

**ATOMIC ENERGY EDUCATION SOCIETY.
SUBJECT- HISTORY /CLASS IX**

CHAPTER- 3 NAZISM AND THE RISE OF HITLER

(HANDOUT of MODULE 1/2)

NAZISM AND THE RISE OF HITLER

CONCEPTS:

BIRTH OF THE WEIMER REPUBLIC: Germany fought the First World War (1914–1918) along with the Austrian empire and 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 its harsh terms. 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. 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 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 This support was withdrawn with the crash in 1929 of the Wall Street Exchange.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 were filled with the fear of Proletarianisation. 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.
- 3.

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 newly 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 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.