenceau, Britain by Lloyd George while President Woodrow Wilson represented United States.

Russia was not part of the negotiations in the Conference although she played an important role in the war against Germany. This was because of the fact that Western powers did not recognise Bolshevik government of Russia.

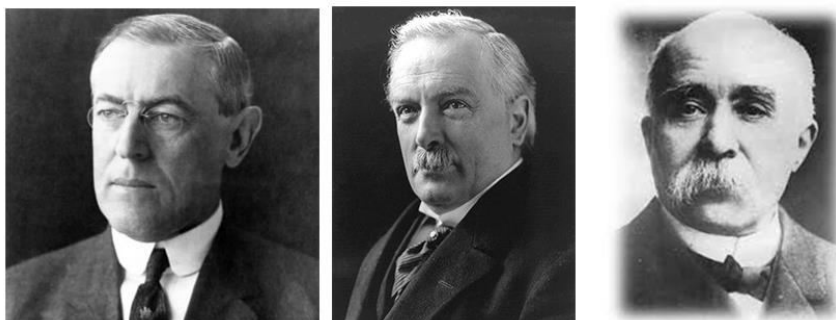


Fig: The Big Three: Leaders of the three victorious nations (L to R: USA-Woodrow Wilson, Britain-David Lloyd George and France-Georges Benjamin,). Including Italy, it became Big 4. However, Italy was not given much importance in the treaties that followed the

Woodrow Wilson, the then president of USA, proposed 14 points for peace programme such as:

1. Transparency in negotiations among states.
2. Reduction of armaments by all the nations.
3. Creation of League of Nations
4. Self-determination by people while determining territories of nations, etc.

However, these points were not significantly followed.

Note: Woodrow Wilson was awarded the 1919 Nobel Peace Prize as the leading architect behind the League of Nations.

## **Major treaties after WW-I**

### **1. Treaty of Versailles with Germany**

Major conditions under the treaty:

- German emperor William II was charged with crime of WWI and was tried by international tribunal.
- Under the infamous "War Guilt Clause" Germany was required to pay heavy war-indemnity of 6.6 billion pound. This heavy indemnity led to indebtedness of Germany.
- Size of German army was reduced.
- Colonial possessions of Germany were distributed among Allied powers.
- Rivers of Germany were internationalised to facilitate inland waterways trade. Consequently, Germany was forced to demilitarize the areas adjoining river Rhine.
- Alsace-Lorraine was returned to France. Alsace Lorraine was acquired in 1870 by Germany (then Prussia-a princely state) from France. This territory was rich in mineral resources. French industrial community was creating pressure to re-occupy this territory because this territory was considered vital for industrial development of France.
- France was given the rights to exploit coal rich Saar valley for 15 years.
- Independence of Belgium and Poland were restored.
- Danzig, a territory consisting of large German population, was handed over to Poland.

### **2. Treaty of Germaine with Austria-Hungary**

- Austria-Hungary was divided into separate nations of Austria and Hungary.
- Some territories of Austria were taken away and made into separate nation of Czechoslovakia (currently Czech Republic and Slovakia).
- Territories of Hungary namely Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina were given to Serbia. Serbia was renamed as Yugoslavia.

### **3. Treaty of Severs with Turkey (remaining territory after collapse of Ottoman Empire)**

- Under this treaty Armenia was made a separate state.
- Syria was given to France under mandate system.
- Mesopotamia (Iraq), Palestine and Jordan were given to England under mandate system.
- Straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles were internationalized.

#### **Mandate System**

Mandate system was initiated with the creation of League of Nations. Under this system, the territories acquired from Axis powers were put under international guarantee. The international guarantee referred that one of super power under League of Nations had the responsibility to maintain security of a newly carved out territory.

### **How First World War led to Second World War**

1. It was projected in Germany that it lost WWI due to betrayal by its citizens. This led to propagation of 'stab in the back' theory. Hitler propagated this theory and used it to promote national self-pride. Hitler regarded signatories of armistice (peace agreement between warring sides) as November criminals.

The nickname 'November Criminals' was given to the German politicians who negotiated and signed the armistice which ended World War-I. This nickname was given by their opponents in the Germany itself. Opponents felt the army had enough strength to continue and that surrender was a betrayal, a crime. Many of the November Criminals were leading members of the early Weimar Republic (Democratic government in Germany after fall of William-II). They were regarded as November criminals because they signed armistice in November 1918.

2. Some territories from Germany, such as control of Danzig was given to Poland. Danzig consisted large German population. Similarly, Czechoslovakia was given Sudetenland consisting three million Germans. The claim of these territories by Germany led to WW-II.

3. Treaty of Versailles posed heavy war indemnity on Germany, leading to financial instability and economic depression in Germany. Moreover, shortage of commodities led to hyper-inflation.

After WW-I, Democratic government in Germany failed to acquire public support on account of above-mentioned conditions. The ground was ripe for emergence of authoritarian regime of Hitler.

4. Italy was promised large territories and other benefits in WWI. However, it was given minimal benefits in comparison to what was secured by France and Britain. This resulted in resentment in Italy. Also, heavy war expenditure led to deterioration of national economy. These factors favoured rise of Mussolini and the Fascist party in Italy.

### **Other Factors which lead to World War II**

1. League of Nations was created after WWI to prevent further wars among nations. However, USA did not ratify League of Nations because it believed that its participation in the League may involve it in the European disputes. USA adopted 'Policy of Isolation'. This policy meant that the US would not involve in European conflicts.

It was also believed that the US participated in WW-I to secure interests of bankers and armed manufactures. These bankers had loaned money and armed manufacturers had sold weapons to Britain and France. To protect these marginal interests, large amount of money was spent and the US also had to face heavy casualties. The bankers and armed manufactures were sarcastically regarded in various publications as "merchants of death" and war was regarded as "racket".

US adopted Stimson Doctrine during this time period. This doctrine meant that US will not recognise any territory acquired by force. As a result, the US did not recognise Japanese occupation of Manchuria (plain region in north-eastern China) in 1931- 1932.

2. Ideological division of European nations: Most of the European Nations adopted either of the three major ideologies during 1920s:

- Left ideology (communist nations) nations such as Soviet Union.
- Liberal Democratic Nations such as France, Britain and others. Modern Turkey (emerged out of Ottoman Empire) was autocratic during WW-I. However, after WW-I under Young Turks Movement, Turkey was converted into liberal democratic nation. As a result, Turkey was part of Central powers in WW-I and part of Allied powers in WW-II.
- Right Ideology Nations were counter-revolutionary or against communism because revolution in authoritarian regimes meant loss of power of autocrats. These nations were Germany, Italy and Japan.

Italy and Japan joined Allied powers in WW-I but shifted to Axis powers in WW-II. Both these nations adopted Right Ideology and came under autocratic rule.

3. Re-emergence of Germany: Hitler was one of the soldiers in German army during WW-I. However, gradually he emerged as leader of Nazi Party. In 1933, Nazi Party won elections in Germany. Hitler became Chancellor (equivalent to Prime Minister) of Germany. Hitler brought changes in German political system and centralised all the powers. He was supported by people of Germany because Hitler brought welfare to the people. German economy once again flourished and standard of living drastically improved.

From 1935, he began violation of treaty of Versailles, such as militarisation of Germany, re-occupation of Rhine land, conscription (compulsory military service) and so on.

Hitler adopted the policy of 'Greater Germany' which would include all territories inhabited by German speaking population and even other territories. In line with this policy German troops entered Austria. Referendum was undertaken in Austria in which 99.73% of population preferred to join Germany.

4. Japan wanted to secure exclusive control over plains of Manchuria. Northern Manchuria was under the control of Russia and the southern Manchuria was under the control of China. In 1895 after Sino-Japanese war, through Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895), China ceded southern Manchuria to Japan. However, this treaty was nullified on account of intervention by super powers.

In 1905, Russia was defeated by Japan. Treaty of Portsmouth (1905) was signed between Japan and Russia. Under this treaty, Russia agreed to cede Northern Manchuria to Japan. However, this treaty was also nullified by super powers.

In 1931, finally Japan acquired Manchuria from China. This incident reduced credibility of League of Nations. Japan, being member of the League, withdrew from the League and occupied Manchuria.

5. Italy under leadership of Mussolini adopted policy of expansion of territories. Consequently, Italy acquired territories in east Africa namely Somalia. Italy also attempted to acquire Abyssinia (presently Ethiopia). However, in battle of Adwa (1896) on account of tough resistance and support by France, Italy failed to acquire Abyssinia.