Chapter 3  NAZISM AND THE RISE OF HITLER

1. Page 61 Activity

What do source A and B tell you about Hitler’s imperial ambitions?

1.1 Answer. Both the sources make clear that Hitler believed in expanding the territories of Germany beyond its existing boundaries. Source A states his confidence and belief that the Earth will not be given as a gift. It will only belong to people who have the vision and courage to conquer it and the strength to preserve it. To defend the primary right to life a nation will always find ways to extend its territories to the requirements of the size of its population.

1.2 Source B conveys the imperial ambition more clearly. It states that Germany with five hundred sq. km. of land cannot be expected to call itself a world power, in a world where an entire continent is one state. Here, the reference to the United States of America and Australia are implied.

1.3 Hitler’s arguments in the two sources are that for Germany to regain its lost glory, it has to conquer more land and enlarge its geographical extent. Such ambitions are known as ‘imperial’, as they involve taking over the land from border states to extent the boundaries of one’s country.

2. Mahatma Gandhi would have pointed out to the equal right to life and land of other countries. If Hitler thought that a primary right to life existed, then it did not exist for Germany alone, but was for all countries. Such imperial ambitions of one state can never be satisfied as they are based on greed. Greed is a bottomless pit which eventually devours the greedy person himself. The primary right to life is for all, and it can best be protected through the maxim of ‘live and let live’.
3. What does citizenship mean to you? Look at Chapter 1 and 3 and write 200 words on how the French Revolution and Nazism defined citizenship?

3.1 Answer. The French Revolution defined citizenship through “Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen’. It meant ‘equality of all men as citizens’. Citizens were the source of all sovereignty of the nation. Men alone were viewed as born free and equal. They alone had inalienable rights to liberty, property and citizenship. Every citizen was also free to speak, write or print and publish his views. Women were excluded from the French definition of equality and citizenship. They were not viewed as equal to men and they were not allowed to own any private property. They did not have any rights to be involved in political matters or public affairs.
3.2 Nazism defined right to citizenship as belonging only to persons born to German parents or related by blood to Germans. Such persons alone were citizens, who could enjoy the protection of the German Empire. No German citizen could marry a Jew and all such marriages were forbidden. Jews in Nazi Germany had no right to property. Their properties could be sold by force or confiscated. Jews as non citizens could not hold any government jobs. All businesses run by Jews were to be boycotted by all German citizens. In sum, Jews that no right to life or work in Nazi Germany.

3.3 What did the Nuremberg Laws mean to the ‘undesirables’ in Nazi Germany? What other legal measures were taken against them to make them feel unwanted?

3.4 Nuremberg Laws announced the ‘exclusion’ of the ‘undesirables’ from German society. The Jews, the African blacks, the Gypsies and all ‘mentally and physically handicapped’ persons even if they were Germans, were identified as ‘undesirables’ and viewed as ‘sub-humans’. These people had no right to life in German society. They were not allowed to interact with other Germans who were desirable ‘pure and healthy blond Nordic Aryans, with blue eyes’. Other legal methods used against the ‘undesirable’ included making it criminal for a German to marry a non German. Their houses and places of worship were to be vandalized and looted. Their businesses or trade were to be boycotted.

4. Page 69 Activity

4.1 If I were a Jewish woman, I would have thought Hitler to be insane, particularly after the September 1935 when the Nuremberg Laws of citizenship were declared. I would also have become very weary and cautious about what I said in public places and to strangers. I would have tried to find out if I could leave Germany with my family and migrate to the United States of America or any other country. If I were an old woman I would have arranged for my grown up children to leave Germany first,
sending them separately and not together. I would have stayed back for some time to avoid suspicion. After the children had reached their destination safely, I would have attempted to leave Germany secretly.

4.2 If I were a non Jewish German woman, I may have been happy to see that the economy was reviving and inflation was under control. I would have been happy that my children were getting good education, and were not having to go hungry.

5. Page 69 Activity 2

5.1 The poster is trying to depict the Jews as greedy people who hoarded gold and wealth and did not share it with others, particularly the Germans. It is trying to reinforce the stereotype image of the Jew community. In most countries Jews were not allowed to own land and were viewed as anti Christian because Jesus Christ had been sentenced to death by Pilat, who was a Jew in the service of the Roman Empire. Therefore, traditionally they had become moneylenders in times when banks did not exist and money was needed for trade and commerce. In view of the high risks in uncharted seas, the Jews charged very high rates of interest. Therefore, large sections of society in every European country owed debts to Jews. This stereotype image of a Jew is being depicted and publicized through this Nazi poster to create a mindset and a propaganda against them. The real life German Jews dressed normally like any other rich German. But the caricature with religious cap and dress tried to convey that they were different and therefore, needed to be excluded from German society.

6. Page 70 Activity:

6.1 Figure 29 is an appeal to farmers. Therefore, it shows Nazi propaganda as stoking the fear of uncertainty that is always associated with all agricultural activity. However, this is being presented in the form of a logical argument with well known illustrations from USA and USSR. It is comparing the
evidences from two countries well known to the German farmers, and projecting them as being against the interest of German farmers.

6.2 In contrast, Nazism under the party’s new name of ‘National Socialism’ is shown to be the saviour of the farmers. Both the capitalist economic system and the Marxist economic system are presented as born from Jewish thinking, to serve the master plan of Jews for world domination. This is because Karl Marx was a German Jew, who had migrated to live in London. Capitalists were linked to Jews because like the Jews, increasing their profits, was the only objective of capitalism.

For ordinary Germans, Jews were already identified as the most ‘undesirable’ section of society in Germany. Nazism as ‘National Socialism’ is offered as the only way out of the ‘two great dangers’ of Capitalism and Marxism. The leaflet was also meant to propagate the new name of the Nazi Party and to project Hitler.

6.3 The poster in Figure 30 is addressed to industrial workers. Amongst them workers in the Iron and Steel industry were viewed as the natural leaders of all other industrial workers, as iron and steel related work required longer training, total physical fitness and higher strength. They were also viewed as the strongest and most powerful among all workers.

6.4 This physical power, strength and prowess are projected as the chief qualities of pure German race. Therefore, in this poster Hitler is depicted through his identifying cap as a physically strong worker from the iron and steel industry carry the iron smith’s hammer, which is the heaviest for any worker in industry. The physical strength is highly exaggerated to convey a sense of security when Hitler is around. So voting for him is also a vote for security of workers.

7. Page 71 Activity The opinion of Ema Kranz is a natural reaction of an average German at the time. The conditions and penalties imposed after the First World War on Germany, were too heavy and humiliating. It had taken away the most important mineral
resources regions from Germany, and yet had imposed millions of dollars payable as fine per year.

7.2 Such heavy fines could not be paid without impoverishing the ordinary people. Therefore, every German saw ‘a sense of purpose’ in the system offered by Nazism. In a nation of impoverished Germans, the Jews were the only prosperous community. As the state needed more money to pay its penalty for having started the First World War, it had to target this most wealthy community. Nazism was ‘common sense’ for an average German, because Jews though living in Germany for centuries were seen to have maintained their distinct society and prosperity.

7.3 In contrast the ‘native’ Germans were impoverished and barely able to sustain their lives. Even the Allies realized that the harsh conditions imposed on Germany in 1918 were the real reason for the rise of Nazism. It was not by choice but by necessity that the Nazi system based on racial discrimination became so popular. Therefore, after the defeat of Nazi Hitler Germany in 1945, the country was divided into East and West Germany, but no heavy penalties were imposed on it.

7.4 In contrast to the heavy fines imposed in 1918, USA extended soft loans for rebuilding the economy of West Germany, called the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) that remained as a part of capitalist Europe. The East Germany called the German Democratic Republic (GDR) became a part of the USSR bloc.

QUESTIONS

1. Describe the problems faced by the Weimar Republic? and
2. Discuss why Nazism became popular in Germany by 1930?
   4. Explain why Nazi propaganda was effective in creating a hatred for the Jews?

(The reasons for these question is the same, and three answers can be formulated from the material given below and adapted to the question)
Reasons for rise of Nazism and Hitler

6. In sum, hyper inflation resulting in high prices of all essential goods, high unemployment, the sense of national humiliation, and the inability of elected parties to solve the existing problems created the political, economic, and social environment for the rise of Hitler and his Nazi Party.

5. In the USA, on 24th October 1929, the first Wall Street Crisis occurred when 13 million shares were sold on a single day. The national income fell by 50% and the Great Economic Depression that began lasted till 1932. Unemployment rose to 6 million, and many large businesses collapsed. Agriculture was impacted as people had no money to pay even for food. The soft loans that were being given by USA to Germany were stopped in 1929.

4. To repay its debts, Weimar Republic began printing paper currency, without any backing of gold reserves. This resulted in hyper inflation. In April 1923, one US dollar was equal to 24,000 Deutschmark, by July it was 353,000, and by August 4,621. Due to this prices of all commodities rose. To purchase one loaf of bread people had to carry currency in a suitcase.

1. Imperial Germany was blamed for the First World War and the Emperor was made to abdicate the throne. Imperial Germany had fought the war on loans and borrowings.

Weimar Republic of Germany was established as a parliamentary democracy, in 1918. Heavy fines were imposed on the new Republic. Hitler was a corporal who had fought in the War. He found the terms of the Peace Treaty very humiliating.

2. Fines imposed included:
   a) The Allies took control of all overseas colonies of Germany from 1918. Germany lost this source of its income.
   b) The mineral rich, 13% of German territory, that contained 75% of iron and 26% of coal resources, was placed in the control of France, Poland, Denmark, and Lithuania. Till 1920, the Allies continued to occupy the iron and mineral rich Rhineland and exploit it.
   c) Germany had to pay annual compensation to the Allies at 2 million in gold only. This depleted its gold reserves by 1923. Thereafter, it refused to pay in gold.

4.1 Answers 1, 2 and 4: After the defeat of Imperial Germany in 1918 the Emperor abdicated the throne and Germany became a Parliamentary Democracy, called the Weimar Republic. The peace treaty of Versailles, imposed very harsh and humiliating conditions on German Republic.

4.2 Germany had to give up control over all its overseas colonies to the Allies. 13 per cent of its territories, that had 75 per cent of its iron and 26 per cent of its coal resources was placed under the control of France, Poland, Denmark, and Lithuania.

4.3 Till 1920, the Allies continued to occupy the iron and mineral resource rich Rhineland, which means that for almost two years they exploited the resources and the people of this region. Further, Germany was demilitarized to weaken its power. The War Guilt Clause in the Peace Treaty held Germany responsible for the War and
damages the Allies had suffered. For this Germany was required to pay compensation amounting to 6 billion pounds in gold only. Therefore, most Germans viewed this Treaty as a national disgrace.

4.4 The financial liabilities imposed on Weimar Republic of Germany wrecked it financially and economy entirely. It carried the multiple burden of war guilt, national humiliation, and a financially crippling liability required to be paid for next several years.

4.5 Imperial Germany had fought the War mainly on loan. The Weimar Republic had to pay the reparations in gold. This was far more expensive for it than loan. From a nation of creditors it turned in to a debtor. Therefore, the Socialists, Catholics, and the Democrats who supported the creation of the Weimar Republic, became the direct targets of attack by the national conservatives. The national conservatives became a part of the Nazi Party by 1930.

4.6 The major problems faced by Weimar Republic from November 1918 onwards included the following:-

a) First, a Russian revolution type organization of workers and sailors was established as the Separatist League. They demanded a Soviet style government.

b) The League was opposed and suppressed by the Socialists and the Democrats. Thereafter, the Separatist League founded the Communist Party of Germany. Due to this, the Communists and the Socialists became permanent opponents and refused to cooperate in any common cause, including opposing Hitler and the Nazi Party.

c) Due to the humiliating peace treaty the revolutionaries and the militant nationalists wanted radical solutions. These solutions were offered by the Nazi Party, which viewed both the Capitalists and the Marxists as enemies.

d) By 1923, Weimar Republic’s gold reserves were depleted due to payment of compensation to the Allies. It therefore, refused to pay the compensation. In retaliation, France occupied the leading industrial belt of Germany in Ruhr, to claim coal.
e) Germany retaliated with passive resistance by printing paper currency without the backing of gold reserve. This brought too much paper money in circulation thereby bringing down the value of the German Mark in rapid succession.

f) In April 1923 one US dollar was equal to 24,000 marks, in July it was 353,000 marks, in August 4,621,000 marks. As the value of mark collapsed, prices of all commodities soared, resulting in hyper inflation. Eventually, the USA intervened to re negotiate the terms of repatriation to ease the financial burden of the Weimar Republic.

g) From 1924 to 1928 the German economy revived due to short term loans, largely from the USA. But this support was withdrawn due to the Wall Street Exchange Crisis of 24th October 1929, when 13 million shares were sold in a single day. The national income of USA fell by half and the Great Depression began. The Great Depression lasted till 1932.

h) During this period unemployment rose to 6 million. The middle class, the salaried class, the self employed and the small merchants and retailers suffered, as businesses were destroyed. Even the big businesses were in crisis. Peasants were affected by the sharp fall in prices, as people had no money to buy even the essential food items.

i) In these circumstances, it was easy for the Germans to find and believe in ‘targets’ such as the ‘undesirable’ Jews, the Gypsies, and the ‘blacks’. All these had different cultural practices that were strange and inexplicable to the Germans. Despite the general impoverishment, the Jews seemed to be relatively ‘better off’ than the Germans. This was also partly because they followed a simple lifestyle with very little needs. For this reasons also they were seen as ‘misers’ who preferred to hoard money, rather than spend it.

j) Due to the financial and economic crises the governments in Weimar Republic fell frequently and the Republic saw twenty governments each lasting about 239 days on
average. Yet, the crises could not be solved. This made the Germans lose faith in democratic system of government.

k) A solution to the unending economic crisis was offered by the Nazism. Hitler first used the direct method of revolution to acquire power, through the ‘Brown Shirts’. Thereafter, he used the constitutional method of election and got elected. Within a week of Hitler getting elected as the Chancellor of Germany, the German Parliament building got burnt down due a ‘short circuit’. Though, the construction of a new building was announced, it was never constructed. Thereafter, all pretence of democracy were set aside by the Nazi Party and Hitler declared himself Fuhrer for life.

3. What are the peculiar features of Nazi thinking?

Answer. Hitler’s Nazi thinking had the following features:

a) There was no equality between different people of the world. People’s qualities were as per the race to which they belonged. On basis of race all people were graded. The pure Germans were Nordic Aryans who were blond and blue eyed and they were on top of the race hierarchy. They were also physically well built and strong. As Nordic Aryan Germans were the strongest and best of all races, they alone would survive as the fittest.

b) At the bottom were the Jews. In between were listed the Asians and Africans depending on their physical features. Jews were the arch enemies of the German Aryans. Nazis therefore wanted to establish an exclusive Aryan state of ‘pure and healthy Nordic Germans’. Only the Nordic Germans were worthy of prosperity and progress. All others who prospered were to be eliminated, particularly the Jews and the Gypsies.

c) The Jews were to be eliminated in two phases: From 1933 to 1938 the Jews were declared as ‘undesirable’ in Germany. They
were segregated and terrorized. Their businesses were attacked and boycotted and many were forced to leave Germany. This was the phase in which they were pauperized. It coincided with the period of hyper inflation in Germany.

d) Followed by the Great Depression. The objective was to make them vacate their houses and businesses that were in prime areas, so that these could be taken over by the Nazis. All Jews were moved to ‘ghettos’ a special residential area with no facilities of electricity, water etc. In the second phase from 1939 to 1945 (during the Second World War) they were moved out of the ghettos and physically eliminated in gas chambers especially constructed in Poland.

e) Nazi German Youth had to imbibe Nazi values from the age of 10 years. Girls and boys were taught that they were physically different and could not be equal. All democratic demands for equality of men and women would destroy society.

f) Boys were to make themselves physically strong, be aggressive and steel hearted. Girls had to become good mothers of as many children as possible and take care of their homes. They were to marry only Nordic Germans and maintain the purity of the Aryan race. ‘Youth organizations’ were made responsible for educating German children in ‘the spirit of Nazism’. School education was converted in to a process of Nazi schooling, in which ‘Racial Science’ and a prolonged period of Nazi ideological training were included.

 g) Nazis used the media with care and great effect. Propaganda for adopted as a Nazi policy from the beginning. Media was carefully used through visual images, films, radio, posters, catchy slogans and leaflets. Propaganda films were created to spread hatred against the Jews, and to declare the Socialists and liberals as degenerates and malicious foreign agents. Through their propaganda machinery Nazism worked on the minds of the people and provoked their emotions against the ‘undesirables’ in Germany. The propaganda was also ‘tailor made’ for each section of society to appeal to their core emotions separately. Separate posters and leaflets were created for workers, peasants, children, youth, men and women. The propaganda also stirred up
hope for a better future for the Germans. In 1928 the Nazi party that had got only 2.6 per cent of votes, became the largest party with 37 percent of votes in 1932. Such was the success of Nazi propaganda that Hitler was projected as a savior of German national honour at a time when people were reeling under humiliation of the Peace Treaty and payment of heavy compensation in gold.

h) In sum, Nazi thinking was peculiar as it was based on selective use of racial inequality, propaganda, early indoctrination from childhood, a planned and methodical progress of elimination of the ‘undesirables’ and the prosperity of the ‘desirable’ Nordic Aryans.

Question 5 Explain what role did women have in Nazi society. Compare and contrast the role of women in the two periods of French Revolution and Nazi Germany?

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<th>Role of women in French Revolution</th>
<th>Role of women in Nazi Germany</th>
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<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women were politically active and had organized themselves for participating actively during the French Revolution.</td>
<td>German girls from the age of 10 years were taught that they had to become good mothers and rear pure blooded Nordic Aryan German children.</td>
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<td><strong>2</strong></td>
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<td>But after the Revolution they were excluded from the ‘Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizens’ Therefore they put up their separate demand for ‘Declaration</td>
<td>They had to maintain the purity of the Aryan race and not mix or communicate with the Jews, or with Polish, or Russian men. They had to follow the prescribed code of conduct. In case any German woman was caught with any Jew, Pole or Russian,</td>
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of Rights of Women and Citizens’  

she was condemned by tonsuring her head, blackening her face, and with a placard hung around her neck saying ‘I have sullied the honour of the nations’.

4 A painting entitled ‘Liberty’ by a woman artist Nanine Vallain was also exhibited in the Biennial Exhibition in the Salon.  

Marriage between Germans and Jews, Poles, or Russians was made a crime. German women who broke the code of conduct were severely punished. They were separated from their husbands and homes and were jailed for their ‘criminal offence’.

5 However, Frenchmen refused to recognize equality of men and women and believe that nature had made the two different for different duties. The duty of woman was to rear children and take care of their homes. Public work was for men only.  

Women were encouraged to rear pure German children and Honour Crosses were awarded for such efforts. A bronze for those having four children, a silver for six and a gold for eight or more.

6 Women were also not given any right to vote or to own private property after the French Revolution.  

As there were no elections in Nazi Germany the voting rights did not matter. But girl child was treated equal to a male child in education and security. Hitler was obsessed with increasing the pure race and wanted to see all pure children prosper and multiply.

**Question 6** In what ways did the Nazi state seek to establish control over its people?
Steps taken by Hitler for establishing control over Germany and Germans

**Parliamentary Route**
- Hitler first attempted to gain power by force, but failed, and was sent to prison. During his trial he insisted on making his own defence. This introduced the public to his extraordinary skills of oratory.
- In prison, he wrote his autobiography 'Mien Kemph' in which is detailed his political views based on imperialism and racial discrimination. Nazi Party was formed on basis of these views, and his book sold millions of copies.
- His highly efficient propaganda machinery was developed and controlled by Gobbels. It was based on a single premise that when a falsehood was enlarged and announced repeatedly on a large scale, it would be believed to be true.

**Chancellor**
- Hitler stood for elections after his release. By then unemployment, hyperinflation, frequent changes in elected governments had created chaos. His public rallies organized by the Nazi Party displayed the discipline and revived German national pride. Hitler won the elections and got appointed as Chancellor.
- Once appointed, within a week the Parliament building got destroyed by fire. It was not rebuilt and though elections were promised, they were never held. Hitler declared himself as Chancellor for life.

**German superiority**
- He revived the economy through new technology, and industries that could strengthen the army, navy and airforce. He provided mandatory military training and employment to all German youth.
- The Germans were then given special recognition, incentives and awards for conducting their lives as per Nazi ‘code of conduct’ Any deviation from the code was made criminal.
- His propaganda separated the ‘desirable’ German race from the ‘undesirable’ Jews, Poles, Russians, Gypsies, the physically and the mentally handicapped and the African blacks.

**Answer**
After becoming the Chancellor of Germany, Hitler dismantled the structure of democratic government. The building of the German Parliament mysteriously caught fire at night and was totally destroyed. Next, from 28th February 1933 all the civil rights of freedom of speech, assembly and press were suspended indefinitely. The Communists who had become the arch rivals of
Nazis after the suppression of the Separatist Demonstration, were the first to be sent to the newly constructed concentration camps. The severe repression of the Communists was followed by the repression of 51 other types of ‘undesirables’ of German society. On 3rd March 1933 the Enabling Act established a dictatorship in Germany. It gave Hitler all the powers to rule by decree and sideline the existing Parliament. All political parties other than the Nazi Party were banned.

The State then proceeded to establish complete control of the media, the economy, the army and the judiciary. Special security and surveillance forces were created to control and bring order in the society as per Nazi thinking. These included the regular police in green uniforms, the SA or Storm Troopers, the secret state police called Gestapo, the protection squad of Hitler called the SS, Security Service (SD) and the criminal police. Due to the special powers of these secret services, Nazi Germany got the reputation of the most dreaded criminal state. These special secret forces had all the rights detain, torture, interrogate anyone for any reason, while the people did not even have the natural right to life.

Through propaganda Nazi state played on the emotions of the people to make them behave the way the state wanted them to behave. First, the propaganda separated the ‘desirable’ German race from the ‘undesirable’ Jews, Poles, Russians, Gypsies, the physically and the mentally handicapped and the African blacks. The Germans where then given special recognition, incentives and awards for conducting their lives as per Nazi ‘code of conduct’ Any deviation from the code was made criminal resulting not only in immediate public condemnation, but also imprisonment and loss of home for the accused. Indoctrinating the children in Nazi thinking from the primary school stage was the basic method for control over the people and their future. This was the ‘voluntary’ method in contrast to the ‘mandatory’ method of control of the secret services.

In sum, the control of the Nazi state was most autocratic in modern history.