Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

Assignment: Owens vs Master Race

Answer the following :

1. **Where was Jesse Owens going? How was he travelling?**

Ans: Jesse Owens was going to Berlin for participating in the Olympics. He was travelling by an ocean liner ‘Manhattan’.

1. **What did Jesse Owens see upon reaching Berlin? What was his reaction ?**

Ans: Jesse Owens saw that old buildings lined up the streets of Berlin. He was extremely amazed as the streets of Germany were like nothing he had ever seen before. He was fascinated by the old buildings. He also saw the swastika flags that seemed to hang from almost every window or shop front. This was the most striking of all to Jesse.

1. **Describe the Nazi flag and state its significance.**

Ans: The Nazi flag had a swastika on it, which was a crooked black cross on a blood-red banner. It was a symbol of the German Nazi Party and it signified silently how the country was totally controlled by the Nazis.

1. **When were the Berlin Olympics held? What does the writer say about that time? Why?**

Ans: The Berlin Olympics were held in 1936. The writer says those were the ‘troubled times’ as a lot of things were not going right during that period. Ethiopia was conquered by Italy while Brazil was struck by a political divide. Unemployment was on the high in Europe and America. The worst thing was the invasion of the Nazis on Germany and their cruelty.

1. **What did the Nazis think about other races as compared to their own?**

Ans: The Nazis believed that the Germans were the ‘Master Race’ – superior human beings who were destined to rule the world. According to them the other races were far inferior to them. According to them, Jews were responsible for every evil that had overtaken the country while the Black people were not even considered normal human beings.

1. **What was the importance of the Berlin Olympics to the Nazis?**

Ans: The Olympics were to be held in a 110,000 capacity Berlin Olympic Stadium. According to the Nazis, this was a grand stage ,where German athletes would assert their claims to racial superiority by winning all the competitions. Thus the Olympics were to be a grand advertisement for their regime and its beliefs.

1. **What was the reaction of people and countries across the world to the Nazi claims? How did it affect the Nazis? Finally how many countries attended the game?**

Ans: Many people throughout the world were disgusted by the racist attitudes of the Nazis and felt their country should boycott the Olympics. Aware of the reaction, the Nazis had softened their fanatical policies a few months before the games. As a result , fifty-two nations agreed to attend the Berlin Olympics?

1. **Write a few lines about the athletic achievements of Jesse Owens.**

Ans: Jesse Owens, twenty-two, was one of America’s most promising athletes. He was an extraordinary runner and was equally remarkable in long jump.

1. **What was Jesse Owens’ initial thought about going to Berlin for the games? What did he finally decide?**

Ans: Initially, Owens also wondered whether he should go to Berlin. But the Olympic Games offered him the opportunity to show his skills to the entire world so he finally decided to go.

1. **What had Owens’ coach warned him about? How did it affect Owens?**

Ans: Owens’ coach had warned him to expect racist abuse from Nazi supporters among the Berlin crowds. But Owens had come to the Olympics determined not to allow it to affect his performance.

1. **How was Owens received in Germany?**

Ans: The Germans who had read about his record-breaking performance were eager to see him and Owens was received warmly by the public. He was mobbed by sports fans that were charmed by his pleasant appearance.

1. **What made Owens particularly likeable?**

Ans: Owens was tall and handsome and had a boyish charm and modesty that made him particularly likeable.

1. **When and how did the Games begin? What was the significance of the opening speech?**

Ans: The Games began on 1st August with a speech made by the founder of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin. He said that the important thing at the Olympic Games is not to win but to participate and that the most important thing in life was not to conquer but to struggle well. This speech was very significant as it gave the meaning of true sportsman spirit which was beyond winning or losing and laid emphasis on participation.

1. **Write a few lines about Owens’ first race.**

Ans: Owens’ first race was the 100 metres , on the day after the opening. He was pitted against five of the world’s fastest human beings who wanted to defeat him. But Owens won racing to a new record of 100 metres in 10.3 seconds.

1. **How did Owens’ first victory affect Hitler?**

Ans: The Nazi leader , Adolf Hitler, who was seated in his private stadium box , was not amused. His dream of German athletes dominating the games was fading before his eyes. When he was suggested to invite Owens up to congratulate him, Hitler was outraged. He retorted asking if the person thought he would allow himself to be photographed shaking hands with a black man.

1. **What happened during the preliminary round of long-jumps? Who helped Owens get over his disappointment? What was the final outcome?**

Ans: During the preliminary round of long-jump, Jesse Owens did not perform well and this upset him. Lutz Long- a German and fellow competitor , whispered a few consoling words to Owens which cheered him up and he went on to make a record breaking 8.06 leap.

1. **Write a few lines about the newly-born friendship of Owens and Long.**

Ans: When Owens won the long-jump gold, Long and Owens left the stadium arm-in-arm and that evening they met again at the Olympic Village and talked through the night. Though Long’s looked like a perfect German, he did not share the racist beliefs of the Nazi and their leader. He and Owens had much in common. They were the same age and from similar, poor backgrounds and both saw athletic success as a way to improve their future and not a ground for competition.

1. **Write a brief character sketch of Lutz Long.**

Ans: Lutz Long was German athlete and a fellow competitor of Owens. Long had blond Germanic good looks and a perfect athlete’s body and thus he was the epitome of the Nazi German racial ideal. But Long did not share the racist beliefs of the Nazis. Long was disturbed by the prejudice he saw all around him in Germany. He proved to be a true sportsman, who helped a fellow competitor , Owens , to overcome his nervousness in an event, without thinking about victory or defeat. Inspite of being defeated at the hands of Owens , he congratulated him heartily and walked out of the stadium holding his arms.

1. **How did the Berlin Olympics affect Owens? What did he do after the Games?**

Ans: The Berlin Olympics made Owens world famous. When the games finished, he left Germany for a short tour of Europe, surrounded by press photographers and well-wishers.

1. **How did Jesse Owens crush Hitler’s dream?**

Ans: Hitler was of the strong belief that the Germans being the ‘superior race’ would win all competition and establish the fact that they were above the others. Jesse Owens, a Black – American, proved him wrong by winning four gold medals and defeating the German competitors. Thus Owens , a soft spoken athlete and crushed Hitler’s dream and made a mockery of the Nazi claims of German racial supremacy.