



Impact of Nazism on European Societies in Post -World War-II Era

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Original Article:

Received 1 June. 2017 Accepted 22 June. 2017 Published 30 June. 2017

ABSTRACT

To impose a wide scale war was the biggest impact of Nazism not only on Europe but on the entire world. On the Allied side were the countries like Britain, Soviet Union, France, and USA and on the Axis side were the countries like Germany, Japan and Italy. No doubt, big Nazis especially the Hitler was responsible for the war but there were other superior leaders who had important role in it. Among those were the Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin, Hirohito and Mussolini were the prominent. Almost all societies were affected by the Hitler's actions not only during the war but also after the war. His rigorous policies outraged the world. Some societies achieved economic benefits from the war in the form of new jobs and industrial revolutions but many societies like Germans were crushed by receiving tremendous debts and economic bankruptcy. Societies also faced the impacts from the creation of the UNO World Charter, to the establishment of the Neo-Nazi Parties in different countries. Research Paper in hand highlights the very impact of Nazism on European Societies in Post -World War-II Era.

Keyword:

Nazism, Hitler, Impact, Post World War Era, European Societies

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Peer review under responsibility of **Iranian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research**

1. Introduction

Almost 39 countries were invaded by Hitler. Nazism caused serious troubles in many communities before, during and after the WWII. Extermination of several nations as the result of Nazi ideology was eventually halted by the Allies. Subhuman Nazi activities led to the destruction of several states and deaths of tens of millions (Wikipedia, 2014, December 6). Nazi Germany not only destroyed the German nation but affected the whole world especially Europe by unleashing WWII and instigating the Holocaust. So, it was called the most destructive political regime of the 20th century.

The War, thus, gave nearly fifty million casualties among six million Jews who became direct target of Hitler's hatred. An historian Mark Mazower described that till 1948 more than ninety million people were either displaced or killed. So, it is impossible to understand the future course of European History without knowing the political and social consequences of this wide scale upheaval (Mazower, M, 1998, p.224). War made millions of people homeless. It collapsed the economy and destroyed the European industrial infrastructure.

After the war, the lives of Germans were very traumatic due to overwhelming defeat and destruction of cities and towns. More than half the population was in the form of displaced persons, refugees, expellees, prisoners of war and evacuees (Fulbrook, M, 2001, p.179). They were suffered with shortage of food with many other hardships like starvation, diseases, abuses, looting and plundering, etc.

2. Country-Wise Impacts with Casualties

Effects of Nazism were clearly felt by not only the Europeans but by the whole world. Following is a list of European countries which suffered losses by the hands of Nazis and the war imposed by their ideology. A very brief overview of country-wise losses is as under.

2.1 Albania

Germany took control over Albania in 1943. Under Nazi control, Jewish population was aggressively protected by Albanians. After the war, communist government was established here under the influence of Russia. Albania suffered nearly 28,200 total deaths. It was 2.6% of the total population.

2.2 Austria

Nazis took control over this country in 1938. Being the first victim of Nazis, Austria benefited from the Allied side (Davies, N., 1996, p.1088). After 1945, it came under the control of Allies. By the treaty of 'Asian State', in 1955, Republic of Austria was established. Its total number of casualties was 105,500 along with 65,000 deaths of Jews. It was 1.6% of the total population.

2.3 Belarus

Nazis captured this territory in 1941 during Soviet Invasion. 90% of its Jewish population and its almost all intellectual elite were liquidated. 380,000 young men were deported and thousands of civilians were killed along with the burning of 600 villages and 209 cities. It was a part of Himmler's plan of eradication. In 1944, Soviet troops regained it.

2.4 Belgium

It served as the base of operations for Nazis against France. It suffered 86,100 total deaths including 24,400 Jews. It was 1 percent of its total population.

2.5 Bulgaria

Nazis used its land by force to invade Greece in 1941. It was liberated in 1944 by Soviets. Its total casualties were 25,000 and it was the 0.4 percent of the total population.

2.6 Czechoslovakia

Nazis gave its southern portion to Hungary. After was communist government was established under Soviet influence. Its 2.3 percent population was eradicated with 345,000 deaths including 277,000 Jews.

2.7 Denmark

Nazis invaded it in 1940 to use it as launching pad for invasion of Norway. After the war, Iceland was separated due to its weak position. It lost 3,200 lives. It was 0.1 percent of the total population.

2.8 Estonia

It was annexed by Soviets in 1940. So, when Nazis invaded Estonia in 1941, it considered them as liberators. After that Red Army regained its control in 1944. Its 4.3 percent population was liquidated with 49,000 deaths including 1,000 Jews.

2.9 Finland

It joined Axis powers in 1941, but after the Continuation War, it came under the Russian's imposed restrictions. It lost 2.6 percent of the total population with 97,000 casualties.

2.10 France

Germany invaded France in 1940 but the Free French Forces joined the Allies and tried to liberate France. At the end of war, it regained its control but lost Vietnam to Japan.

After the war, France was militarily, economically and psychologically weakened. So, movements for independence started in its colonies. It resisted the movements but failed. Thus, it lost its colonies. It was estimated that it lost 1.4 percent of its population with 567,600 casualties along with 83,000 Jewish deaths (Lindemann, 2013, p.323).

2.11 Germany

After the invasion of Poland, it invaded Norway, Netherlands, Denmark, Luxembourg, Belgium and then France. After that it launched its invasions against Greece, Bulgaria and Russia. Thinly-spread supply lines and then entry of America in war caused its downfall.

It was estimated that nearly 8 million Germans were liquidated in the war (Lindemann, 2013, p.323). After the war, the brutality of Allies increased the casualties. Utter devastation became the fate of Germany due to carpet bombing by the Allied forces. German nation faced contempt due to Nazis atrocities and crimes against humans. German economy was devastated and the territory filled with refugees. Its parts were divided among the Allied countries.

Truman decided the reconstruction of the German industry as it was essential for the economic recovery of Europe (Jennings, 2003, p.15). President Truman

ordered to take welfare steps for Germany by annulling the punitive measures on the "National Security Grounds" and stressed that the productive and stable Germany was essential for the prosperous Europe (Jennings, 2003, p.15). As the Eastern Block denounced the Marshall Plan so, it recovered slowly. According to the Ruhr agreement, Federal Republic of Germany was established (Yoder, 1955, pp.345-348). Restoration of Germany started and it was estimated that 10 million were spent by UK and US for intellectual reparations (Naimark, 1995, p.206). Thousands of intellectual German researchers went to US and Russia to start their research.

But during the period of 1945, internal aid for ethnic Germans was blocked by American forces (Vardy, 2003, p.281). Non-German DPs were provided with relief goods. After some time, International Red Cross could help Germans with strict control on travel and supplies. By the help of Red Cross, better living conditions were achieved by prisoners (Wikipedia, 2014, December 18). Germans were also used in labor and it was recorded that Russia, France, US and UK used nearly 4 million Germans as forced labor for example to clear minefield which was very life threatening. During such a work, about 2,000 Germans were maimed or killed only under French command (MacKenzie, 1994, pp.487-520). It was estimated that 10.6 percent population was perished with 7,393,000 casualties including 160,000 Jews.

2.12Greece

Its economy was destroyed through hyperinflation and looting the resources by Nazi occupation. Starvation and lethal famine led to 300,000 civilian deaths. Long lasting effect of Nazism in Greece was the civil war between pro-democracy and pro-communist started in 1944. In 1949, democratic forces won the battle. Greece lost 311,300 lives and it was the 4.3 percent of the total population.

2.13Hungary

It cooperated the Nazis but, in 1944, fell under the Russian occupation. After the war, communist government was installed in it. It lost 6.4 percent population with 580,000 casualties including 200,000 Jews.

2.14Ireland

During the war, it remained neutral but it suffered losses due to independence upon UK (Davies, 1996, p.1088). It lost only 200 lives.

2.15Italy

In 1940, Italy joined the Axis alliance. At the end of 1944, most of Italy was surrendered by Allies. In April 1945, Mussolini was terribly murdered. After the war, it was forced by Paris Peace Treaty to pay huge amount of money to Albania, Russia, Greece, Ethiopia and Yugoslavia. As most of the war criminals were summarily executed so, there were no trials against them. Italy was leniently handled by the Allies because it had been broken off its relations with Germans before the end of war (Derry, 1965, p.415). 1 percent of its total population was perished with 454,500 total deaths including nearly 301,300 military deaths, 154,000 civilian and 8 thousand Jewish casualties (Lindemann, 2013, p.323).

2.16Latvia

It was annexed by Russia when Baltic States were invaded in 1940. They considered Nazis as liberators because Germans entered in 1941.

Russia regained it from Nazis in 1944 by reversing their advancement and pursuing Germans west. Russia ruled over it directly by retaining its hold over it. It lost 227,000 lives including eighty thousand Jews. About 11.4 percent of total population was liquidated.

2.17Lithuania

It was also annexed by Russia in 1940 along with Baltic States. Russian troops took the territory back in 1944. About 13.7 percent population was perished with 353,000 deaths including 141,000 Jews.

2.18Luxembourg

Nazi used this territory as an operational base against France. Nazi lost this land in 1945. It lost 0.7 percent of total population with 2 thousand casualties.

2.19Moldova

After the war, Russia demanded to take the territory from Romania and Allies accepted the demand. So, Moldova came under the direct control of Russia in the post war period.

2.20Netherlands

Nazi annexed this land in 1940 and used it against France till the Allied occupation in 1945. Its 3.4 percent population was liquidated with 301,000 casualties including 104,000 Jews.

2.21Norway

It was annexed by Nazis to capture its vast resources and used it to launch naval operations in Atlantic. It was liberated in 1945. Its 0.3 percent of total population was perished with 10 thousand deaths including 7 hundred Jews.

2.22Poland

In 1939, Poland was invaded by Nazis from the west and by Russian troops from the east. Nazis exterminated 5 and half million Poles as it remained the battleground throughout the war. It means its 16.1 percent population was perished including 3 million Jewish casualties. 85 percent buildings in Warsaw were destroyed by Nazis and Russian bombings. A huge concentration camp was established due to Nazi policy of exploiting and plundering the Polish territory. Poland suffered nearly 6 hundred billion dollars' losses by Nazis alone.

Correct estimation of the number of Polish deaths was difficult because official Russian historiography recorded the Polish borderland casualties in the lists of Belarus, Soviet and Ukraine (Davies, 1982, p.558). The official record prepared in 1947 by Polish government shown the total number of war victims as 6,028,000 of ethnic Poles and Jews. It suffered the territorial losses of 188,000 square kilometers which was later compensated (Polish Ministry of Information, 1941, pp.9-10.)

About 2 hundred thousand Polish children having German blood were taken away by Nazis (Moses, 2004, p.260). only 15 percent abducted children were returned to their parents (Piotrowski, 1998, p.22). Poland also lost over half of its intellectuals. Till the Russian collapse in 1990, Poland remained under the Russian control.

2.23 Portugal

Its territory was remained neutral but, in 1943, it served as the war base.

2.24 Romania

In hope of getting Moldova back from Russia, it helped Axis powers. But it lost Bukovina and Bess Arabia. Communist government was established after the war. It lost 4.2 percent of total population with 833,000 total deaths including 469,000 Jews.

2.25 Spain

In the early period of war, it co-operated Nazis but later it became neutral and protected its Jewish population. Allies imposed embargo against it as a punishment for Nazi support. Spain remained isolated diplomatically with weak economy. It lost 4,500 lives.

2.26 Sweden

It co-operated both sides. Nazis purchased iron-ore and transported its troops through Swedish land. Allies used its navy to fight with Germans. Its main objective was to safe its own people. It lost only 2 thousand lives.

2.27 Switzerland

Nazis forced it to do business with Germany because it was dependent on trade. It was benefited due to important role in tourism and banking (Davies, 1998, p.1087). It lost only hundred lives.

2.28 Turkey

During WWII, it remained neutral.

2.29 Ukraine

7 to 11 million lives were perished along with destruction of 28,000 villages and 7 hundred towns and cities. It remained under the Nazi control from 1941 to 1944. Soviet Socialist Republic was established after the war.

2.30 United Kingdom

UK army was ill prepared but its navy was powerful. It suffered losses by German U-boat attacks but it overpowered German troops with the help of US. After the end of war, the economic conditions of UK were worse and bread rationing was started there (Crisp, 1960, pp.22-26). In 1946, US loan helped to restore its economic stability (Foster, 1974, pp.286-87). But the conditions of loan put harmful effects on the currency value of UK (Johnson, 1997, pp.647-48).

UK lost 0.9 percent of the total population with 449,800 casualties (Lindemann, 2013, p.323). After the war, its massive empire could not maintain control over colonies. One after another, countries declared independence. Till 1960, most colonies were declared independence without any military action.

2.31 Soviet Union

It was estimated that 13.7 percent of the total population was perished with almost 26 to 32 million total casualties including 13 million civilians and one million Jews (Lindemann, 2013, p.323). Death rate was increased due to atrocities, exposure and starvation.

Repatriation agreement was signed by UK and US with Russia in February 1945 (Elliott, 1973, pp.253-75). When Soviet prisoners of war returned to their country, they were considered cowards, traitors and deserters. So, many repatriates were sent to Gulags and many were killed. Russia suffered a lot due to mass shooting,

forced labor, diseases, poor conditions of Nazi concentration camps and famine (Ellman, 1994, pp.671-80). Russia was so severely affected that its population took 30 years to return to its pre-war standard.

About 226,127 repatriates and ex-prisoners of war were sent to prison camps in Siberia after scrutiny and found suspected as Nazi collaborators (Bacon, 1992, pp.1069-76). Many civilians and ex-POWs were given the jobs to rebuild damaged infrastructure and others were conscripted in Red Army (Ellman, 2002, pp.1151-72). Due to war, its economy was collapsed and production of foodstuffs and other consumer items was very low.

After the end of Nazism, Russia had set a goal to become USSR (Roberts, 2006, p.43). So, after the war, it started annexing foreign territories (Wettig, 2008, pp.20-21). On the map of the world, there rose new Russian Satellite states in Czechoslovakia (Grenville, 2005, pp.370-71), Bulgaria, Albania (Bernard, 2001, p.17), Poland, Romania and the last one in East Germany (Gerhard, 2008, pp.96-100). At the end of war, Russia had built strong and large army which helped it to capture most of eastern Europe.

End of Nazism and end of WWII gave rise the bipolar world with two blocks. Cold war started between Russian and American blocks.

2.32 Yugoslavia

In 1941, it was occupied by Nazis. Due to strong opposition, Serbs were also killed with Jews. Nazis killed 100 Serbians against their one casualty. It lost 6.7 percent of the total population with one million casualties including 67,000 Jews. In 1944, it was liberated by Russian troops, but soon it distanced itself from Russia.

3. Nuremberg Trials - A Historical Landmark

Nuremberg was a former site of Hitler's propaganda victories. After the end of Nazi regime and the defeat of Germany, big Nazis were tried for crimes at Nuremberg.

At the time of trial, Nuremberg was considered as a voice for history because thousands of documents were assembled on the orders of the court for the scrutiny and investigation of the Third Reich. For investigation purpose, there was no parallel in history to that huge mass of documentation which was brought forward in Nuremberg (Immell, 2001, p.218).

4. Effect on International Law

Defendants were brought in the dock during the trials. After Hitler's death, Goering was the most important official who was alive in the Third Reich. So, he was the focus of prosecution.

No one can underestimate the effect of Nuremberg Trials against Nazis on international law. During a Genocide Convention of UNO in December 1948, many laws were formulated to consider genocide as a crime. Universal Declaration of Human Rights were included in International Law. An unwritten principle was created that it would be no excuse for any governmental official to follow the orders of his chief about a crime against humanity. Another effect

was that Collective punishments were considered as a war crime in fourth Geneva Convention.

5. The Legacy of Havoc and Destruction

Nazi legacy of destruction after WWII was very alarming. Casualties on such a wide scale with eighty million deaths, illness, starvation, destruction of dozens of cities, wastage of material resources for destructive motives, conversion of fertile land into wasteland and violation of elementary human rights was quite disastrous (Mandel, 1986, p.69).

Barbaric and violent treatment to life and effect on human minds, psychology and behavior was even worse.

6. Effected Jews

Nazis killed more than 33 percent of 15 million Jews of the world during the early period of Second World War. In Poland, heartland of Jewish culture, about 350,000 of the 3 million Jews were survived. Survivors sought refuge in other countries. Jacob Talman differentiated Holocaust from other massacres. He called it a remorselessly campaign of extermination with explicit planning and systematic execution (Gutman, 1984, p.237).

7. Rape Incidents

As the result of WWII caused by Nazism more than 2 million women and girls were raped. The severe effects on social psychology of women and girls as the result of rape crimes could be felt long after the end of Nazism. Even after the war, children and their mothers had to suffer abuse for many years.

Especially Soviets committed robberies and rapes in Yugoslavia, Romania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia (Moeller, 1997, p.41). German population was harshly treated. Incidents of murder and rape of Germans were even worse than the anticipation of Nazi propaganda (Schissler, 2001, p.93). The troops even received encouragement from their officers to terrorize and take re revenge from the Germans (iddiscombe, 1998, p.260). German women were raped by the Russian military men. It was estimated that about 10 million German women were raped (Heineman, 2003, p.81). Red Army raped about 1.9 million German girls and women (Beevor, 2002, p.410). Only in Berlin, one third women were raped. Substantial victims were raped in many times repeatedly.

Record was taken from the contemporary hospitals of Berlin. which indicated that Soviet military raped between 95,000 and 130,000 German women. Among these victims nearly 10 thousand women died. Most of them did suicide. More than 4 and half million Germans migrated towards West. Initially, Russians had no rule to control their troops but after 1947 attempts were made to stop robbery and rape by isolating troops from the native population. Not all Russian troops took part in raping, plundering and looting. Soviets denounced the foreign reports of abuse and brutality as false. All obnoxious activities were blamed on German bandits who were prisoners. Russians brutality was sometime justified based on German previous bad treatment toward Soviet population. These Russian activities were ignored by the East German Histories till the German unification but this is still ignored by the Russian histories. News about rape incidents were often rejected by Russians

as considered them the byproduct of war or the mere propaganda against Communism. There were reports of such brutal actions under the occupation of some other forces but majority was occurred under the Russian occupation. Rapes were committed by French forces in their occupation of Baden and Wurtemberg (Harrington, 2010, p.80).

The share of American army in raping and looting was also enough. Based on military record, it was estimated by Robert Lilly that, during 1942 to 1945, nearly 14 thousand rapes were committed by US troops in Germany, France and Britain.

8. Blot on Europe

When survivors of war were set free after the end of war, it was estimated that there were above 9 million DPs in Germany alone. All those displaced persons were kept in overcrowded camps or barracks administered by the United Nations' Refugee Relief Administration. Slowly and steadily, those DPs were dispersed and the last emigrant left the camp in 1952.

Such a huge number of displaced persons in DP camps and the violence in postwar Eastern Europe was a blot on the pages of European History (Wyman, 1998, pp.205-06).

9. Frightful Liberation

The process of liberation of millions of survivors was very frightful and bloody because their cities and hometowns were bombed. So, they were weak and dazed to comprehend the situation that who would survive and who would die after being set free (Hichcock, 2009, pp.367-68).

10. Largest Internal Migration

After the war ended, millions of people were displaced and Europe faced with mass deportations. Tidal waves of refugees were forcibly expelled or transferred because the borders were shifted. So, in recorded European History, it was the largest internal population migration (Siljak, 2001, pp.209-11).

It was estimated that the people who were expelled from Germany alone were numbered 12 million. Nearly 110,000 Japanese were imprisoned by US government and about 22,000 Japanese Canadians were interned by Canada after the Pearl Harbor attack by Japan.

11. Post-War Life as Nightmare

Nazism was ended but the violence and brutality due to its global ideologies continued for long period. The captivity and the pain of combat resulted in the lifetime of nightmare for many veterans in all armies.

Soldiers could not forget the horrible events of war. Many veterans become patients of nightmares. Post-traumatic stress syndrome was found in those patients who used to recall the past experiments. Recall of memories caused stress and more stress caused the syndrome. Veterans of war used to ask a question, "Why they are alive when their comrades died"?

12. New Syndrome

When survivors of Nazi camps were confronted by medical profession, a new research on their problems was started. A psychoanalyst William G. Neldrland, in 1961, found a syndrome. He named it Survivor Syndrome. Its symptoms were found not only in patients but in their family members too. Its symptoms were included the inability to work, fear of persecution and hatred to uniform policemen. Patients suffered marital problems, panic attacks, nightmares, disinterest in life and a fear of death.

The other symptoms of the syndrome were feeling of helplessness, guilt complex of having alive when others had died. It caused other diseases like neurological pains, peptic ulcers, aches in different body areas and morbid brooding, agitation, complete inertia and hypertension, etc. (Braham, 1988, p.46).

13. Backlash Effect

The primary intellectual effect if Nazism was that after the end of Nazism, for at least two generations, the use of Biology to influence or explain the issues of sociology remained discredited by the Nazi doctrines.

There are a few historical revisionists who attempt to present the events, actions or policies of Nazi era in a positive way and try to minimize the effect of Holocaust by their propaganda. These revisionists have links with neo-Nazis.

14. Conclusion

Some political parties had some traces of Nazi ideology in the late 1940's. Ban was imposed on some parties but groups of neo-Nazis were appeared in various countries like Hungary, France, Italy, Greece, Eastern & Western Germany and Baltic States. Their activities were against police, leftists, and immigrants. They chanted anti-Jewish slogans and desecrated cemeteries. After the reunification of Germany, the neo-Nazis achieved popularity. Although these groups are still present in various countries of Europe and America and they are dangerous for peace but these are not in the form of mass movement like Nazism in Germany. Nazism came to its fatal end by waging a war which engulfed millions of people. Impacts of Nazism were clearly perceived in Europe during and after the WWII. The policies and actions of Nazis affected almost all spheres of life. The gravest impact of Nazism was inflicting WWII in which almost every country of the World suffered losses. In whole human history, Second World War was the most horrible, destructive and bloodiest conflict in which the Germany was emerged as an impoverished, divided and beaten country. Nazi aggressive policies led to the deaths of tens of millions and the ruin of several states. The systematic mass murder of about 6 million Jews was the most tragic aspect of Nazism.

As the war ended, millions of people were homeless. Destructive havoc wreaked on human minds, psychology and behavior was even worse. Prisoners of war and displaced persons along with post-war anti-Semitic violence blotted the European History. The war-trodden people led the rest of their life as a nightmare in agony of painful memories.

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