Nazism and Rise of Hitler – Summary

BIRTH OF THE WEIMER REPUBLIC:

- Germany fought the First World War (1914–1918) along with the Austrian empire against the Allies (England, France and Russia).
- Germany initially made gains by occupying France and Belgium. However, the Allies won defeating Germany and the Central Powers in 1918.
- A National Assembly met at Weimer and established a democratic constitution with a federal structure. The republic, however, was not received well by its own people largely because of the terms it was forced to accept after Germany’s defeat at the end of the First World War.
- Many Germans held the new Weimer Republic responsible for not only the defeat in the war but the disgrace at Versailles.

The Effects of the War-

- The war had a devastating impact on the entire continent both psychologically and financially. From being a creditor, Europe became a debtor.
- The supporters of the Weimer Republic were criticized and became easy targets of attack in the conservative nationalist circles.
- Soldiers came to be placed above civilians.
- Aggressive war propaganda and national honour became important.

Political Radicalism and Economic Crisis:

- The birth of the Weimer Republic coincided with the uprising of the Spartacist League on the pattern of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. The Spartacists founded the Communist Party of Germany.
- Political radicalisation was heightened by the economic crisis of 1923. As Germany refused to pay the war reparations, France occupied its leading industrial area, Ruhr.
- Germany retaliated with printing paper currency recklessly. The value of the mark collapsed. Prices of goods soared. There was hyperinflation.

The Years of Depression

- 1924–1928 saw some stability, yet it was built on sand. Germany was totally dependent on short term loans, largely from the USA.
- This support was withdrawn with the crash in 1929 of the Wall Street Exchange. German economy was hit badly.
- The middle class and working population was filled with the fear of proletarianization.

The Weimer Republic had some inherent defects:

1. Proportional Representation
2. Article 48 which gave the President the powers to impose emergency, suspend civil rights and rule by decree.
HITLER’S RISE TO POWER

- Hitler was born in Austria in 1889.
- He earned many medals for bravery in the First World War.
- The German defeat horrified him. The Treaty of Versailles made him furious.
- He joined the German Workers Party and renamed it National Socialist German Workers’ Party.
- This later came to be known as the Nazi Party.
- Nazism became a mass movement only during the Great Depression.
- The Nazi propaganda stirred hopes of a better future.
- Hitler was a powerful and effective speaker. He promised the people a strong nation where all would get employment.

The Destruction of Democracy —

- Hitler achieved the highest position in the cabinet of ministries on 30 January 1933. Hitler now set out to dismantle the structures of democratic rule.
- The Fire Decree of 28 February 1933 suspended civic rights like freedom of speech, press and assembly.
- Communists were hurriedly packed off to new established concentration camps. All political parties were banned.
- Special surveillance and security forces were created to control the people and rule with impunity.

Reconstruction:

- Economist Hjalmar Schacht was given the responsibility of economic recovery. This was to be done through a state funded work creation programme.
- Hitler pulled out of the League of Nations in 1933, reoccupied the Rhineland in 1936 and integrated Austria and Germany in 1938 under the slogan: One people, one empire, one leader. He then took Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia. Hitler had the unspoken support of England.
- Hitler did not stop here. He chose war as a way out of the Economic Crisis. Resources were to be accumulated through expansion of territory.
- In September 1940 Germany invaded Poland. This started a war with France and England. USA resisted involvement in the war.
- But when Japan extended its support to Hitler and bombarded Pearl Harbour, the USA entered the war.
- The war ended in 1945 with Hitler’s defeat and the US bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan.

THE NAZI WORLD VIEW

- According to Nazi ideology there was no equality between people, but only racial hierarchy.
- The Nazis quickly began to implement their dream of creating an exclusive racial community of pure Germans by physically eliminating all those who were considered undesirable. They wanted a society of pure and healthy Nordic Aryans. Jews, gypsies, blacks, Russian, Poles, even certain Germans and abnormal were considered undesirable.
The other aspect of Hitler’s ideology related to the geopolitical concept of Lebensraum, or living space.

Jews were the worst sufferers in Nazi Germany. Hitler believed in pseudoscientific theories of race which said that conversion was no solution to the Jewish problem. It had to be solved through their total elimination. From 1933–1938 — the Nazis terrorised, pauperised and segregated the Jews, compelling them to leave the country. The next phase, 1939–1945, aimed at concentrating them in certain areas and then killing them in gas chambers in Poland.

The Racial Utopia
- Genocide and war became two sides of the same coin.
- Occupied Poland was divided. Poles were forced to leave their homes and properties behind to be occupied by ethnic Germans brought in from occupied Europe.

YOUTH IN NAZI GERMANY
- Hitler felt that a strong Nazi society could be established by teaching Nazi ideology to children. All schools were given German teachers.
- Children were divided into two groups — desirable and undesirable. Textbooks were rewritten, functions of sports in schools was to nurture the spirit of violence and aggression.
- Ten-year olds had to enter Jungvolk. At 14, all boys joined ‘Hitler Youth’, they joined the Labour Service at 18.

The Nazi Cult of Motherhood —
- Women were told to be good mothers and rear pure blooded Aryan children. They were encouraged to produce many children.

The Art of Propaganda —
- The Nazi regime used language and media with care and often to great effect. They used films, pictures, radio, posters, etc. to spread hatred for Jews.

- Crimes against Humanity — People saw the world through Nazi eyes and spoke the Nazi language. At times even the Jews began to believe in the Nazi stereotypes about them.

Knowledge about the Holocaust —
- It was only after the war ended that people came to know about what had happened.
- The Jews wanted the world to know about the atrocities and sufferings they had endured during the Nazi killing operations. They just wanted to live, even if it was for a few hours, to tell the world about the Holocaust.
1. Describe what happened to Germany after its defeat in the First World War.
Ans.
- World War I, ended with the Allies defeating Germany and the Central powers in November 1918.
- The Peace Treaty at Versailles with the Allies was a harsh and humiliating treaty. Germany lost its overseas colonies, a tenth of its population, 13 per cent of its territories, 75 per cent of its iron and 26 per cent of its coal to France, Poland, Denmark and Lithuania.
- The Allied Powers demilitarized Germany to weaken its power. Germany was forced to pay compensation amounting to 6 billion.

2. Give reasons for Hitler's rise to power.
Ans
(i) The economic crisis: Germany had to face a great economic crisis after the First World War. Many soldiers were no longer in service, so they became unemployed. Trade and commerce was ruined. Germany was in the grip of unemployment and starvation.
(ii) Exploiting the mentality of the Germans: The Germans had no faith in democracy. It was against their culture and tradition. They at once gave their support to a strong man like Hitler who could transfer their dreams into reality.
(iii) Making the best use of his personal qualities: Hitler was a powerful orator, an able Organiser.

3. Explain the following terms: (a) A Racial State (b) Propaganda (c) Jungvolk
Ans
(a) Racial State: Once in power, the Nazis quickly began to implement their dream of creating an exclusive racial community of pure Germans by physically eliminating all those who were seen as 'undesirable' in the extended empire. Nazis only wanted a society of 'pure and healthy Nordic Aryans'. They alone were considered ‘desirable’.
(b) Propaganda: The Nazi regime used language and media with care and often to great effect. They used films, pictures, radio, posters, etc. to spread hatred for the Jews. Propaganda is a specific type of message directly aimed at influencing the opinion of people through the use of posters, films, speeches etc.
(c) Jungvolk: These were Nazi youth groups for children below 14 years of age. Youth organisations were made responsible for educating German youth in 'the spirit of National Socialism’. Ten-year olds had to enter Jungvolk. At 14, all boys had to join the Nazi youth organisation.

4. Explain the role of women in Hitler's Germany.
Ans.
1. According to Hitler’s ideology, women were radically different from men.
2. The democratic idea of equal rights for men and women was wrong and would destroy society.
3. While boys were taught to be aggressive, masculine and steel-hearted, girls were told that they had to become good mothers and rear pure blooded Aryan children.

5. Explain the main views of Hitler as expressed in his book 'Mein Kampf'.
Ans.
Adolf Hitler wrote a book entitled ‘Mein Kampf’. Its literal meaning is ‘My Struggle’. This book expresses some of the most monstrous ideas of the Nazi movement.
1. He glorified the use of force and brutalities and the rule by a great leader and ridiculed internationalism, peace and democracy.
2. These principles were accepted by all followers of Hitler.
3. Throughout Germany an atmosphere of terror was created. Hitler glorified violent nationalism and extolled war.
4. He wrote this book at the age of 35, it is an autobiographical book; in this book Hitler has poured out his hatred for democracy.
5. He also revealed his bitterness over German surrender in World War I.

6. Why is Nazism considered a calamity not only for Germany but for the entire Europe?
Ans.
Nazi ideology specified that there was racial hierarchy and no equality between people.
1. The blond, blue eyed Nordic German Aryans were at the top, while the Jews were located somewhere on the lowest rung of the ladder.
2. The number of people killed by Nazi Germany was 6 million Jews, 200,000 Gypsies, 1 million Polish civilians, 70,000 Germans.
3. Nazism glorified the use of force and brutality. It ridiculed internationalism, peace and democracy.
4. Nazi Germany became the most dreaded criminal state. Hitler chose war as the way out of approaching the economic crisis.
5. Germany invaded Poland. This started a war with France and England in September 1940.

7. What happened in schools under Nazism?
Ans.
1. All schools were cleansed and purified.
2. This meant that teachers who were Jews or seen as politically unreliable were dismissed.
3. Children were segregated — Germans and Jews could not sit together or play together.
4. Later on the undesirable children — the Jews, the physically handicapped, gypsies — were thrown out of schools

8. 'In my state the mother is the most important citizen.' Discuss this statement made by Hitler.
Ans.
1. Though Hitler said that in my state the mother is the most important citizen, it was not true.
2. All mothers were not treated equally. Women who bore racially desirable children were awarded, while those who bore racially undesirable children were punished.
3. Women who bore ‘desirable’ children were entitled to privileges and rewards. They were given special treatment in hospitals and concessions in shops and on theatre tickets and railway fares.
LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Give reasons why the Weimar Republic failed to solve the problems of Germany.
   Ans.
   
   1. The birth of the Weimar Republic coincided with the uprising of the Spartacus League on the pattern of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.
   2. The Democrats, Socialists and Catholics opposed it. They met in Weimar to give shape to a democratic republic.
   3. The republic was not received well by its own people largely because of the terms it was forced to accept after Germany’s defeat at the end of the First World War.
   4. Many Germans held the new Weimar Republic responsible for not only the defeat in the war but the disgrace at Versailles. This republic was finally crippled by being forced to pay compensation. Soon after the economic crisis hit Germany in 1923, the value of German mark fell considerably.
   5. The Weimar Republic had to face hyperinflation. Then came the Wall Street exchange crash in 1929.

2. Why was Nazism considered to be a negation of both democracy and socialism?
   Ans.
   
   1. After assuming power on 30th January 1933, Hitler set out to dismantle the structure of democratic rule.
   2. The Fire decree of 28th February 1933 indefinitely suspended civic rights like freedom of speech, press and assembly that had been guaranteed by the Weimar constitution.
   3. The repression of the Jews and Communists was severe. On 3rd March 1933, the famous Enabling Act was passed. This Act established dictatorship in Germany.
      (a) This Act gave Adolf Hitler all political and administrative power to sideline the German parliament.
      (b) All political parties of Germany and trade unions were banned except for the Nazi party and its affiliates. The state established complete control over the economy, media, army and judiciary.
      (c) Special surveillance and security forces besides the existing regular police force, the Gestapo, the SD plus the extra constitutional powers of these newly constructed forces gave the Nazi state its reputation of being the most dreaded criminal state.

3. Describe Hitler’s rise to power with reference to his
   (a) Policy towards the youth (b) His personal qualities (c) Development of the art of propaganda
   Ans.

   (a) Policy towards youth: Hitler was fanatically interested in the youth of the country. He felt that a strong Nazi society could be established only by teaching children the Nazi ideology. This required a control over the child, both inside and outside school. Good German children were subjected to a process of Nazi schooling, a prolonged period of ideological training. Youth organisations were made responsible for educating the German youth in ‘the spirit of National Socialism’. Ten-year olds had to enter Jungvolk. At 14, all boys had to join the Nazi youth organisation.
(b) His personal qualities: Hitler was a tireless worker and an able organiser. He had a charming personality. He was an effective orator. Bitterly anti-Communist, he promised to save the country from the onslaught of communism. He won over the nationalists by promising to vindicate national honour by repudiating the Treaty of Versailles.

(c) Development of the art of propaganda:
The Nazi regime used language and media with care, and often to great effect. The terms they coined to describe their various practices were not only deceptive, they were chilling. Nazis never used words "kill" or "murder" in their official communications.


Ans.

1. Once in power, the Nazis quickly began to implement their dream of creating an exclusive racial community of pure Germans by physically eliminating all those who were seen as "undesirable" in the extended empire were mentally or physically unfit Germans, Gypsies, blacks, Russians, Poles.

2. But Jews remained the worst sufferers in Nazi Germany. They were stereotyped as 'killers of Christ and usurers'.

3. Until medieval times, Jews were barred from owning land. They survived mainly through trade and moneylending. They lived in separately marked areas called 'ghettos'.

4. They were often persecuted through periodic organised violence and expulsion from land.

5. All this had a precursor in the traditional Christian hostility towards Jews for being the killers of Christ. However, Hitler's hatred of the Jews was based on pseudo-scientific theories of race, which held that conversion was no solution to 'the Jewish problem'. It could be solved only through their total elimination.

HOTS:

1. Describe the main provisions of Treaty of Versailles.

Ans.

The Treaty of Versailles was harsh and humiliating peace for the Germans.

(i) Germany lost all its overseas colonies, a tenth of its population.

(ii) 13 per cent of its territories, 75 per cent of its iron and 26 per cent of its coal to France.

(iii) Germany was demilitarised to weaken its power.

(iv) The war guilt clause held Germany responsible for war and damages the Allied countries suffered. It was forced to pay a compensation amounting to £6 billion.

(v) The Allied forces occupied the resource rich Rhineland till the 1920s.

2. How did the ordinary Germans react to Nazism?

Ans.

1. Many saw the world through Nazi eyes and spoke their mind in Nazi language.

2. They felt hatred and anger even against someone they thought who looked like a Jew.

3. They reported against suspected Jews and marked their houses.
4. They believed Nazism would make them prosperous and happy. The large numbers of Germans were passive onlookers, too scared to act, to differ or protest.

3. From whom did Hitler borrow his racist ideology? Explain.
   Ans.
   1. Hitler borrowed his racist ideology from thinkers like Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer.
   2. Darwin was a natural scientist who tried to explain the creation of plants and animals through the concept of evolution and natural selection.
   3. Herbert Spencer later on added the idea of survival of the fittest. According to this idea, only those species survived on earth that could adapt themselves to changing climatic conditions.
   4. Darwin never advocated human intervention in what he thought was a purely natural process of selection.
   5. However, his ideas were used by racist thinkers and politicians to justify imperial rule over conquered peoples.
Nazism and Rise of Hitler - MCQ

1. Which of the following can best define Nazism?
   (a) Hitler’s determination to make Germany a great nation
   (b) Extermination of Jews
   (c) A system, a structure of ideas about the world and politics
   (d) Hitler’s ambition of conquering the world

2. Allied Powers in World War II
   (a) Germany, Italy, Japan
   (b) Germany, Italy, Turkey
   (c) UK, France, Italy
   (d) UK, France, USSR, USA

3. Which nations were the Axis powers during World War II?
   (a) UK, France, USA, USSR
   (b) UK, France, Japan
   (c) Germany, Italy, Japan
   (d) Germany, France, UK

4. The International War Tribunal was set up in
   (a) Vienna
   (b) Munich
   (c) Nuremberg
   (d) Auschwitz

5. World War II began with German invasion of
   (a) Poland
   (b) Belgium
   (c) Austria
   (d) Czechoslovakia

6. Which among the following was the single most important factor in the victory of Allied powers in World War II?
   (a) Alliance of England, France and Russia
   (b) US entry in 1917
   (c) Russian Revolution of 1917
   (d) Axis Powers

7. Who among the given were called "November Criminals"?
   (a) Bolsheviks
   (b) Jews
   (c) Nazis
   (d) Socialists, Catholics and Democrats

8. Who were the 'desirables'?
   (a) Nordic German Aryans
   (b) Jews
9. Who among the following topped the list of undesirables’?
(a) Blacks
(b) Jews
(c) Gypsies
(d) Nordic Aryans

10. Which of the given parties came to be known as Nazi Party?
(a) German Workers Party
(b) Socialist Democratic Party
(c) National Socialist German Workers Party
(d) Socialist Party

11. German defeat in World War I
(a) led to the establishment of the Weimer Republic
(b) adoption of declaration of rights of man and citizens
(c) establishment of Nazi rule
(d) restoration of monarchy

12. What was not a factor in the rise of Hitler?
(a) Disgrace at Versailles
(b) Nazi propaganda and Hitler’s charismatic leadership
(c) Years of Depression and Economic crisis
(d) Weimer Republic

13. Which of the following was the treaty signed by Germany after its defeat in World War I?
(a) Treaty of Paris
(b) Treaty of Versailles
(c) Brest Litovsk
(d) Dawes Plan

14. Which of the following was the immediate factor for the Great Depression (1929-1932)?
(a) Collapse of Wall Street Exchange
(b) Financial Impact of World War I
(c) Fall in US exports
(d) Collapse of banks

15. Which of the following was not a feature of the new Nazi style of politics?
(a) Massive rallies
(b) Ritualized applause
(c) Red banners with Swastika
(d) Not so powerful speeches of Hitler

16. Hitler’s ideas of racialism were based on which of the following thinkers
(a) Aristotle
(b) Pluto
(c) Charles Darwin
(d) Rousseau
17. Which was not a feature of Jew stereotypes?
(a) Weak and degenerate
(b) Vermin and rats
(c) Foreign agents
(d) Generous and charitable

18. Which of the following was not a part of Hitler’s policies to exclude Jews?
(a) Exclusion
(b) Ghettoisation
(c) Assimilation
(d) Annihilation

19. What was Jungvolk?
(a) Nazi youth group for children below 14 years
(b) Nazi youth group for children above 14 years
(c) It was the other name for Youth League
(d) It referred to the undesirable German children

20. Which of the following was the most feared security force of the Nazi State?
(a) Storm Troopers (SA)
(b) Protection Squads (SS)
(c) Gestapo
(d) Security Service

21. Hitler’s world view was based on the concept of
(a) Charles Darwin
(b) Herbert Spence
(c) Lebensraum
(d) One nation, one empire and one leader

22. Which of the following was not true of Nazi State and women?
(a) Equal rights for men and women
(b) Women were socially different from men
(c) All mothers were not treated equally
(d) They had to bearers of Aryan culture and race

23. Which of the following is not true of ordinary people in Nazi Germany?
(a) Majority of Germans were passive onlookers
(b) They were scared to act, to differ, to protest
(c) Majority genuinely believed Nazism would bring prosperity and well-being
(d) Every German was a Nazi

Answers:
1. (c) 2. (d) 3. (c) 4. (c) 5. (a)
6. (b) 7. (d) 8. (a) 9. (b) 10. (c)
11. (a) 12. (d) 13. (b) 14. (a) 15. (d)
16. (c) 17. (d) 18. (c) 19. (a) 20. (c)
21. (c) 22. (a) 23. (d).