

## Describe the problems faced by the Weimer Republic.

It faced many problems right since its birth. These were as follows:

- The Republic was forced to sign a humiliating Treaty of Versailles. Germans held the Weimar Republic responsible for not only the defeat in the war but the disgrace at Versailles. It carried the burden of war guilt and national humiliation.
- The Republic was financially crippled by being forced to pay war compensation.
- Birth of Weimar Republic coincided with different revolutionary uprisings.
- Political radicalisation was heightened by the economic crisis, which created deep anxieties and fears in people.
- The Weimar constitution had some inherent defects, such as:
  - \_ Provision of proportional representation made achievement of a majority by any one party a near impossible task.
  - \_ President had the powers to impose emergency, suspend civil rights and rule by decree.

All these provisions led to instability in Germany.

## Discuss why Nazism became popular in Germany in 1930?

The principal causes responsible for the rise of Nazism in Germany can be summed up as follows:

- **Discontent due to the treaty of Versailles:** The treaty had imposed many unjust conditions on Germany. It was forced to accept them under the threat of aggression. But “nevertheless” serious discontent was brewing.
- **Political Conditions:** Although Germany had become a republic, the vested interests represented by the monarchy, the industrialists, big landowners and army offices could not be crushed out. These anti-republic forces began to secretly align with the Nazis.
- **Economic Crisis:** In the late 1920s, Germany was in the grip of the worst ever economic crises. The Government failed to resolve this crisis. Hitler made promises to the people and attracted strong faith.

- ***Threat of Communism:*** Communism had taken roots in Russia, and was well poised to spread to other countries. Hitler warned his countrymen against the danger and exposed the living conditions in a communist state. Anticommunism feelings favoured the Nazis.
- ***Exploitation of German Mentality:*** The Germans had no faith in democracy as it was against their culture and traditions. They preferred glory and prestige to liberty and freedom. Hitler promised what the Germans wanted.
- ***Party Strifes:*** The period from 1919 to 1933 was a period of party strife in the history of German Republic. Each party tried to gain power. Political situation became unstable and uncertain.
- ***Contribution of Hitler:*** Hitler was very influential, charming, a first-rate orator, a resourceful person, tireless worker and an able organizer. Through a tactful use of political intrigues, Hitler was appointed the Chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933. This gave him the opportunity he needed to consolidate the control of his party.

### What were the peculiar features of Nazi thinking?

The principal features of Nazism were as follows:

- Nazism took the form of organised barbarism. Brutality was used to establish Nazism.
- Hitler glorified the use of force and brutality.
- Hitler expounded the theory of superiority of the original German race. He extolled them to rise and rule the world.
- The German Jews were held responsible for all the ills that Germany suffered from. Jews were systematically exterminated.
- All types of parliamentary institutions were done away with.
- Nazis glorified the rule of great leader and establishment of an autocratic totalitarian state.
- Nazis glorified violent nationalism and extolled war. They advocate a policy of global expansion.
- According to the Nazi philosophy, 'people exist for the state, rather than the state for the people'.

**Explain why Nazi propaganda was effective in creating a hatred for Jews.**

The Nazi Party considered the Jews the worst race on the earth, and hence the Nazis felt duty bound to eliminate the Jews.

Nazis' hatred of Jews had to be traced to the traditional Christian hostility towards Jews. Hitler had a strong belief in the theory of racial hierarchy. He placed the Jews at the bottom of this hierarchy. He believed that the problems raised by this race can be solved only by physically eliminating them.

The Nazi propaganda machinery got active. Propaganda films were made to create hatred for Jews. They were referred to as vermins, rats and pests. Their movements were compared to those of rodents.

Nazism worked on the minds of the people. It trapped their emotions. The results were dramatic for the Nazis. The Jews became the most hatred species on earth, as far as Germans were concerned.

**Explain the role women had played in creating Nazi society. Return to chapter-I on the French Revolution. Write a paragraph comparing and contrasting the role of women in the two periods.**

In the Nazi society, women were treated differently from men. The principal role assigned to women was to become good mothers and give birth to pure-blooded Aryan children. They were motivated to produce more children.

Their main obligation was to maintain the purity of the race. They were expected to look after their homes and teach their children Nazi values. Women had to be the bearers of the Aryan culture and race. They were not given the right to vote.

On the contrary, in France women were active participants in the events which brought about so many important changes in the French society. They hoped that their involvement would pressurize the revolutionary government to introduce measures to improve their lives. Women had started their first political clubs and newspapers. One of their demands was that women must enjoy the same political rights as men.

## **In what ways did the Nazi state seek to establish total control over people?**

Hitler set out to dismantle the structures of democratic rule. He sought to control all leavers of power himself.

- He suspended civil rights like freedom of speech, press and assembly.
- All those who opposed him were sent to the concentration camps.
- The Enabling Act was passed in March 1933. All political parties and trade unions were banned, except for the Nazi Party and its affiliates.
- Special surveillance and security forces were created to control and order society in ways that the Nazis wanted.
- The police forces acquired all types of powers to act the way they wanted.
- All oppositions was ruthlessly put down and persecuted, if not physically eliminated.

## **How did the Nazis persecute the Jews?**

The Jews were persecuted by the Nazi in a systematic way. Jews were classified as undesirable and made to live in separately marked areas called ghettos. They were often persecuted through periodic organized violence and expulsion from the land Jewish properties were vandalised and looted, houses attacked, synagogues burnt and men arrested. Jews were brought to death factories and charred in gas chambers.

## **What did the Nazis envisage for the youth?**

Hitler had a fundamental belief that a strong Nazi society could be set up only by teaching the Nazi ideology. This required a control over the child, both inside and outside school.

German child were segregated from all other 'undesirable' children. The other undesirable children were finally taken to gas chambers. German children were subjected to a process of Nazi schooling. Children were also taught to be strong and aggressive to the outside world. But they were taught to be loyal and submissive to Hitler. They were taught to worship Hitler. A cult of hatred towards Jews was cultivated to the core among them.

10-years old children had to enter Jungvolk, a Nazi youth group. At 14, all boys had to join the Nazi youth organization, called Hitler Youth. After 18, all boys joined the Labour Service.

At all these different stages, they were indoctrinated, with Nazi beliefs and ideals. They had to pass the final test of loyalty and worship of Hitler. After that, they had to serve in the armed forces and enter one of the Nazi organisations. While boys were taught to be aggressive, masculine and steel hearted, girls were told that they had to become good mothers.

### **Discuss, the impact of economic crises on Germany?**

The German economy was the worst hit by the economic crisis. By 1932, industrial production was reduced to 40 per cent of the 1929 level. Workers lost their jobs or were paid reduced wages. The number of unemployed touched an unprecedented 6 million. Unemployed youths played cards or simply sat at street corners, or desperately queued up at the local employment exchange. As jobs disappeared, the youth took to criminal activities and total despair became commonplace.

The economic crises created deep anxieties and fears in people. The middle classes, especially salaried employees and pensioners, saw their savings diminish when the currency lost its value. Small businessmen, the self-employed and retailers suffered as their businesses got ruined.

Big business was in crisis. The large mass of peasantry was affected by a sharp fall in agricultural prices and women, unable to fill their children's stomachs, were filled with a sense of deep despair. People lost confidence in the democratic parliamentary system, which seemed to offer no solution. This crisis in the economy, polity and society formed the background to Hitler's rise to power.

### **State the rise of Hitler to power:**

Hitler spent his youth in poverty. During the First World War, he enrolled himself in the German army, acted as a messenger at the front, became a corporal and earned medals for bravery.

In 1919, he joined a small group called the German Workers' Party and subsequently took control of this party, renaming it as the National Socialist German Workers' Party. This party came to be known as the Nazi Party. In 1923, Hitler was arrested and tried for treason.

He struggled to build the Nazi Party. By 1938, The Nazi Party had become the largest party with 37 per cent votes.

In 1933, Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany. Having acquired power, Hitler set out to dismantle the structures of democratic rule. The enabling Act was passed. This gave Hitler all powers to sideline the Parliament. The state established complete control over the economy, media, army and the judiciary. Hitler went on to rebuild Germany along his personal preferences and the desires of the Nazi Party.

### **How did Nazi government effect the German Policy?**

1. Hitler tried to pull his country out of the economic crisis that had fallen on Germany as a result of her defeat in the First World War. Different types of industries were set up to provide work to the workers. Trade was encouraged.
2. Hitler tried to enhance military power of Germany.
3. All political parties except that of the Nazi Party were banned. Assassination of anti-Nazi leaders were organized on a large scale.
4. The Communist parties were also banned. Trade Unions were suppressed. Thousands of socialists and communists were sent to the Concentration Camps.
5. A massive programme of militarism was launched and preparation for warS began in a big way.

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