

Revision Notes

Class – 9 Social Science (History)

Chapter 3 – Nazism and The Rise of Hitler

- Otto Frank was at the pinnacle of his success. As a businessman, he had earned a lot. He was also living a happy life with his wife and two of his daughters. But fate was very cruel. Hitler gradually rose to the power in initial part of the 20th century. But clever Frank was foresighted. He also knew inside of him about what was to come. So he shifted from Germany to Amsterdam so as to escape from the madness of Hitler. He also tried hard to send his family to the U.S, so as to leave that hell once and for all. Later when Hitler became too much powerful, the Nazi soldiers separated the once happy family & transported them to the various concentration camps. Imagine a father, who is not being able to look his two lovely daughters & his beloved wife. Every day he had hoped to see his family alive. That hope never came. In 1945 the father, Otto Frank, got to hear the news that he so desperately did not want to hear.
- How did Hitler became so much powerful? Why did the Germans support him in the very beginning? What happened during the time of Hitler? This chapter is devoted to all of these topics.

Germany's Defeat In The World War I

- Germany entered the world war on 1st August, 1914. Its aim was to dominate over Russia and France, the most powerful countries on either side of Germany.
- It first attacked Belgium. After this move of Germany, Great Britain attacked Germany.
- Later as the U.S joined the Allied forces, Germany was easily defeated by them.
- First, the failure of Schlieffen plan and then the weakness of Kaiser Wilhelm II made general public and the army lose respect for him.

- In 1918 Wilhelm abdicated the throne.
- The Social Democratic Party & the Independent Social Democratic party convened a National Congress. Ultimately, a weak coalition government was made.

Paris Peace Conference & the Treaty of Versailles

- Meanwhile, in the Paris, the Allies met in basically to take revenge (politically and economically) upon the defeated Central Powers.
- The main outcome of the peace conference was the Treaty of Versailles (1919). This treaty was signed with Germany. The terms of this treaty put the blame of all the destruction & damages squarely on Germany. Because of this treaty -
- Germany had to lose its overseas colonies. Nearly 13% of the German territory was given away to various countries who directly or indirectly supported the Allies countries.
- France also grabbed Alsace and Lorraine which were parts of Germany.
- Germany's control over Poland was also taken away. Poland now had become a sovereign country again.
- As reparation, Germany had to shell out \$33 billion.
- Germany's military prowess was more or less neutralised -especially in Rhineland.
- France and Belgium initially grabbed a significant part of Rhineland. Later when Germany failed to pay reparations the French and Belgian army occupied the Ruhr region as well.

After-Effects of The Treaty

- It was a huge embarrassing blow to the psychology of the proud Germans. They had to undergo extreme humiliation due to this treaty.

- The poor Weimar Republic - which had nothing to do with the war or the treaty - became the punching bag of the Germans. They felt that it was because of the weakness of republic government that the Allies had dared to impose such heavy penalties.
- The conservative nationalistic people in Germany also abused the supporters of the Weimar Republic and turned against them. The supporters of it included mainly the Socialists. The Democrats and the Catholics also bore the brunt.
- As aggressive nationalism reared its head, so did the tendency to glorify the war and trench life.

Radical Elements In The Political Sphere

- As Weimar Republic came to existence so did the radical group called the Spartacist League. The group was impressed by the Soviets & wanted to imitate their style of governance. Initially, Weimar Republic, with the help of the Free Corps, stunted the rise of Spartacist League.
- As you can imagine from their love of the Soviet-style of governance, the league was Communist in spirit. Later it formed the Communist Party of Germany.

The Economic Fallout

- Germany also had to pay the Allies an astronomical sum of money as reparations. On the other hand, during the war, it borrowed money & resources as well. So it was in great debt.
- France occupied the Ruhr upon non-payment of reparations.
- To counter the growing economic stress, Germany also printed a large amount of paper currency. This led to shocking inflation.
- Although America tried to bail Germany out, after the economic depression of 1929, America had stopped giving loans to Germany.
- German industrial output also was at an all-time low. As many as 6 million Germans became unemployed.

The Emergence of Hitler

- As the German economy was deteriorating day by day due to of unfair ruling in the peace treaty, Hitler was seething with anger. Toxic nationalistic sentiment had filled him to the core.
- Who was Hitler as a man before Hitler became 'the' Hitler? He was son of a customs official. He lived in Austria in his early days. Hitler also wanted to be an artist but was repeatedly rejected by the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna. (Imagine if he had been admitted to the Academy, the History could have been a lot less bloody).
- In 1913, Hitler then came to Munich and joined the 16th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment.
- An aimless Hitler had found refuge in war. He really loved the discipline and the way of life that he experienced while he was in the army.
- After his service, Hitler also joined German Workers Party. That was in the year 1919 - the year when the Versailles Treaty was also signed. He then became the topmost leader of the party and had renamed it the National Socialist German Workers' Party. This same party was then transformed into the Nazi Party.

The Promise For A Better Country

- The morale of the German people was at the very bottom after the treaty. Hitler, through his Nazi Party, had promised the Germans the better future once he would come to power. The people started dreaming - just like a drowning ant would have clutch a straw. By 1932, Hitler's nazi Party got 37% votes and became a majority party in the German Parliament. Ultimately on 30th January 1933, Hitler became the Chancellor and The Dictatorship Began.
- Hitler then intoxicated the conservatives & the general population with his promises.
- When a mysterious fire broke out in the German Parliament building, Hitler used this as an opportunity for the murder of freedom speech and press. He also imposed heavy restrictions on the right to assemble.

- The Communists were then condemned to the concentration camps.
- And came the Enabling Act of 1933. The Nazi party had become the one and only party in Germany. Every other party & organisation was termed illegal. The Storm Troopers, the Gestapo, the Surveillance Force along with regular police - were given a free hand to locate the 'enemies' & send them to the concentration camps.
- Politically speaking, Hitler did manage to reverse the embarrassing rulings of the peace treaty of 1919 (but at what cost?). He got back the Rhine area. Czechoslovakia and Sudetenland were also annexed by Germany. Hitler then attacked Poland. In many countries, Nazi stooges were also installed. By 1940 Hitler became extremely powerful.

Racism In Hitler

- “All human culture, the results of art, science, & technology that we see before us today, are almost exclusively the product of Aryans” - Hitler writes in Mein Kampf. From this, you can imagine how blind Hitler was in his love for so-called pure race.
- Hitler was against the union of the Aryans & other races as that would then produce inferior sons and daughters.
- Hitler was also a believer in the racial hierarchy. The Aryans were normally considered to be the most superior & the Jews were considered to be the most inferior. All other races were between these two extremes.
- His blind hatred against Jews led to the killing of 6 billion Jews. Killing is a very understatement here. The Jews were tortured, gassed, orphaned, widowed, separated & forced to live a life of hiding and constant fear. This mass killing of the Jews is called in history as the Holocaust.
- We must note that Hitler killed countless people in Poland and in Russia as well. In fact, even the German people who were considered unfit were treated very harshly.

- **Holocaust**

Hitler's hatred for Jews was deadly as a forest fire which showed no sign of stopping. After Hitler became the dictator of Germany, he then pushed forth his theory of the Aryan supremacy. He believed that blue-eyed Nordic Aryans were at top of racial hierarchy & the Jews were at the bottom. He associated spiritual significance with the killing of Jews. Thus, with the help of his police force, the SA unit & the Gestapo, he systematically located and sent the Jews to concentration camps and butchered them. This systematic killing of the Jew community by Hitler is known as the Holocaust.