



CHAPTER : 3

NAZISM AND THE RISE OF HITLER



POINTS OT REMEMBER:

- **The First World War (1914-1918)-** The first World War was fought between the **Central Powers** (Germany, Austria and Turkey) and **Allied Powers** (France, Britain and Russia).
- **Treaty of Versailles:** After the end of the First World War, Germany had to sign a harsh and humiliating treaty at Versailles with the Allied powers. Germany was demilitarized and it had to pay huge amount in compensation.
- **Weimer Republic:** After the defeat of Germany in First World War and abdication of the emperor, a democratic constitution with federal structure was set up in Germany. But, the Weimer Republic had to face **many problems:**
 - (i) It had signed the treaty at Versailles and hence it was held responsible accepting the humiliating provisions.
 - (ii) The Weimer Republic had to pay the war compensation which had crippled it financially.
 - (iii) The Weimer Republic had to face the revolutionary uprising of the Spartacist League. However, the uprising was crushed.
 - (iv) With changing situations in 1923, it printed paper currency recklessly. With too much printed money in circulation, the value of German currency fell and prices of goods soared. Thus, they had to face the hyperinflation.
 - (v) The Great Economic Depression (1929-32) further hit the German economy. Industrial production fell and unemployment level was very high.
 - (vi) Owing to some inherent defects viz. proportional representation, the Weimer Republic was fragile. People lost confidence in the

democratic parliamentary system due to constant political instability.

Hitler:

- Hitler was born in **Austria** in **1889**.
- He was in the German Army during First World War and earned medals for his bravery.
- He headed the **National Socialist German Workers' Party** which later came to be known as **Nazi Party**.
- During Great Economic Depression, Nazism became a mass movement. By 1932, Hitler's party had become the largest party with 37 percent votes.
- On 30 January 1933, Hitler became the **Chancellor**, the highest position in the cabinet of ministers.
- On 28 February, 1933, Hitler indefinitely suspended civic rights like freedom of speech, press and assembly through **The Fire Decree**.
- On 3 March 1933, the famous Enabling Act was passed. It gave Hitler all powers to sideline parliament and rule by decree. Thus, dictatorship was established in Germany.
- He pulled out of the League of Nations in 1933.
- He reoccupied the Rhineland in 1936.
- He integrated Austria and Germany in 1938 under the slogan, ***One people, One empire, and One leader.***
- He invaded **Poland in September, 1939**. This started a war with France and England and the Second World War.
- In September 1940, a Tripartite Pact was signed between Germany, Italy and Japan. They were known as **Axis powers**.
- **Allied powers** included France, Britain, USA, Soviet Union etc.
- He attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941.
- The Second World War ended in May 1945. Allied powers won the war.

The Nazi Worldview

- **Racial supremacy:** Hitler considered Nordic German Aryans at the top while Jews were located at the bottom.
- **Concept of *Lebensraum*:** It means living space. Hitler believed that new territories had to be acquired for settlement of the German people.
- The Nazis believed in the **strong leadership**. Hitler adopted the title **Der Fuhrer** meaning 'the leader'. Slogan like '**Adolf Hitler is Germany, Germany is Adolf Hitler**' was common.
- **National Socialism:** The Nazis criticized both capitalism and socialism but they espoused a philosophy called National Socialism.

- **Youth in Nazi Germany:**

Hitler felt that a strong Nazi society could be established only by teaching children Nazi ideology. He took following steps to achieve this:

- (i) Jews were dismissed from the schools.
- (ii) Children were segregated. Germans and Jews could not sit together. Subsequently, 'undesirable children'- Jews, the physically handicapped, Gypsies- were thrown out of schools.
- (iii) School textbooks were rewritten. Racial science was introduced to justify Nazi ideas of race.
- (iv) Children were taught to be loyal and submissive, hate Jews and worship Hitler.
- (v) Youth organizations were made responsible for educating German youth in the 'spirit of National Socialism'.
- (vi) After a period of rigorous ideological and physical training, they joined the Labour Service. Then they have to serve in the armed forces and enter one of the Nazi organizations.

- **Women in the Nazi Germany:**

- (i) Girls were taught to become good mothers and rear pure-blooded Aryan children.
- (ii) Girls had to maintain the purity of the race, distance themselves from Jews, look after the home, and teach their children Nazi ideology.

- (iii) Hitler said: 'In my state the mother is the most important citizen. But, in Nazi Germany all mothers were not treated equally.
- (iv) Women who bore racially undesirable children were punished and those who produced racially desirable children were awarded.
- (v) Women were encouraged to produce many children.
- (vi) 'Aryan' women who deviated from the prescribed code of conduct were publically condemned, and severely punished.



- **Propaganda:**

The Nazi regime used propaganda to achieve their goals. These included the following:

- (i) Mass killing were termed ***special treatment, final solution*** (for the Jews), ***euthanasia*** (for the disabled), ***selections and disinfections***.
 - (ii) ***'Evacuation'*** meant deporting people to gas chambers.
 - (iii) Media was carefully used to win support for the regime and popularize its worldview.
 - (iv) Nazi ideas were spread through **visual images, films, radio, posters, catchy slogans and leaflets**.
 - (v) Propaganda films were made to create hatred for Jews. The most infamous film was ***The Eternal Jew***.
 - (vi) Orthodox Jews were stereotyped and marked.
 - (vii) Through propaganda they tried to win the support of all the sections of population by suggesting that Nazis alone could solve all their problems.
- **Holocaust:** The mass killing of millions of Jews by the Nazi regime is known as the holocaust. Jews were taken to the gas chambers and were killed.

QUESTIONS

Very Short Answer Type questions (1 Mark each)

1. Name the countries of Allied powers.
2. Which Republic was born in Germany after the First World War?
3. What is name of the German Parliament?

4. Which peace treaty was signed by Germany after the WW 1?
5. When and where was Hitler born?
6. Mention the countries that were in Axis powers.
7. When was the Great Economic Depression Started?
8. What was suspended by Hitler through the Fire Decree?
9. Which Act gave Hitler all powers to sideline Parliament and rule by decree?
10. What was the name of secret state police during Nazi regime?
11. Which US base was bombed by the Japan during the Second World War?
12. When the Second World War ended?
13. Which country dropped atom bomb on Hiroshima in Japan?
14. Who were the main targets of mass killing during Nazi regime?
15. What was the concept of *Lebensraum*?
16. What was holocaust?



Short/Long Questions (3/5 Marks)

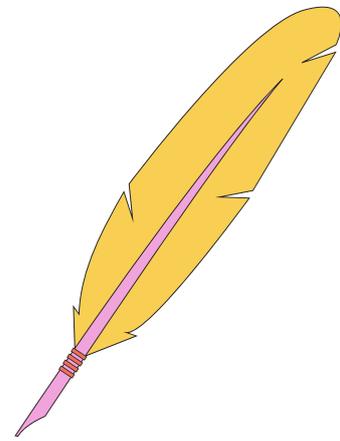
1. Mention the provisions of the treaty of Versailles?
2. Describe the problems faced by the Weimer Republic.
3. Explain the peculiar features of Nazi worldview.
4. How were the youth educated during Nazi regime?
5. What was the role of women during Nazi society?
6. What was the ways of Nazi propaganda?
7. Why did Nazism become a mass movement during the Great Depression?
8. How were the Jews portrayed in Nazi propaganda?

ANSWERS

Very Short Answer Type Questions (1 Mark each)

1. France, Britain, USA etc.
2. Weimer Republic
3. Reichstag
4. Treaty of Versailles
5. 1889, Austria
6. Germany, Italy, Japan

7. 1929-32
8. Civic rights like freedom of speech, press and assembly.
9. The Enabling Act of 1933
10. Gestapo
11. Pearl Harbor
12. May 1945
13. USA
14. Jews
15. Living space or the new territories to be acquired for settlement.
16. Mass killing of Jews by the Nazi regime.



Short/Long Type Questions (3/5 Marks)

1. (i) Germany was held responsible for the war and damages.
(ii) Germany was demilitarized.
(iii) It was forced to pay compensation amounting to £ 6 billion.
(iv) Resource-rich Rhineland was occupied by the Allied powers.
(v) Germany lost its overseas colonies, a tenth of its population, 13 percent of its territories, 75 per cent of its iron and 26 per cent of its coal to France.
2. See the key points.
3. See the key points.
4. See the key points.
5. See the key points.
6. See the key points.
7. Following are the reasons for the growing popularity of Nazism during the Great Depression:
 - (i) German economy was worst hit by the economic crisis because short-term loans were withdrawn when the Wall Street Exchange crashed in 1929.
 - (ii) Owing to this, industrial production fell; workers lost their jobs or paid reduced wages. The number of unemployed rose phenomenally high.

- (iii) The economic crisis created deep anxieties and fears in people. The middle classes, small businessmen, the self-employed, retailers were the worst hit. These sections of society were filled with the fear of being reduced to the ranks of the working class or of being unemployed.
- (iv) In such a situation Nazi propaganda stirred hopes of a better future.
- (v) Hitler himself was a great speaker. He promised to build a strong nation, undo the injustices of the Versailles treaty and employment to the people.
- (vi) Hitler was projected as a messiah, a savior, as someone who had arrived to deliver people from their distress.
- (viii) Thus, owing to economic and political crises, and coupled with Nazi propaganda, Nazism became a mass movement.

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- (i) Jews had been stereotyped as killers of Christ and usurers.
- (ii) They were shown with flowing beards wearing kaftans.
- (iii) They were referred to as vermin, rats and pests.
- (iv) Their movements were compared to those of rodents.
- (v) Propaganda films were made to create hatred for Jews. The Most infamous film was *The Eternal Jew*.

