

Nazi Germany, 1933-1939

The creation of a dictatorship, 1933-1934

1. Reichstag Fire

Reichstag set on fire 27th February 1933.

Dutch **Communist**, Marinus Van Der Lubbe **charged with crime**.

Hitler got Hindenburg to sign emergency law: **Law for the Protection of the People and the State**. Gave police control. Arrested Communist leaders. Their meetings broken up.

As a result, **Nazis** did well in **March election: 44% of the vote=288 seats. Joined with Nationalist party** to get majority (over ½ the supporters) in Reichstag.

2. Enabling Law

This law **gave Hitler the right to pass any law he wanted**. No need to ask Reichstag or President Hindenburg=Hitler a dictator.

How did he get the law passed?

Banned the 81 Communist politicians.

Got Brownshirts to threaten/attack Social Democrats. Many did not turn up to vote.

3. Removed enemies

Banned other political parties e.g. Social Democrats.

Law against the Formation of New Parties= only Nazi Party allowed=one-party state.

Trades Unions banned

Political opponents arrested. Put in concentration camps.

All important jobs given to Nazis. E.g. judges, local govt. workers.

4. Night of the Long Knives

On 30th June 1934 **Hitler got SS to arrest 100s of SA leaders**. Some killed, including the leader, Ernst Roehm.

Why?

Roehm wanted to join SA and army. This would make him more powerful than Hitler. SA were thugs. Hitler wanted to keep support of richer people (many didn't like SA).

5. Death of Hindenburg

President Hindenburg died 2nd August 1934. Hitler didn't replace him. Gave himself title of **Fuhrer**.

Got army to swear an oath of loyalty to him. (Agreed to obey Hitler.)

1. Law and Order

- **SS** lead by Himmler. Power to arrest people and send them to concentration camps.
- **Gestapo**=secret police. Tapped phones, spied on people. People encouraged to spy on neighbours.
- **Courts and judges.** All Nazis. Courts for political opponents, not just criminals.
- **Concentration camps.** 'Prisons' for opponents of the Nazis e.g. politicians from other parties and persecuted groups e.g. homosexuals, prostitutes, Jews.

7. Propaganda

- **Joseph Goebbels** in charge. Aim = to get people to believe in/support Nazis.
- All media controlled by Nazis. **Newspapers** printed good stories about the Nazis. Cheap **radios ('People's Receivers')** made. No foreign radio stations allowed. Loudspeakers in streets and work places broadcast Nazi message. **Mass rallies** e.g. Nuremburg = parades, fireworks, speeches by Hitler. Over 100 **films** made a year. All reinforced Nazi message. **Music** had to be German. Jewish composers/ Black jazz music banned. **Books:** 1033 book-burning/banned Jewish books.

2. Persecution of Jews

How?

- Boycott of Jewish shops, Jews sacked from jobs
- Segregation: separate park benches, seats on transport, schools
- **Nuremburg Laws.** Marriage law banned Jews from marrying other Germans. Citizenship law said Jews were no longer German citizens/protected by the law.
- **Kristallnacht.** (Night of Broken Glass.) November 1938. Week of violence against Jews. Synagogues, shops, homes destroyed/burnt. Nearly 100 Jews killed. 1000s arrested.
- 1939 start of mass arrests of Jews. Sent to concentration camps.

Why?

- Said Jews were **inferior** to the **Aryan race**. Shouldn't mix with the 'master race'.
- Were blamed for Germany's problems: losing WWI, the depression.
- Resented for having good jobs e.g. bankers, doctors.

What was the Nazi dictatorship like?

5. Children

In school

- Lessons: **Biology**=taught that Germans were the master race, Jews inferior. **History**=Hitler saved Germany from failings of Weimar Republic.
- Teachers made to teach Nazi ideas. If not, sacked.

Hitler Youth

- Children forced to join after 1935. Trained them to be loyal to Hitler and to be future soldiers (boys) and wives/mothers (girls).
- Did sports, went to camps, had uniforms, did parades. Fun for many

6. Women

- Encouraged to **get married, have children and stay at home. (Kinder, kirche, kuche.)**
- Got 1000 marks when married. Kept 250 for every child they had.
- Lost jobs. Told not to smoke or diet to encourage pregnancy.

4. The Church

- **Catholic Church** signed agreement with Nazis: were left alone as long as they didn't interfere
- **Protestant Church** brought into Nazi Reich Church
- **Those who protested about Nazi control of the Church were punished e.g. Pastor Martin Niemoller**

3. Other persecuted groups

- **Gypsies:** homeless, no permanent jobs=not socially useful
- **Black people**=inferior race
- **Tramps, physically/mentally disabled.** Sterilisation then euthanasia programme for mentally ill people.

The Economy

Hitler had been voted in because he promised to solve the problems of the depression. Had 2 main aims:

1. **Create jobs/solve unemployment.** 1933 = 6 million, 1939 = 0.4 million.

a. **National Labour Service.** Gave jobs to 18-25 year olds. Dug ditches, planted forests and involved in public work schemes. Given food, lived in camps. 'Pocket' money only.

b. **Public Work Schemes.** Built motorways (autobahns), hospitals etc.

c. **Rearmament.** Created 1000s of jobs by making weapons.

d. **Conscription.** Forced men into the army = they had jobs. 1.3 million men got jobs.

e. **Jews/women lost jobs** but were not added to the unemployment lists.

2. **Self-sufficiency.** Hitler wanted Germany to make everything it needed and not have to buy in food from other countries. More coal and oil produced. Factories set up to make substitutes e.g. coffee from acorns. By 1939 Germany still needed to import 1/3rd of raw materials. (Started to take over countries with raw materials!)

The Workers

- **German Labour Front** run by Dr Robert Ley. All workers had to join. Trade Unions banned, strikes banned, couldn't leave job without permission. Working hours went up, wages down.
- **Free time was organised.** **Strength through Joy** organisation planned cheap holidays, theatre trips, concerts etc. Cheap car scheme (Volkswagen) set up. People didn't get their cars though!

Opposition to the Nazis

- 1933-1939 there were 1.3 million people sent to the concentration camps and 300,000 left Germany = **lots of opposition**
- **BUT** Nazis had lots of **support** e.g. because of job creation, dealing with Communists and reversing the Treaty of Versailles. (Who would like these things?)
- **Young people.** E.g. Swing Youth: mainly middle class; listened to jazz music; boys grew hair long; women wore make up and smoked. Edelweiss Pirates: 'umbrella' name for working class gangs all over Germany e.g. Navajos of Cologne. Created no-go areas for the Hitler Youth in their cities; beat them up.
- **Assassination attempts:** 1938-some army leaders planned to overthrow Hitler (but decided not to). Jewish students plotted to kill Hitler in 1935-6 e.g. Maurice Bavaud planned to shoot Hitler in Munich during a parade; he didn't shoot as he didn't want to injure others.