

Living Under

Nazi Rule

1933 - 1945

Revision Booklet



How were the Nazis able to take control of Germany so quickly?

Hitler and the Nazi Party in 1933

- **Adolf Hitler** - Leader of the party from 1921. Wrote *Mein Kampf*. Becomes the *Fuhrer*.
- **Joseph Goebbels** - Propaganda. Very intelligent.
- **Wilhelm Frick** - Minister of the Interior. Help shape Nazi racial policy
- **Ernst Rohm** - Leader of the SA. Originally a bodyguard for Hitler
- **Herman Goring** - 2nd in Power after Hitler. Formed the *Gestapo* in 1933
- **Rudolph Hess** - 3rd in Power. Worked at the headquarters. Signed off on new legislation and Nazi Ideology.
- **Heinrich Himmler** - Led the SS. End up running the concentration camps.

Nazi Ideology in 1933

Students are taught about the harshness of the Treaty of Versailles and how it cast a dark shadow over Germany until Hitler came into power. The Weimar Government which ruled from 1919-1933 were blamed for signing the treaty and disgracing Germany.

The main Nazi demands were -

- Scrap the Treaty of Versailles
- Bread and work for all
- Destroy Marxism
- Subdue the Jew
- Ensure Aryan Supremacy
- Fight for *Lebensraum* (Living Space)
- Build Nationalism
- Strengthen Central Government
- Nationalise important industries
- Improve education



Establishing the Dictatorship

Step 1: Remove the Communists

The Reichstag Fire - 27th February 1933

- Van der Lubbe arrested and blamed for the fire.
- He says it was just him but Nazi claim he is part of a Communist plot.
- Perfect timing for Nazis either way with the election coming up in March.

Consequences of the Reichstag Fire - 27th February 1933

- Hitler and the elite Nazis took this opportunity to crush the Nazis.
- Used it to persuade President Hindenberg to use his power to bypass the Reichstag and declare an Emergency Decree on the 28th February 1933
- This Decree restricts all civil liberties such as freedom of speech and freedom of the press.
- More than 4000 Communists are arrested,

Step 2: Removing German democracy

The Enabling Act - 24th March 1933

- Gives the Chancellor the power to pass any law without the permission.
- SA were used to intimidate voters.
- This is the end of democracy in Germany and the Reichstag itself.

Step 3: Gleichschaltung - bringing Germany into line

1. **The Civil Service Act** - Remove all non Aryans from position of power (teacher etc)
2. **Official Encouragement of anti-Semitism** - Boycott of business and removal from important positions and universities.
3. **Book Burning** - 25,000 were burnt by University students for being Un-German Sprit
4. **The use of terror** - Removal of all opposition using the force of the SS and SA

Step 4: Removing opposition

Trade Unions - Protect the rights of workers and call for Strikes. They are also very Left Wing. Hitler arrests the leaders and shuts down the organisations.

Other Political Parties - With the communists dealt with Hitler still had a problem with the Social Democrats. He accused them of being corrupt and arrests over 3000 Social Democrats imprison and tortures them. Other parties see this and disband in fear. On 14th July an Act banning new parties was passed. This created the one party system.

Achieving total power July 1933-August 1934

1. **Controlling Local government** - Central state control is wanted by the Nazis. Power has been removed from the localities to the central government.
2. **The People's Court** - Hitler had been infuriated by the Reichstag Fire trial. He wanted a separate court that dealt with Political Offences. Death penalties rose.
3. **The Night of the Long Knives - 30th June 1933**
 - Hitler had two problems
 - Von Papen, the vice chancellor who was a conservative
 - The SA, it wanted to take the army and Rohm wasn't happy openly denouncing Hitler.

The SA were gathered at a meeting in Munich. The SS, Hitler and Goebbels arrested the SA leadership and many were killed. Rohm was given the option of suicide but declined and was murdered two days later.

In Berlin, Goring focused on the conservatives and Von Papen. He escaped arrest and later resigned. Leadership officials and followers were arrested. This was also an opportunity to rid of old rivals and enemies.

4. Consequences of the Night of the Long Knives - 30th June 1933#

- The power of the SA was reduced
- The loyalty of the Army was secured
- The rise of the SS and Himmler was established
- A Culture of fear was created
- The Nazi regime gained a strange legal grounding

Becoming the Fuhrer

Hitler still had one final hurdle - President Hindenburg.

On 1st August Hitler visited the president who was on death's door.

Hitler created a new leadership title by combining the Chancellor and the President - The Fuhrer.

Hindenburg dies on the 2nd August and he becomes the leader of Germany

What made it so hard to oppose the Nazis?

The Machinery of terror

Himmler and the SS

- Original job of the SS was the bodyguard to Hitler. 250 men including Himmler.
- In 1929, Himmler is made leader and transforms the tiny group into a force.
- Himmler was ruthless about selection - Aryan and Pure German blood.
- In 1934 the SS rose to power after the Night of the Long Knives. The SS are now used to remove enemies and carry out purges with total obedience.

Intelligence Gathering

SD

- Led by Reinhard Heydrich. Official intelligence gathering agency
- Job role was to identify potential and actual enemies of the Nazis.
- Passed their information to the Gestapo.

The Gestapo (Secret Police)

- Most infamous organisation within the Nazi Terror system.
- Spied on the public and removed any opposition
- Goering was the original leader.
- They were highly feared by the people
- Focused on political opponents in 1933 then moved on to Jews and other groups who were disliked afterwards.
- Relied on the public to give tip offs (denunciations)
- Aim of interrogation was always to get the person to confess.

The Police, Judges and Court

Police

- 1936 police put under the control of the SS
- Oppo (Ordinary police) and Kripo (Criminal police) continued their roles.
- Became a part of the terror system

Judges and Courts

- Judges had to swear an oath to Hitler.
- Death penalty rose by thousands and most were issued by the people's court.

Concentration Camps

Early Years

- 70 camps were set up in 1933 to imprison 45,000 communists, trade unionists and other political opponents
- Extreme punishments were common place. Many were run by the SA and were disorganised. Most prisoners were freed at some point.

Later years

- In 1937, Himmler said that no guard at the camps could be punished for their behaviour at the camps.
- In 1938, at Buchenwald 4600 of the 8000 inmates were 'work shy'.

The range and effectiveness of Nazi Propaganda

- **Newspapers** - Closed all rival newspapers and controlled all content.
- **Radio** - Best way to get a message across in the days before TV.
- **Rallies** - Used to show the strength of the Nazi movement
- **Posters** - The Nazis were the masters of the visual message
- **Berlin Olympics** - 1936 - used as a perfect opportunity to show Nazi Propaganda
- **Film** - Golden age of cinema is used to promote the Nazi ideology.

Opposition to Nazi rule including the Left, Church leaders and youth groups.

The Left

Social Democrats -

The Social Democrats that remained in the country worked in the industrial areas of the country producing anti Nazi leaflets. They were hunted down by the Gestapo. If they would have joined forces with the Communist they may have stood a chance but long standing rivalry prevented this.

The Communists -

The Communists were more active than the Social Democrats. They provided a visual resistance with meetings, propaganda and Newsletters. If caught they were arrested by the Gestapo.

The Church

With 22 Million Catholics and 40 Million Protestants, the church was by far the largest non Nazi group in Germany. Hitler made promises with both churches to maintain order but by 1938 these promises had been broken.

Martin Niemoller - Critic of the Nazi Regime, refused to join the Reich church, sent to CC

Paul Schneider - 1st priest murdered by the Nazis, warned to stop protesting, killed at CC

Pope Pius XI - Pope signed an agreement in 1933 but by 1937 he had had enough. Due to this and a letter written by the pope - all catholic churches were raided.

Cardinal Galen - Initially welcomed the Nazis but started to resist. The Gestapo questioned him but he was too high profile to arrest and get rid of so he continued.

Jehovah's Witnesses - Due to the rules of their religion they could not comply with the Nazis. By 1939 over 6000 had been imprisoned in concentration camps.

Youth Groups

Young people questioned the Nazis and were unhappy with their politics, attitude to religion and culture.

Young Communists - Banned in Germany but met in disguise and wrote some Nazi flyers

Christians - In 1933, there were 2.5 million members of Christian youth groups. These were banned by the Nazis but they met in secret anyway.

Swing Kids - Came together to listen to Jazz and talk openly. Banned by the Nazis and Himmler saw this as dangerous. Many were arrested and sent to CC.

Edelweiss Pirates - All members wore the edelweiss flower or a white pin. They produced flyers and painted slogans. Members were punished.

How did the lives of the German people change 1933-39?

Work and Home

Workers

On the surface life improved for the workers. By 1939 unemployment had been reduced from 6 million to just 35,000 out of a total of 25 million men. However behind this is a complicated picture.

- Small craftsmen numbers actually fell despite this being a priority for the Nazis.
- Despite the peasants also being a priority with the promise of work and bread. The rural population also fell.
- Industrial workers certainly had their hands full with re armament and preparation for war. However, with the 'voluntary' donations being made to support Nazi initiatives and rising bread prices being employed didn't always mean you were comfortable.

DAF

After the Trade unions were abolished the Nazis wanted to win over the workers. They set up DAF which means the German Labour front. Its run by Robert Ley and it was designed to keep workers happy.

- Strength through Joy - Leisure time for workers
- Beauty of Labour - improve work places with toilets/changing rooms etc
- Reich Labour Service - Set up to tackle unemployment.
- Volkswagen System - Workers could save for a car

Women's lives

The Nazis ideal woman should not smoke, be natural (no makeup), dress traditionally, the role of in the kitchen is essential, physically robust, should be members of the National Socialist Women's League.

Marriages did increase as did births. The number of women in employment rose due to War production. The number of women in higher education fell.

Motherhood

The Nazis aimed to encourage women to have Aryan children to increase their population.

1. Loans to encourage women to marry and have children
2. Making divorce and re marriage more easy
3. Reducing opportunities for women in higher education

The lives of young people

Education

The key to creating a Nazi education system was controlling the teachers. After the Nazi take over, unsuitable teachers were forced to resign. Any teacher that stepped out of line would face the machinery of terror.

Nazis also set up their own schools run by SA and SS training young Nazis in physical and military education.

Curriculum

From 1934, all schools had to educate the children in the sprit of Nazi ideology. All subjects are based around the Nazi way of thinking such as History focusing on the superiority of the Aryan Race.

Youth Organisations

The Nazis also wanted to control children outside of school. At first, membership to Hitler youth was voluntary but by 1936 it was compulsory. The Nazis shut down all other youth groups, Both boys and girls would spend more time learning and improving their Nazi knowledge and understanding. There was a limited impact as many children began to resent their strict regime and scheduled life.

Nazi Racial Policy

Übermenschen – Super human or Master race (True Aryans)

Untermenschen – Sub humans (Non Aryans)

Dangerous Myths – The Nazi spread myths surrounding the Jews using their propaganda. An example of this is that all Jews are cowards and helped cause Germany's defeat in 1918. In truth, Jews fought in WW1 in the German Army and some received the Iron Cross for Bravery

Social Persecution – Growing suspicion, boycotts of businesses, social exclusion from 1935 (not allowed in public places such as parks or shops), physical persecution (Jews lived in fear of mistreatment and violence), Publications (Jews portrayed as money grabbers, communists and sex offenders)

Kristallnacht – 9/10th November 1938

The most extreme outbreak of violence against German Jews.

- Homes and businesses are attacked.
- Triggered by a 17 year old Polish Jew assassinating a German embassy official in response to the persecution of the Jews.
- 30,000 Jewish men were also rounded up and taken to concentration camps.

Anti Semitic Legislation 1933-39

The Nazi government took no action against people who abused or hurt the Jews. Instead, they made laws against the Jews such as Jews not being allowed to use swimming pools or attend university. The severity of the laws increased to Jews being evicted from their homes without an explanation given.

What was the impact of the Second World War on the German people?

The Move to War Economy - When the Nazis invaded Poland they prepared for a limited War. Within 3 days both Britain and France had declared war on Germany. The war quickly escalated and in December 1939 Hitler declared a War Economy. This meant all industry was focused upon the War and the production for War materials.

Albert Speer - Provided structure for the War economy in 1942. Hitler trusted him and he was able to take control of industry. He introduced structure such as factories producing a single product as well as giving greater individual freedoms to the people running the factories which is uncommon in a state controlled government.

The Impact of the War on German civilians 1939-42

Winter of 1940 was the coldest in living memory. Due to war production many small businesses - cafes, beer halls etc were closed. There was a real need for basic necessities like firewood.

Shortages - Rationing was implemented from the start. The supply of most foods, clothing, shoes and coal was strictly controlled. The rationing system could be too complicating. The system did work although people spent lots of time queuing and the quality of products was not good. Complaining could be dangerous and you could count on being punished if you were caught.

Women - The Nazis were divided over the role of women. Some thought they should be at home making Aryan babies and others thought they needed to contribute to the War effort.

Bombing and evacuation - Industrial areas of Germany received heavy bombing from the RAF. Cities such as Berlin and Dresden were badly affected. In September 194, a voluntary evacuation to the countryside as first applied. All children under 14 could get a six month stay in a rural area. Older children could also go to Hitler youth camps but conditions varied with a very rigid timetable and discipline system

Wartime opposition

During the war some Germans still opposed the Nazis. With the terror machine intensifying and the policy towards Jews turning to genocide assassination attempts were a very real threat.

Assassination attempts - July 1944 bomb plot

Public Criticism

Cardinal Galen - (Catholic Cardinal) Continued to oppose the Nazis. He lived under house arrest from 1941-1945

Dietrich Bonhoeffer - (Protestant Pastor) He relayed messages for the underground resistance. He was arrested and dies in a CC two weeks before the end of the war.

The Rosenstrasse - Women gathered outside the welfare office where their husbands were being held for being Jewish. Around 600 women protested for their husbands to be released. The men were eventually released.

Leaflets and postcards

Being caught with any anti Nazi Literature would mean instant arrest and possibly death. The White Rose was a group of University students from Munich. Hans and Sophie Scholl were the leaders. They passed literature around the University. The Scholls were discovered and after facing a trial at the people's court were executed.

Passive resistance from the German people

- Saying good morning instead of Heil Hitler
- Telling anti Nazi Jokes
- Reading banned literature
- Listening to the BBC
- Hiding Jews

Total War 1943-45

After the loss of Stalingrad the German people were told that it was time for sacrifice and that 'Total War' was required. Goebbels held a meeting at the Berlin Sportpalast and got the crowd behind Total War and sacrifice.

The impact of this was

- The Nazis finally tried to mobilise Women into the War effort.
- Anything that did not contribute to the War effort was eliminated.
- The shortages became even worse
- There was an increase in propaganda.

Desperation 1944

With the War increasingly turning against Germany chaos was brought to Germany like never before. In the summer of 1944 there was an increase in arrests and executions. The Gestapo and SS managed to connect 7000 people to the July bomb plot. 5000 of these people were executed.

Increase the War Effort - The pressure was increased on German people, propaganda increased again, all social places such as theatres were closed and half a million workers were forced to be soldiers.

The Volkssturm - The people's storm was similar to Britain's dad's Army. All men 16-60 not in military service must join and protect national security.

Chaos, destruction and peace 1945

As the Nazis defence on the western and Eastern front, Germany began to fall apart. People faced chaos and starvation. In 1945 Dresden was brutally bombed and the city was destroyed.

What did Nazi rule mean for the people of Europe 1939-45?

The contrasting nature of Nazi rule in eastern and western Europe

The occupation of Poland

- Poland had only been a country since 1918. Before this it had been part of an area that Germany controlled. Nazi leaders believe this was their Lebensraum (living space).
- Their plan was to totally germanise the country and remove all elements of polish culture and control.
- In October 1939 Poland ceased to exist.
- In 1940 hundreds of thousands of Native polish people were told to leave and 500,000 Germans replaced them.
- Nazis considered Slavic poles to be racially inferior and large numbers were murdered.
- Polish Jews were put into Ghettos with awful conditions before being transferred to te concentration camps.
- There was some resistance to this brutal occupation. The poles staged an uprising in 1944 which lasted two months. This ended being brutally crushed by the Nazis.

The occupation of the Netherlands

- The Dutch shared the same ethnic background to the Germans so they were treated very differently to the Polish. Civil servants were allowed to continue working and the education system was not changed.
- In 1941, the atmosphere became to change. 425 Jewish men were rounded up for deportation and Dutch communists called for a strike because of this. The Germans abandoned their friendly attitude and hundreds were killed and arrested.
- Intimidation and violence became a way of life from 1943. Jews were being deported. Men were being sent to Germany and forced to work to replace the German workers on the front.
- Netherlands were liberated by the Canadians in 1945.

The Holocaust

By the end of the War, the Nazis had murdered 11 million people including Jews, Slavs, Gypsies, communists and homosexuals.

The first solution: Persecution and emigration 1938-39

Rights taken away, business boycotts and legislation passed restricting civil liberties. This caused emigration to nearby countries.

The second solution: Concentration in ghettos 1939-41

Ghettos were enclosed districts that isolated the Jews into communities away from other respectable society. The largest Ghetto was in Warsaw. The conditions were terrible with wide spread disease and death. 140,000 died in the 3 years Warsaw ghetto was in use.

The final solution; Murder 1941-45

Phase one: The Einsatzgruppen

Mass murder of Jews. Mobile killing units. Once the village or town was reached, all Jews would be rounded up and taken to a secluded area to be killed.

Phase Two: Death by Gas

Extermination of all Jews in Concentration Camps. An example of this is **Auschwitz**.

Responses to Nazi rule: collaboration, accommodation and resistance

- Collaboration - working with the Nazis and helping them
- Accommodation - doing as you were told by the Nazis
- Resistance - Opposing the Nazi rule