

## **NAZISM AND THE RISE OF HITLER**

### **RISE OF DICTATORSHIPS IN ITALY AND GERMANY**

The inter-war period (1919-1939 A.D.) saw the rise of dictatorships in Italy and Germany. Though the first World War fought to "make the world safe for democracy", yet the unsettled economic and political conditions after the War paved the way for the termination of democracy in both these countries.

There were several common factors in both Italy and Germany which led to the rise of dictatorship under Fascism and Nazism there. For Example, these factors were (a) dis-satisfaction with humiliating peace treaties; (b) Economic crisis; (c) Inefficient and weak democratic system and (d) Political instability.

Dictatorship is an anti-thesis of democracy. It gives no rights to people, tolerates neither opposition nor criticism. It envisages one party rule, controlled by one leader with total authority.

### **THE RISE OF THE NAZI DICTATORSHIP IN GERMANY**

After her defeat in the first World War, Germany also faced economic crisis, revolts lawlessness, unemployment, price rise etc. William Kaiser II was unable to solve these problems. He was forced to abdicate and he fled to Holland on November 10, 1918 to save his life. Elections were held to the new Constituent Assembly on January 19, 1919 which met at Weimar and adopted the new Constitution, which set up a democratic government called the Weimar Republic, But, it failed to solve the current problems of the Germans.



## NAZISM AND THE RISE OF HITLER

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- (A) Treaty of Versailles :** Germany signed a peace treaty with the Allies at Versailles according to which-
- (i) Germany lost its overseas colonies, a tenth of its population, 13 percent of its territories, 75 percent of its iron and 26 percent of its coal to France, Poland, Denmark and Lithuania.
  - (ii) The Allied Powers demilitarised Germany to weaken its power.
  - (iii) The War Guilt clause held Germany responsible for the war damages the Allied countries suffered. Germany was forced to pay compensation amounting to 6 billion pounds.
  - (iv) The Allied armies also occupied the resource rich Rhineland for much of the 1920s.

- (B) The effects of the war :** The war had a devastating impact on the entire continent both psychologically and financially. From a continent of creditors, Europe turned into one of debtors. The Weimer Republic carried the burden of war guilt and national humiliation and was financially crippled by being forced to pay compensation.

The First World War left a deep imprint on European society and polity. Soldiers came to be placed above civilians. Politicians and publicists laid great stress on the need for men to be aggressive, strong and masculine. However soldiers lived miserable lives in trenches, trapped with rats feeding on corpses. They faced poisonous gas and enemy shelling, and witnessed their ranks reduce rapidly. Democracy was indeed a young and fragile idea, which could not survive the instabilities of interwar Europe.

- (C) Political Radicalism and Economic Crises:**

(i) Soviets of workers and sailors were established in many cities. The political atmosphere in Berlin was charged with demands for Soviet-style governance. Those opposed to this - such as the Socialists, Democrats and Catholics - met in Weimar to give shape to the democratic republic. The Weimar Republic crushed the uprising with the help of a war veterans organisation called Free Corps. The anguished Spartacists later founded the Communist Party of Germany. Communists and Socialists henceforth became irreconcilable enemies and could not make common cause against Hitler. Both revolutionaries and militant nationalists craved for radical solutions.

(ii) Germany had fought the war largely on loans and had to pay reparations in Gold. In 1923 Germany refused to pay, and the French occupied its leading industrial area, Ruhr, to claim their coal. Germany retaliated with passive resistance and printed paper currency recklessly. With too much printed money in circulation, the value of the German Mark fell. As the value of the Mark collapsed, prices of goods soared. This crisis came to be known as hyperinflation, a situation when prices rise phenomenally high.

- (D) The Years of Depression:** German investments and industrial recovery were totally dependent on short term loans, largely from the USA. On one single day, 24 October, 13 million shares were sold in Wall Street Exchange. This was the start of the Great Economic Depression. The German economy was the worst hit by the economic crisis. Workers lost their jobs or were paid reduced wages. As jobs disappeared, the youth took to criminal activities and total despair became a commonplace. The economic crisis created deep anxieties and fears in people. The currency lost its value. Sections of society were filled with the fear of proletarianisation, an anxiety of being reduced to the ranks of the working class, or worse still, the unemployed. 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. Politically too the Weimer Republic was fragile. The Weimer constitution had some inherent defects, which made it unstable and vulnerable to dictatorship. Proportional representation and Article 48 were its major shortcomings. People lost confidence in the democratic parliamentary system, which seemed to offer no solutions.

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- This map illustrates the territorial control in Europe during World War II, specifically in 1941. The map uses various shading patterns to denote different types of territories:
- Greater Germany:** Indicated by a checkered pattern, covering Germany and its surrounding territories.
  - Power Co-operating with the Axis:** Indicated by a cross-hatched pattern, including Italy, Japan, and their respective territories.
  - Territories under German occupation:** Indicated by a dotted pattern, covering areas like France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and parts of Poland and the Soviet Union.
  - Italy and its territories:** Indicated by a diagonal line pattern, covering Italy and its colonies.
  - Neutral countries:** Indicated by a solid grey pattern, including Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, and Switzerland.
- The map also shows the **UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC** and various other countries and regions, including the **Atlantic Ocean**, **Mediterranean Sea**, **Black Sea**, **Caspian Sea**, and **Persia**. Key cities and regions labeled include Ireland, United Kingdom, France, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Greece, Albania, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, and the Baltic Sea.



### MAIN FEATURES OF NAZIM AND AIMS OF HITLER OR THE IDEOLOGY OF NAZIMS

Hitler's cult, his creed and philosophy were called Nazism. The following were its main principles and aims:

1. The people exist for the State, rather than the State for the people. He believed in a Totalitarian State.
2. To tolerate no opposition or criticism and to allow no party formation other than his own.
3. To put an end to parliamentary institutions and the democratic government.
4. To have full control on education, press, radio and other means of propaganda.
5. To crush communism and liberalism.
6. To turn out the Jews from Germany, because they had caused great hardship to German people due to their greed conspiracy, during the first World War.
7. To denounce the Treaty of Versailles as disgraceful and to regain the lost or ceded German territories.

### HITLER'S RISE TO POWER OR THE RISE OF THE NAZI PARTY

The rise of the Nazi party and the rise of Hitler to power are interlinked. Adolf Hitler was born in 1889 A.D. in Austria. He fought on the German side in the First World War. He got the "Iron Cross" for his bravery.

In 1919 A.D., Hitler joined a small political group, called the German Workers Party in Munich. Soon he became its Fuhrer i.e., the leader. He changed the name of the party to National Socialist Party which became more famous by the name of the Nazi Party.

In 1923 A.D., Hitler was arrested and jailed for five years. In the jail, he wrote his famous autobiography named Mein Kampf (My Struggle)

After his release from the jail, Hitler re-organized the Nazi Party from 1925-1929 A.D. A master in the art of propaganda, he defamed the Weimar Republic for the sufferings of the people.

In the election of July 1932, the Nazis polled more than 13 million votes and captured 230 seats in Reichstag. The Nazi Party made the functioning of the coalition government headed by Von Papen impossible. He could not continue for long. Ultimately, President Hindenburg of Germany was compelled by these circumstances to appoint Hitler as the Chancellor (i.e., the Prime Minister) of the coalition government in January, 1933.

Hitler ordered fresh elections to the German Parliament (Reichstag) to be held on March 5, 1933. But before the election, Hitler blamed the opposition, particularly the Communists for this sabotage. He crushed them with a heavy hand.

In such circumstances, Hitler got passed the Enabling Act, which authorised his Government to take any action without the approval of the Reichstag. Thus without even having the majority, Hitler became all powerful. The Nazi regime practically became one-man show. President Hindenburg died on August 2, 1934. On that very day, Hitler combined in his own persons the offices of the Chancellor (i.e., Prime Minister) and the President. From then onwards he assumed the title of the Fuhrer i.e., Leader and became the absolute dictator of Germany.

### IMPACT OF NAZISM

After coming into power, Hitler followed a vigorous domestic and foreign policy.

The following points may be mentioned in this regard :

#### DOMESTIC POLICY

1. **Setting up a strong national State of Germany :** Germany became a dictatorship, with all powers in the hands of her leader, all opposition parties abolished, criticism disallowed, rights denied to the people, democracy crushed, and a secret police under the name of Gestapo established to pay over everyone. Those suspected of disloyalty to the Fuhrer were executed without a proper trial. The Germans were told that Hitler was Germany and Germany was Hitler. He established the rule of one man, one leader and one party. In this way, national unity was brought about in Germany. The radio, the press and all other means of propaganda were controlled by the State. Even education was re-planned so as to promote Nazism and German nationalism and her unity. Religion too was brought under State control.
2. **Economic Reforms and Development Work :** Having done all above, Hitler took to reforms and development work. He proceeded to recognize German economy and administration. He created new jobs and expanded the bureaucracy. More factories were started and agricultural farms set up. The worker were given more facilities, but they were not given the right to strike. Hitler ordered the production of heavy armaments at a large scale and introduced compulsory military service. Under this programme of Militarism, Naval Ships and Aeroplanes began to be manufactured in Germany's own factories. All these created more jobs for the youth. To keep the workers happy, he kept the prices under control. Import and export were also controlled in order to maintain favourable balance of trade. In the field of public work development, he ordered the construction of government buildings, offices, art galleries, stadium, houses etc.
3. **Anti-Jews Policies :** The Nazi Party and Hitler showed a great dislike for the Jews. They held them responsible for German defeat in the First World War, due to their betrayal. He put large number of Jews in the concentration camps only because they were Jews. They were denied German citizenship, dismissed from government jobs and prohibited from practising medicine, law and many other professions.

#### HITLER'S FOREIGN POLICY

1. **Disregarded the Treaty of Versailles :** Hitler has started re-armament and compulsory military service in gross violation of the Treaty of Versailles. He not only stopped the payment of War Indemnity , but also took back the territory of Saar from France in 1934 A.D. In 1936 A.D. German troops re-entered Rhineland and fortified it, while it had been de-militarised by the Treaty of Versailles.
2. **An Imperialist and Expansionist Foreign Policy :** Hitler had imperialist designs and wanted to establish the rule of the Swastik over the world. When Hitler declared openly that he would not abide by the Treaty of Versailles, Italy, Czechoslovakia and France entered into a Military Pact against Germany. France also signed a Military Pact with Russia against Germany. Hitler also started group-formation of his own. He concluded an Anglo-German Naval Agreement in 1933 A.D. In 1936 A.D. he made a treaty with Italy, known as the Rome-Berlin and Tokyo Axis. He also concluded the Non-aggression Pact with Russia. After having strengthened his military position, Hitler again attacked Austria on 13th March, 1938 and annexed her to the German empire. He also annexed Sudetanland (a part of Bohemia) in September 1938. He seized a part of Czechoslovakia with the connivance of Britain and France due to the Munich Pact. Both Britain and France adopted a policy of appeasement towards Germany under Hitler. They did not appose him, when he captured rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 A.D.

- ★ **Fall of Hitler :** It was only when Hitler attacked Poland on 1st September, 1939 that Britain and France issued an ultimatum to Germany, which Hitler ignored. Thus began the Second World War in which Germany was totally defeated by the Allied Powers. She surrendered in 1945 A.D. Hitler is said to have committed suicide with his death, Nazism and Nazi dictatorial regime also came to an end.

### THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Twenty years nine months after the end of the First World War, there came the Second World War in September, 1939, that resulted in a loss of millions of lives and trillions of dollars.

Actually, when Hitler came to power in Germany, already noted above, he began to flout the Treaty of Versailles. He started re-armament, reorganized his disbanded army and expanded Germany's territories. But the nations of Europe stood watching the whole show silently in the hope that Hitler was doing all that to destroy Communism. But when Hitler shook hands with Stalin and signed the Non-aggression Pact with Soviet Russia in August 1939 A.D., the hopes of Nazi-Russian conflict dashed to the ground. The following were the main long term and the Immediate causes of the Second World War :

#### (A) Long Term Causes of The Second World War

1. **Failure of Democracies in Europe and Rise of Dictatorships :** The peculiar problems created after the First World War could not be successfully tackled by the democratic governments. As such, in countries like Italy, Germany, Russia, Spain, Portugal and others dictators rose in power.
2. **Unjust and Humiliating Treaty of Versailles :** The victors of the First World War (Britain, France and U.S.A.) forced Germany to sign the unjust and humiliating Treaty of Peace. It imposed heavy war-penalties on Germany, made her surrender large chunks of her territories like Saar, Rhineland, Ruhr area ect. and some parts of her foreign colonies. The Treaty also prohibited Germany from re-arming herself; her army was disbanded beyond a limit of one lakh soldiers. The German found it too humiliating. Moreover, the attitude of France towards Germany was revengeful. Now when Germany lay prostrate before France. She took revenge from her by taking the Saar valley and the Ruhr Zone in 1923 A.D.
3. **Aggressive Nationalism and Expansionism :** The rulers of Germany, Italy, Japan believed in aggressive type of nationalism. They also wanted to acquire colonies for their countries to satisfy their nationalist urges and for their economic interests. As such Italy annexed Ethiopia (Abyssinia) and Albania. Japan annexed Manchuria ; Germany annexed its neighboring states like Austria and Czechoslovakia ; Soviet Russia too pounced upon the weak countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Again there was a war between China and Japan in 1937 A.D. and many Chinese cities fell into Japanese hands. The League of Nations failed to check these nations in their aggressive policies of territorial annexation.
4. **The Armament Race :** In order to achieve their territorial aims, as noted above, Germany, Italy and Japan began producing firearms, tanks, guns, war-ships, aircrafts and other weapons of destruction at a large scale. The Disarmament Conferences failed to stop the stock-piling of the arms and ammunition. The League of Nations also did not achieve any success in this regard. All the nations followed only one policy, namely "Security first and disarmament after wards".
5. **The weakness of the League of Nations :** The League of Nations was set up to maintain peace in the world. But it failed in its objective. Actually, the League of Nations has no power to act on its own initiative to preserve peace in the world. Moreover, the U.S.A. did not become its member, because the U.S. Senate did not ratify the Covenant of the League of Nations.
6. **Formation of Rival Groups of States :** European nations began to doubt Hitler's motives. They formed power Blocs of Nations for their security. So before the outbreak of the Second World War, Europe was divided into rival camps.

## NAZISM AND THE RISE OF HITLER

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7. **U.S. Policy of Keeping Aloof :** After the First World War, the U.S.A. kept herself aloof from the European politics. She did not join even the League of Nations. American aloofness and her non-interference helped the military regimes of Germany and Italy to pursue their aggressive and militant policy.
8. **The Policy of Appeasement :** This policy was followed by England, and France, before the second world war. Under this, these countries ignored the progressive policy of Germany and Italy. Many factors contributed for the adoption of this policy :
1. The main basis of this policy was the fear of socialism.
  2. Fascist powers were against socialism so these countries wanted to use it against Russia and other socialist countries.

They did not care to enforce the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, when Hitler started to flout it openly. The heads of four nations-Germany, Italy, Britain and France-met at Munich on September 29, 1938 and decided to hand over Sudetenland to Germany. The Czechos were persuaded by them to accept the Munich Pact in the name of world peace. But actually, they were appeasing Hitler at the cost of Czechoslovakia. Hitler's troops occupied Sudetenland on 5th October, 1938 and later on whole of Czechoslovakia became a German satellite. Thus the Anglo-French policy of appeasement proved dangerous for world peace.

### (B) The Immediate Cause:

**The German Invasion of Poland :** The immediate cause of the outbreak of the Second World War was the German aggression on Poland on 1st September, 1939. In August, 1939, Germany had signed a Non-aggression Pact with Russia. Hitler accused Poland of committing atrocities on Germans living there. On September 1, 1939, Germany to vacate Poland, but Hitler refused to do so. So on September 3, 1939, Britain and France declared war against Germany and thus began the second World War.

**Main Events of the War :** In the initial stages, the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy and Japan) got a good success against the Allied Powers (Britain, France and about 80 other nations), German troops captured Holland, Belgium and France, and large territory in North Africa. By 1941 A.D. Hitler had over-run whole of Eastern Europe and reached right up to the suburbs of Moscow. After German attack on Pearl Harbour in December, 1941, the British Air Force with the help of the U.S.A., caused a great damage to German air-power. In 1942 A.D. but Allies could check the advances of the Axis Powers and by 1945 A.D. they were being pushed back on almost all fronts. On 6th August, 1945, America dropped an atom bomb on Hiroshima and on 9th August, 1945, she dropped another atom bomb on Nagasaki. Japan surrendered soon, Thereafter. The Second World War came to an end in this way.

**Consequences of the Second World War :** The War exposed the moral degradation of man for killing his own species on a mass scale. Both the victors and the vanquished had indulged in such barbaric acts of the most heinous type that they must stand self-condemned. The consequences of World War II had their impact on life then and even today. These can be briefly stated as under.

1. **The Defeat of the Axis Powers :** The Axis Powers-Germany, Italy and Japan-were defeated at the end of World War II. Germany stood broken, humiliated and devastated. It was divided into two parts i.e., the East and the West Germany. Germany's army was reduced ; her material was taken away. Her war-criminals were tried and duly punished, even excuted. Nazism came to an end. The Japanese emperor was deprived of his authority. The Americal General Mac-Arthur was given complete control over Japan. Her army was disbanded and arsenals destroyed. Her fleet was also destroyed by the American war-ships. Similarly Italy too was defeated. The Allies took over Sicily in July 1943 and then marched to Rome. Mussolini was dismissed and a new government of Badoglio surrendered before the Allies.

- 2. Unprecedented Deaths and Destruction and the Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki :** The war killed about 25 million soldiers on both the sides, while it wounded more than 34 millions of them. Millions of civilians were also killed. Many big cities with beautiful building were reduced to ashes. Europe, from Baltic to the Black Sea, presented a tragic sight of ruined towns and cities, bridges, roads, fields, factories and concentration camps. This region was called the "misery belt" of the world. A large number of people became refugees, as their houses were destroyed. The two Japanese cities Hiroshima and Nagasaki continued to reel under the radiation effects of these nuclear weapons. These not only brought death for millions, but caused damage to kidney, ovary, nervous system, brain, muscles, skin and also caused diseases like cancer, blindness, sterility. The radioactive dust contaminated the earth, the water, the air, it killed animals and destroyed ecology. Vast areas of land were rendered unworthy of cultivation and human habitation. Some of these effects have continued even upto the present day; and life of man is today endangered with the stock-piling of more powerful nuclear weapons.

The cost of the war too was very huge. To the U.S.A. alone, it cost something like 350 billion dollars, whereas the direct expenditure of other countries was estimated at one trillion (1,000 billion) dollars, while loss of property must have run to another trillion. The indirect long range effects of the War were simply incalculable. No country was free from the impact of the war, directly or indirectly, Inflation pushed up the prices. The scarcity of food, clothing and shelter caused untold suffering, misery and death to a large number of people all the world over.
- 3. Lowered the Prestige of England and France :** Though both England and France won the War, yet they were badly ravaged. The War proved too much of a strain and stress on both of them. War weary and exhausted Britain and France came to occupy the position of second rate powers.
- 4. Emergence of the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union as Super Powers :** The U.S.A. had played a decisive role in the victory of the Allied Powers, especially as she was the only nuclear power in the world. By using the atom bombs to crush Japan, she had emerged as a super military and economic power. Soon in the years to come, dollar-imperialism became a reality and her influence in world politics increased tremendously, leading to the U.S. interference in the internal affairs of other nations.

The Soviet Union emerged as another super power in the post-Second World War period. The Russian empire was greatly expanded. It included half of Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and many parts of Germany. Under Stalin's leadership, Soviet Russia became a dominant power in world politics.
- 5. Two Power blocs in the Post-War World :** The post-Second World War world stood divided into two power Blocks—one known as the American Bloc and the other known as the Soviet Bloc. The world became Bi-polar as it was grouped into the Capitalist nations and the socialist nations, each headed by the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. respectively. They were also known as the Democratic Bloc and the Communist Bloc.
- 6. Resurgence of Nationalism in Asia and Africa :** As the War shattered the colonial empires of Britain, France, Portugal, Germany, Italy etc. a desire for freedom gained ground in the people of their colonies in Asia and Africa. India, Burma (Myanmar), Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Malaya, which were under Britain, became free. The East-Indies overthrew the Dutch rule ; Indo-China became free from French rule ; Indonesia also earned her freedom. Similarly, the British, the French, Portuguese and Holland's colonies in African continent also shed the yolk of colonialism.
- 7. Birth of the United Nations Organization :** Mankind looked for a better, a happier and a peaceful world after it had witnessed the nuclear holocaust and the widespread destruction and death in the Second World War. To save the coming generations from the scourge of War, the United Nations Organization (U.N.O.) was established on October 24, 1945, with its headquarters in New York (U.S.A.). Peace, human dignity, justice, human brotherhood, cooperation etc, are the main objectives of the U.N.O. It is the largest world organization, having 191 (presently 194) member-States, and it has done a commendable job in almost all spheres of life. We can say that the U.N.O. is the great gift of the World War II to save and serve mankind.



### GLOSSARY

1. **Dictatorship** : It is a form of government in which a person or a group of persons possesses absolute power without effective constitutional limitations.
2. **Nazism** : A political system introduced by Hitler in Germany. Akin to dictatorship and fascism, it also propagated extreme hatred against the Jews.
3. **Nazi** : The short form of Nationalist Socialist German Workers Party. Formed by Hitler in 1921, it propagated Nazism.
4. **Axis Powers** : Italy, Germany and Japan formed the axis powers.
5. **Allied Powers** : Britain, France, Russia and U.S.A. were the allied powers.
6. **Second World War** : The global war which took place from September 1939 to May 1945 in which over 50 million people were killed and many cities were reduced to rubble.
7. **The great Depression** : A worldwide economic slump lasting from 1929 to 1935. During these years, trade between nations dropped and around 25 million people lost their jobs.
8. **Pearl Harbor** : Situated on the Hawaiian island of Honolulu, it was the main base of the US pacific fleet. Japanese planes launched from aircraft carriers attacked the base on 7th December 1941. They destroyed 120 aircraft and killed 2,400 people.
9. **Gestapo** : Short for Geheime Staatspolizei, the secret state police in Nazi Germany. It had the power to arrest people without trial and torture and kill them. As a result they were the most hated and feared organisation in Nazi-occupied Europe.
10. **Holocaust** : It comes from the Greek word holos and kautos which literally means 'completely burnt'. It is used to describe the persecution and mass murder of Jews by German Nazis between 1933 and 1945.
11. **Semite** : Usually someone who belongs to any of the peoples of South-west Asia, especially Jews and Arabs. In Nazi Germany the word was used to describe only Jewish people.
12. **Reichstag** : The name given to the German Parliament
13. **Reparation** : Making up for a wrong done.
14. **Wall Street Exchange** : The name of the world's biggest stock exchange located in the U.S.A.
15. **Propaganda** : Specific type of message directly aimed at influencing the opinion of people through the use of posters, films and speeches.
16. **Concentration camp.** : A camp where people were isolated and detained without the due process of law.
17. **Persecution** : Systematic, organised punishment of those belonging to a group or religion.
18. **Jung volk** : Nazi youth groups for children below 14 years of age.

### IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES

1. **Adolf Hitler** : Founder of the Nazi Party, he led Germany during the second World War and committed suicide on 30th April 1945.
2. **Franklin D. Roosevelt** : The only American President to enjoy four successive terms in office. He led the U.S.A. during the Second World War and introduced the New Deal.
3. **General Von Paulus** : Commander of the German 6th army which was forced to surrender at Stalingrad in February 1943. This defeat shattered belief in the invincibility of Hitler's army.
4. **President Harry S. Truman** : The American President who was responsible for dropping two atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima and forcing Japan to surrender thus bringing the Second World War to an end.
5. **Winston Churchill** : A great leader, author and orator, he led Britain to victory during the Second World War.
6. **General Tojo** : The Prime Minister of Japan who adopted an aggressive foreign policy and was responsible for the attack on Pearl Harbour which brought America into the second World War.

**IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS**

- 1914 : First World War begins
- 1918 : Weimer Republic is established
- 1919 : Treaty of Versailles was signed by Germany. Hitler joins the 'National Socialist Germany Workers Party'.
- 1929 : The Economic Depression occurs in U.S.A.
- 1933 : (a) President Roosevelt introduces the New Deal to deal with the Economic Depression.  
(b) Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.
- 1934 : Hitler becomes President of Germany.
- 1935 : (a) Italy attacks Ethiopia  
(b) Anglo-German Naval Agreement signed between Britain and Germany.
- 1936 : (a) A new constitution is introduced by Stalin  
(b) Hitler occupies the Rhineland.  
(c) Civil War starts in Spain
- 1937 : (a) Japan attacks China  
(b) Anti-Comintern pact signed by Germany, Japan and Italy
- 1938 : (a) Hitler's troops march into Austria  
(b) Munich pact is signed. German troops acquire Sudetenland.
- 1939 : (a) Germany attacks Czechoslovakia  
(b) Soviet Union signs non-aggression pact with Germany  
(c) 1st September : Germany invades Poland  
(d) 3rd September Britain and France declare war on Germany
- 1940 : (a) Italy declares war on Britain and France  
(b) Battle of Britain begins  
(c) Italy attacks Egypt  
(d) Germany invades Norway and Sweden  
(e) France surrenders.
- 1941 : (a) 8th April : Germany invades the Balkans  
(b) 22nd June : Germany invades the Soviet Union  
(c) 15th September : Siege of Leningrad by the Germans  
(d) 7th December : Japan attacks Pearl Harbour.  
America Joins the war  
(e) 11th December : Germany and Italy declare war on America
- 1942 : United Nations declaration signed by the representatives of 26 nations
- 1943 : Germany and Italy defeated by the Allied powers in North Africa
- 1944 : 6th June : D-Day-Opening of the Second Front
- 1945 : (a) 25th-26th August: Liberation of Paris  
(b) 28th April : Italian partisans shoot Mussolini  
(c) 30 April : Hitler commits suicide  
(d) 2nd May : Soviet army enters Berlin  
(e) 7th May : Germany surrenders  
(f) 8th May : VE (Victory in Europe) Day celebrated  
(g) 9th May : Stalin announce defeat of the German forces by the Red Army  
German naval fleet surrenders.  
(h) 6th August : U.S. drops atomic bomb on Hiroshima  
(i) 8th August : Soviet Union declares war on Japan  
(j) 9th August : U.S. drops atomic bomb on Nagasaki  
(k) 14th August : Japan surrenders  
(l) 2nd September : The Second World War ends  
(m) 24th October : U.N.O. comes into existence