



Weimar and Nazi Germany



The Weimar Republic, 1919-1923

Why did Germany need a new government in 1918?

Since 1888 Germany had been ruled by Kaiser Wilhelm II. Although Germany had a parliament, called the Reichstag, it was the Kaiser, a strong leader, who had most of the power. He chose ministers to help him run the country. He made sure that they would do what he wanted. If they did not, he would sack them.

By the autumn of 1918 the Kaiser was in big trouble. For four years Germany had been fighting in the First World War. It now faced certain defeat. The German army was retreating and people in Germany faced starvation.

The Allies (Britain, France and the USA) would only make peace with Germany if it became more democratic. This meant getting rid of the Kaiser and setting up a new government. Throughout Germany there were violent uprisings against the Kaiser. Eventually, he was forced to flee to the Netherlands. Germany became a republic.

Friedrich Ebert became the new democratically elected leader of Germany. Ebert was leader of the Social Democrats, the largest party in the Reichstag.

How was the Weimar Republic governed?

In 1919 there was a general election. Friedrich Ebert became the President. There was too much violence in Berlin, the capital, for the new government to meet there, so it met in the town of Weimar. The government was therefore called the Weimar Republic.

During 1919 a new constitution was drawn up. This was a set of rules for how Germany would be governed. As you can see from the diagram below, it was very different from the old system under the Kaiser. In fact, the Weimar constitution was one of the most democratic systems of government in the world.

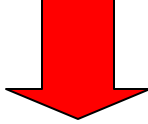


THE WEIMAR CONSTITUTION

THE PRESIDENT

- Elected every seven years
- Controlled the armed forces
- Stayed out of the day-to-day running of the country
- In an emergency he could make laws without going through the Reichstag (Parliament).

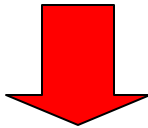
appointed



THE CHANCELLOR

- Responsible for the day-to-day running of the country
- Chosen from the Reichstag by the President
- Like a Prime Minister.

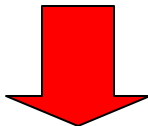
needed the support of more than half of



THE REICHSTAG (Parliament)

- Voted on new laws
- Members elected every four years, through a system called PR (proportional representation). This system gave small parties a chance to have a say in Parliament.

was elected by

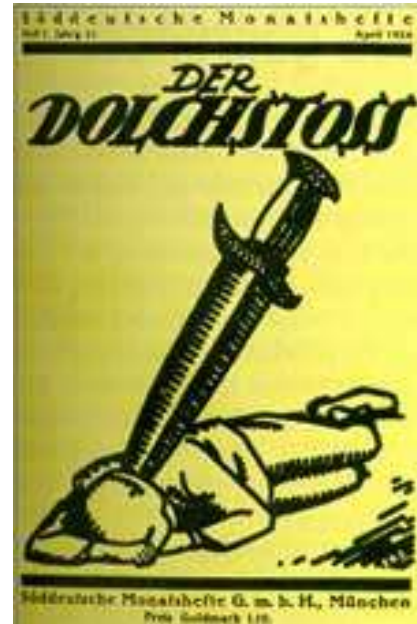


THE GERMAN PEOPLE

- Elected the President and the members of the Reichstag
- All men and women over the age of 20 could vote
- All adults had equal rights and the right of free speech.

The 'stab in the back' myth

Throughout the First World War the German public had been told that their country was winning. As far as the majority of Germans were concerned, the German army was advancing and victory was possible. So when the Kaiser fled and Germany surrendered in November 1918, the German people were shocked. People were very bitter and looked for someone to blame. A simple explanation for the defeat quickly spread. The great German army had been 'stabbed in the back' by the new Weimar government. The politicians who had signed the Armistice became known as the 'November Criminals'.



Supporters of the 'stab in the back' theory, known in German as 'Der Dolchstoß', did not just blame the Weimar government. They also blamed certain sections of German society, such as Jews, communists and sometimes even Catholics. These people were believed to have undermined Germany's war effort by criticizing Germany's leaders and by instigating strikes and unrest, such as the Kiel Mutiny in October 1918.

In reality, Germany had no choice but to surrender. The war had not been going as well as the propaganda led the German public to believe, and the new Weimar government was left with only two choices. They could either refuse to sign the Armistice and be invaded by the Allies, or sign and be blamed for Germany's defeat. By choosing the latter option, the leaders of the new Weimar Republic made themselves highly unpopular with their fellow Germans before their work had even begun.

What did the German people hope for from the Treaty of Versailles?



The Allies said that they wanted a more democratic Germany. That is what we have created. The Kaiser has gone. Our new government needs support, not punishment. The Allies will not punish us for what the Kaiser did.

President Wilson of the USA is on our side. He has already said that the treaty should not be too hard on us. Wilson has come up with Fourteen Points that will form the basis of a fair treaty. France and Britain will have to listen to him.



Germany did not start the First World War. It is not to blame for the war. All the countries involved should take a share of the blame. We do not expect to be punished for a war we did not start!



The terms of the Treaty of Versailles

The terms of the Treaty of Versailles came as a real shock to the German people. France and Britain put pressure on Woodrow Wilson (President of the USA) and forced him to accept a treaty that was designed to seriously weaken Germany.

Land

- Germany lost 13 per cent of its land (and about 6 million people living there).
- This lost land had important raw materials, such as coal.
- Germany was split in two. This was to give Poland access to the sea.
- German troops were not allowed in the Rhineland. This was to make the French feel safe from a German attack.
- All of Germany's overseas colonies were taken away.

Army

- The German army was to be reduced to just 100,000.
- The navy was cut to 15,000 sailors and only six battleships.
- Germany was not allowed submarines, tanks or an air force.

Money

- Germany had to pay reparations. Most of the money would go to France and Belgium.
- At Versailles no sum was fixed. But in 1921 the Allies fixed the total amount that Germany had to pay at £6600 million.

Blame

- In the 'war guilt' clause, Germany was blamed for the war.
- This enabled the Allies to demand compensation from Germany for all the damage that had been caused.

How did the German people react?

The German people felt humiliated by the Treaty of Versailles. They hated the Treaty, and the people who made it.

The German government did not like the Treaty either. However, they had little choice but to accept it. The Allies threatened to restart the war if they did not sign the peace treaty.

However, opponents of the Weimar Republic now blamed the new government for signing the Treaty. To them, the fact that the government had signed the Treaty showed how weak they were and reinforced the view that they had stabbed Germany in the back.

Which extremist political groups were a threat to the Weimar Republic?

The Spartacist Rising, 1919

Who?

The Spartacist League. A Communist group set up by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.

Why?

Spartacists wanted a full-scale Communist revolution like the recent Russian Revolution of 1917. They did not trust the new government. They thought that Ebert would not improve the lives of working people.

What?

In January 1919 workers were protesting throughout Germany. The Spartacists tried to turn this into a revolution. In Berlin they took over the government's newspaper and telegraph headquarters. They hoped protesters would join them and take over other buildings, but this did not happen. The government ordered the army to stop the uprising. The army was helped by units of the Freikorps. These units were made up of ex-soldiers who were anti-Communist. In the fighting that followed over 100 workers were killed.

Success?

The uprising was badly planned. The Spartacists did not get support from other left-wing groups. Rosa Luxemburg was captured by the Freikorps and shot. Her body was dumped in a Berlin canal. Karl Liebknecht was also murdered. Without their main leaders the Spartacists were defeated.

The Red Rising in the Ruhr, 1920

Who?

Groups of workers led by members of the Communist Party.

Why?

Many German workers were angry about bad pay and bad working conditions. Workers had been protesting throughout 1919.

What?

In 1920 a Communist 'Red Army' of 50,000 workers occupied the Ruhr region of Germany and took control of its raw materials. This was one of Germany's main industrial areas. The German army, with the help of the Freikorps, crushed the rising. Over 1000 workers were killed.

Success?

The Communist Party had weak leadership. They did not have a clear plan. Protests did not have widespread, committed support. For the next few years there were lots of demonstrations and strikes, but unrest never seriously threatened the Weimar government's control of Germany.

The Kapp Putsch, 1920

Who?

Freikorps units, led by Wolfgang Kapp.

Why?

In 1920 the government ordered that the Freikorps brigades be disbanded. It had little need for them now that left-wing groups had been crushed.

What?

Around 12,000 Freikorps marched to Berlin. The government was forced to flee. The Freikorps put forward Kapp as the new leader of Germany.

Success?

Kapp and the Freikorps failed to win much support. In Berlin, the Weimar government persuaded the workers to go on strike in protest at the putsch. This made it impossible for Kapp to rule. After four days he fled from Berlin and Ebert's government returned.

The Munich Putsch, 1923

Who?

The Nazi Party (led by Adolf Hitler) and General Ludendorff (a popular First World War hero who had been involved in the Kapp Putsch). The Nazis had 55,000 members and their own private army called the SA.

Why?

Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party believed that democracy only led to weak government. They thought that there should be only one political party, with one leader.

What?

The Nazis planned to take over the government and set up General Ludendorff as leader of Germany. They started in Munich. Hitler and 600 of his SA burst into a meeting where Kahr, the leader of Bavaria, was speaking. They forced Kahr to promise to support their plan.

Success?

The putsch had not been properly planned. Kahr was allowed to leave the beer hall, and the following day he withdrew his support. The German government responded quickly. They ordered the army to crush the revolt. When armed Nazis marched to a military base in Munich they were met by armed police and soldiers. In the fighting that followed fourteen Nazis were killed. The leaders of the putsch were arrested and Hitler was sent to prison for five years. He was released after just nine months, but during this time the Nazis nearly fell apart without their leader.

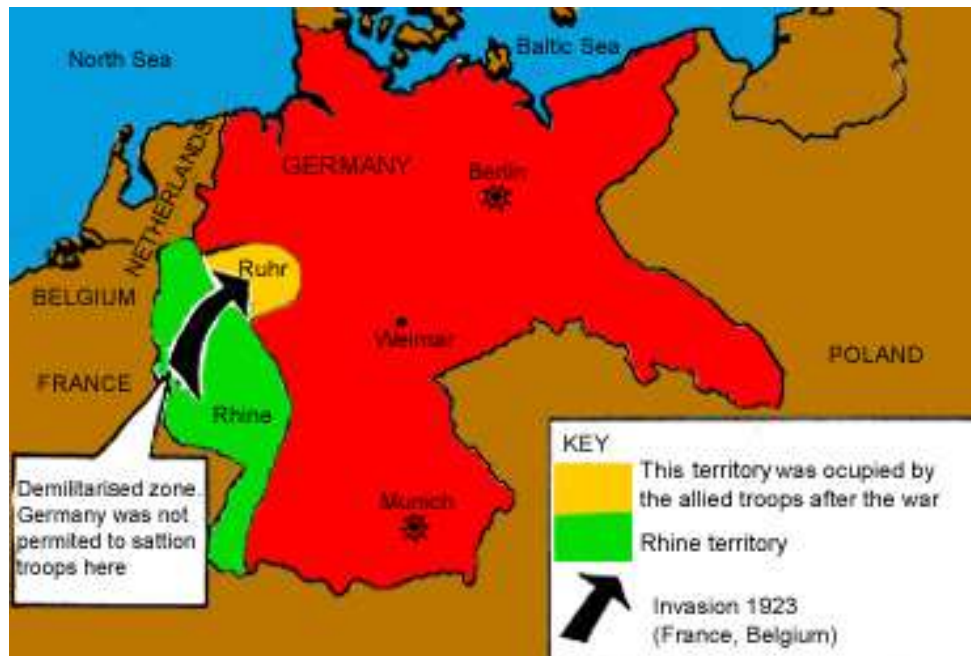
What were the causes and consequences of the invasion of the Ruhr?

Germany struggled to keep up with the reparations payments to the Allies. She managed to pay the first instalment in 1921, but in 1922 Germany announced that she could not afford to pay reparations for the next three years. France did not believe this and was determined to make Germany pay.

In 1923 60,000 French and Belgian troops marched into the Ruhr, an important industrial area of Germany. They seized control of all mines, factories and railways. They took supplies from shops and set up machine gun posts in the streets.

The German government told workers not to cooperate with the French. All workers went on strike, in a policy known as passive resistance. It was a non-violent protest against the invasion. Despite this, 140 Germans were killed in clashes with troops.

The workers who went on strike received money from the German government to support their families. This cost the government a lot of money. To make matters worse, no money was coming in from the Ruhr, one of Germany's main industrial areas. The government was running very short of money.



What were the causes and consequences of hyperinflation?

The order for workers to go on a general strike during France's invasion of the Ruhr may have been patriotic, but it had disastrous consequences for Germany as a whole. The Ruhr was Germany's richest economic area and produced a great deal of wealth for the country. The huge Krupps steelworks was there. By not producing any goods whatsoever, Germany's economy started to suffer. The striking workers had to be paid and the people expelled from their homes had to be looked after. To do this, the government did the worst thing possible - it printed money to cover the cost. This signalled to the outside world that Germany did not have enough money to pay for her day-to-day needs and whatever money may have been invested in Germany was removed by foreign investors.

Such a drop in confidence also caused a crisis in Weimar Germany itself when prices started to rise to match inflation. Very quickly, things got out of control and what is known as **hyperinflation** set in. Prices went up quicker than people could spend their money.

	1918	0.63 marks
	1922	163 marks
January	1923	250 marks
July	1923	3465 marks
September	1923	1,512,000 marks
November	1923	201 billion marks

The rising cost of a loaf of bread in Berlin.

The impact of hyperinflation was huge:

- People were paid by the hour and rushed to pass money to loved ones so that it could be spent before its value meant it was worthless.
- People had to shop with wheelbarrows full of money.
- Bartering became common - exchanging something for something else, but not accepting money for it.
- Pensioners on fixed incomes suffered as pensions became worthless.
- Restaurants did not print menus, as by the time food arrived the price had gone up!
- The poor became even poorer and the winter of 1923 meant that many lived in freezing conditions, burning furniture to get some heat.
- The very rich suffered least because they had sufficient contacts to get food, etc. Most of the very rich were land owners and could produce food on their own estates.
- The group that suffered the most - proportional to their income - was the middle class. Their hard earned savings disappeared overnight.

Hyperinflation proved to many that the old mark was of no use. Germany needed a new currency. In September 1923 Germany had a new Chancellor, the very able Gustav Stresemann. He immediately called off passive resistance and ordered the workers in the Ruhr to go back to work. He knew that this was the only common sense approach to a crisis. The mark was replaced with the Rentenmark which was backed with American gold. In 1924, the **Dawes Plan** was announced. This plan, created by Charles Dawes, an American, set realistic targets for German reparation payments. For example, in 1924, the figure was set at £50 million as opposed to the £2 billion of 1922. The American government also loaned Germany \$200 million. This one action stabilised Weimar Germany and over the next five years, 25 million gold marks was invested in Germany. The economy quickly got back to strength, new factories were built, employment returned and things appeared to be returning to normal. Stresemann gave Germany a sense of purpose and the problems associated with hyperinflation seemed to disappear.

To what extent did Stresemann solve the problems facing the Weimar Republic?

In August 1923 Gustav Stresemann became Chancellor of Germany. The problems he faced were so great most Germans did not think that he or any of the politicians of the Weimar Republic would be able to solve them.

For the next five years (first as Chancellor, then as Foreign Minister) Stresemann tried to find answers to the problems facing the Weimar Republic. How far he succeeded is a debate among historians.

Problem: Hyperinflation

Stresemann's solution: Stresemann acted quickly to deal with hyperinflation. The old money was replaced with a new currency called the Rentenmark. One Rentenmark replaced 1000 billion marks. Old notes were recalled and burned.

Result: The new currency was quickly accepted by the German people. Inflation was brought under control.

However ... The German people never forgot hyperinflation. People who had lost their savings were not compensated. They felt cheated and they blamed the Weimar Republic.

Problem: French occupation of Ruhr

Stresemann's solution: Stresemann called off passive resistance because it had not forced the French to withdraw from the Ruhr and it had created serious economic problems.

Result: The French left the Ruhr.

However ... This was a very unpopular policy in Germany. There was a lot of opposition to it, especially from right-wing extremists. They claimed that it was a sign of weak government. Stresemann had 'given in' to the French.

Problem: Germany was not trusted by other countries

Stresemann's solution: Stresemann decided to cooperate with other countries in Europe. He accepted that Germany could not reclaim the land it had lost in the Treaty of Versailles. He hoped that by doing so the Allies would change the terms of the Treaty.

Result: In 1925 Stresemann signed the Locarno Pacts. These were a series of treaties with Britain, France, Belgium and Italy in which they promised not to invade one another. In 1926 Germany joined the League of Nations. It was given Great Power status, which meant that it could have a say in major decisions that had to be made. In 1926 Stresemann was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

However ... Some Germans thought that Stresemann was weak. By saying that Germany would not try to regain the land it had lost he had once again 'given in' to France. Some army generals believed that Stresemann should have built up the army instead and tried to regain the land lost in the Treaty of Versailles by force.

Problem: Germany was facing massive reparations payments

Stresemann's solution: Stresemann realised that he could not force the Allies to change the Treaty, so he promised to pay reparations. He hoped that the Allies would lower the payments in the future.

Result: The Dawes Plan of 1924 reorganised the way that Germans had to pay reparations. Germany was given a longer period to pay the Allies. In 1929 the Young Plan lowered the amount of money Germany had to pay in reparations from 132,000 million marks to 37,000 million.

However ... The Dawes Plan did not reduce the amount of money Germany had to pay in reparations. Opponents of the Weimar Republic called the Dawes Plan 'a second Versailles'. The Young Plan was also hated by many Germans who thought that Germany should not have to pay reparations at all. Under the terms of the Young Plan, Germany would be paying reparations until 1988.

Problem: Germany needed to rebuild her economy

Stresemann's solution: Stresemann organised big loans for Germany from the USA. This was part of the Dawes Plan (1924).

Result: The German government used this money to improve housing, hospitals, schools and roads. Loans were also given to private German firms. In addition, many US firms set up factories in Germany. Pensions and wages rose (for some).

However ... The German economy was now very dependent on the US economy. Problems in the USA would cause massive problems in Germany. Even Stresemann himself admitted that Germany was 'dancing on a volcano'. Wages did not rise for everyone. Farmers lost out because food prices stayed low. By 1919 farm workers earned only half the national average wage. Many farmers became angry and started to support extreme groups, such as the Nazis, who offered to help them. Unemployment never fell below 1 million. From 1928 it started to rise even higher. Rich people in Germany had to pay higher taxes. They complained that the government was spending too much money on helping the poor and the unemployed.



What cultural changes occurred in Germany during the Weimar period?

Prosperity

Slowly but surely, Stresemann built up Germany's prosperity again. Under the Dawes Plan, reparations payments were spread over a longer period, and 800 million marks in loans from the USA poured into Germany. Some of the money went into German industry, replacing old equipment with the latest technology. Some of the money went into public works like swimming pools, sports stadia and apartment blocks. As well as providing facilities, these projects created jobs.

By 1927 Germany's industry seemed to have recovered very well. In 1928 Germany finally achieved the same levels of production as before the war and regained its place as the world's second greatest industrial power (behind the USA). Wages for industrial workers rose and for many Germans there was a higher standard of living. Reparations were being paid and exports were on the increase. The government was even able to increase welfare benefits and wages for state employees.

From 1924 to 1929 Weimar Germany prospered, bringing good times at last to many of its people and supporting the liveliest cultural life in Europe.

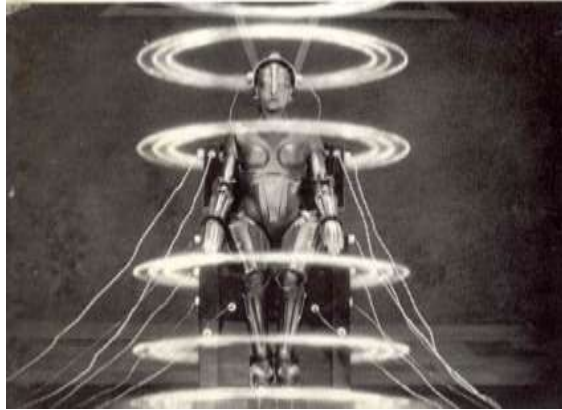
Music and cabaret

After ten years of hardship during the war and the difficult years that followed, many Germans found themselves with money in their pockets and set out to enjoy themselves. Berlin was famous for its daring and liberated night life. In 1927 there were 900 dance bands in Berlin alone. Cabaret artists performed songs criticizing political leaders that would have been banned in the Kaiser's day. These included songs about sex that would have shocked an early generation of Germans. This atmosphere of freedom encouraged many kinds of artists to experiment, pushing the boundaries of what was new and up to date.



Cinema

This was a Golden Age for German cinema, producing one of its most revolutionary directors, Fritz Lang. His film *Nosferatu* (1922) was the first vampire horror movie, while *Metropolis* (1927) is a science fiction story, developing techniques still used by directors today. The world famous German film star Marlene Dietrich later moved to Hollywood, but made her name in *The Blue Angel* (1930).



Theatre

The director Bertold Brecht wrote and produced plays, usually with a left wing theme, breaking new ground in his effort to bring theatre to working people.



Architecture and design

The German architects Walter Gropius and Mies van de Rohe were interested in making full use of 20th century materials, like plate glass, steel and concrete. They produced the *Bauhaus* style, setting the tone for modern architecture through the rest of the century.



Art

Painters too broke new ground and picked up the revolution in 20th century art which had started in France. Georg Grosz produced angry and distorted images of what he saw as the corrupt, selfish, rich and powerful men who were running Germany. The famous abstract artists Paul Klee, who was Swiss, and Wassily Kandinsky, who was Russian, both found Germany a good place to work and both taught at the Bauhaus college in Dessau.

Reaction

The Weimar culture was colourful and exciting to many. However, in many of Germany's villages and country towns, the culture of the cities seemed to represent a moral decline, made worse by American immigrants and Jewish artists and musicians. As you have read, the Bauhaus design college was in Dessau. What you were not told is that it was built in Dessau because it was forced out of Weimar, where it was created, by hostile town officials.

Organisations such as the Wandervogel movement were a reaction to Weimar's culture. The Wandervogel wanted a return to simple country values and wanted to see more help for the countryside and less decadence in the towns. It was a powerful feeling, which the Nazis successfully harnessed in later years.

The Rise of the Nazis

What was Hitler's early life like?

Adolf Hitler, the leader of Nazi Germany, was born on 20 April 1889 in a small Austrian town called Braunau, near to the German border.

His father, Alois, was fifty-one when Hitler was born. He was short-tempered, strict and brutal. It is known that he frequently hit the young Hitler. Alois had an elder son from a previous marriage, but he had ended up in jail for theft. Alois was determined that Hitler was not going to go down the same round - hence his brutal approach to bringing him up.

Alois was a civil servant. This was a respectable job in Braunau. He was shocked and totally disapproving when the young Hitler told him of his desire to be an artist. Alois wanted Hitler to join the civil service.

Hitler's mother, Clara, was the opposite of Alois - very caring and loving and she frequently took Hitler's side when his father's poor temper got the better of him. She doted on her son and for the rest of his life, Hitler carried a photo of his mother with him wherever he went.

Hitler was not popular at school and he made few friends. He was lazy and he rarely excelled at school work. In later years as leader of Germany, he claimed that History had been a strong subject for him - his teacher would have disagreed! His final school report only classed his History work as 'satisfactory'.

Hitler was able, but he simply did not get down to hard work and at the age of eleven he lost his position in the top class of his school - much to the horror of his father.

Alois died when Hitler was thirteen and so there was no strong influence to keep him at school when he was older. After doing very badly in his exams, Hitler left school at the age of fifteen. His mother, as always, supported her son's actions, even though Hitler left school without any qualifications.

When he started his political career, he certainly did not want people to know that he was lazy and a poor achiever at school. He fell out with one of his earliest supporters - Eduard Humer - in 1923 over the fact that Humer told people what Hitler had been like at school.

Humer had been Hitler's French teacher and was in an excellent position to 'spill the beans' - but this met with Hitler's stern disapproval. Such behaviour would have been seriously punished after 1933 - the year when Hitler came to power. After 1933, those who had known Hitler in his early years either kept quiet about what they knew or told those who chose to listen that he was an ideal student, etc.

Hitler had never given up his dream of being an artist and after leaving school he left for Vienna to pursue his dream. However, his life was shattered when, aged 18, his mother died of cancer. Witnesses say that he spent hours just staring at her dead body and drawing sketches of it as she lay on her death bed.

In Vienna, the Vienna Academy of Art, rejected his application as 'he had no School Leaving Certificate'. His drawings, which he presented as evidence of his ability, were rejected as they had too few people in them. The examining board did not want just a landscape artist.

Without work and without any means to support himself, Hitler, short of money, lived in a doss house with tramps. He spent his time painting post cards, which he hoped to sell, and clearing pathways of snow. It was at this stage in his life - about 1908 - that he developed a hatred of the Jews.

He was convinced that it was a Jewish professor that had rejected his art work; he became convinced that a Jewish doctor had been responsible for his mother's death; he cleared the snow-bound paths of beautiful town houses in Vienna where rich people lived and he became convinced that only Jews lived in these homes. By 1910, his mind had become warped and his hatred of the Jews - known as anti-Semitism - had become set.

Hitler called his five years in Vienna 'five years of hardship and misery'. In his book called 'Mein Kampf', Hitler made it clear that his time in Vienna was entirely the fault of the Jews - 'I began to hate them'.

In February 1914, in an attempt to escape his misery, Hitler tried to join the Austrian army. He failed his medical. Years of poor food and sleeping rough had taken their toll on someone who as a PE student at school had been 'excellent' at gymnastics. His medical report stated that he was too weak to actually carry weapons.

In August 1914, World War One was declared. Hitler crossed over the border to Germany, where he had a very brief and not too searching medical which declared that he was fit to be in the German army. Film has been found of the young Hitler in Munich's main square in August 1914, clearly excited at the declaration of war being announced ... along with many others.

In 1924, Hitler wrote 'I sank to my knees and thanked heaven.....that it had given me the good fortune to live at such a time.' There is no doubt that Hitler was a brave soldier. He was a regimental runner. This was a dangerous job, as it exposed Hitler to a lot of enemy fire. His task was to carry messages to officers behind the front line, and then return to the front line with orders.

His fellow soldiers did not like Hitler, as he frequently spoke out about the glories of trench warfare. He was never heard to condemn war, like the rest of his colleagues. He was not a good mixer and rarely went out with his comrades when they had leave from the front. Hitler rose to the rank of corporal - not particularly good over a four year span, and many believe that it was his lack of social skills and his inability to get people to follow his ideas that cost him promotion. Why promote someone who was clearly unpopular?

Though he may have been unpopular with his comrades, his bravery was recognised by his officers. Hitler was awarded Germany's highest award for bravery - the Iron Cross. He

called the day he was given the medal 'the greatest day of my life'. In all Hitler won six medals for bravery.

In the mid-1930s, Hitler met with the future British Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden. It became clear from discussions that they had fought opposite one another at the Battle of Ypres. Eden was impressed with the knowledge of the battle lines which Hitler had - far more than a corporal would have been expected to know, according to Eden.

The war ended disastrously for Hitler. In 1918, he was still convinced that Germany was winning the war - along with many other Germans. In October 1918, just one month before the end of the war, Hitler was blinded by a gas attack at Ypres. While he was recovering in hospital, Germany surrendered. Hitler was devastated. By his own admission, he cried for hours on end and felt nothing but anger and humiliation.

By the time he left hospital with his eyesight restored, he had convinced himself that the Jews had been responsible for Germany's defeat. He believed that Germany would never have surrendered normally and that the nation had been 'stabbed in the back' by the Jews. 'In these nights (after Germany's surrender had been announced) hatred grew in me, hatred for those responsible for this deed. What was all the pain in my eyes compared to this misery?'



What did the Nazis call for in their 25 Point Programme?



The 25 Points

1. The unity of all German-speaking peoples.
2. The abolition of the Treaty of Versailles.
3. Land and colonies to feed Germany's population.
4. Only Germans can be citizens. No Jew can be a German citizen.
5. People in Germany who are not citizens must obey special laws for foreigners.
6. Only German citizens can vote or hold public office.
7. Citizens are entitled to a job and a decent standard of living. If this cannot be achieved, foreigners (who have no rights as citizens) should be expelled from the country.
8. No further immigration of non-Germans must be allowed. All foreigners who have come to Germany since 1914 must be expelled.
9. All citizens have equal rights and duties.
10. The first duty of a citizen is to work.
11. All payments to unemployed people should end.
12. All profits made by profiteers during the war must be shared.
13. Public industries (such as electricity and water) must be nationalised.
14. Large companies must share their profits.
15. Pensions must be improved.
16. Help for small shops and businesses; large department stores (which were mostly owned by Jews) must be closed down.
17. Property reform to give small farmers their land.
18. An all-out battle against criminals, profiteers, etc., who must be punished by death.
19. Reform of the law to make it more German.
20. Improve education so that all Germans can get a job.
21. Improve people's health by making a law that people must do sport.
22. Abolition of the Army, to be replaced by a new People's Army.
23. German newspapers must be free of foreign influence.
24. Freedom of religion.
25. Strong central government with unrestricted authority.

What were the causes and consequences of the Munich Putsch?

The timing of the Putsch

The Nazis had no faith in democracy and so did not believe that taking part in elections and winning votes was the best or right way to achieve power. Instead, the Nazis planned to come to power by seizing control of the country in an armed uprising (putsch).

The Nazis chose the timing for their Putsch carefully. Firstly, Hitler was inspired by the new Italian Prime Minister, Mussolini. He had come to power in 1922, when he carried out his 'March on Rome'. Hitler thought if it worked for Mussolini, then it could work for him too. The Nazis then chose November 1923, as hyperinflation was at its worst. This had damaged the reputation of the government so much that the Nazis believed people would back their Putsch and help to install a new government with Hitler as Chancellor.

Recap

The invasion of the Ruhr

Hitler thought the public would back his Putsch because they were bitter about the way the government handled the invasion of the Ruhr. The government had ordered their troops to stand aside while the French marched into the Ruhr, seizing control of German factories. This made the government look weak. Hitler believed that the German people would rather have a stronger government that would stand up for them and fight against the demands of the Allies.

Hyperinflation

Hitler also thought that many people would back his Putsch because of the way the government had handled hyperinflation. By printing more money to pay for passive resistance in the Ruhr, the government had devalued the Mark. Money became worthless, meaning that the middle class had lost their life savings and many small businesses had gone bankrupt. Many sections of society were severely affected during this period of hyperinflation and felt that the government had created the situation and done little to lessen the effects of this economic disaster. Hitler felt that in times of trouble, such as these, people would be tempted to turn to extremism and extremist parties to sort out their problems.

The events of the Putsch

Hitler chose the state of Bavaria in Germany as the starting point for his putsch. It would begin in Bavaria's capital, Munich, then spread to Berlin, where the Nazis would take control of the whole country. Hitler knew that Bavaria attracted those who wished to overthrow the Weimar Government. It seemed logical therefore that this was the part of Germany where the Nazis would gain an initial foothold. Also, Hitler had already been told by Kahr, the Bavarian Prime Minister, that there was going to be a Bavarian attempt at taking power in Germany and that Kahr wanted Hitler to participate. However, Hitler discovered that Kahr was planning to take over Germany without him.

On 8 November 1923, Hitler and two other leading Nazis, Hermann Goering and Ernst Rohm, together with 600 members of the SA, burst into a meeting being held in the Munich Beer Hall (a drinking club), where Kahr and his most senior officials were addressing a gathering of businessmen. Hitler stopped the meeting and dramatically announced that a revolution was underway and that the Hall was surrounded. Hitler then took Kahr into another room and tried to 'convince' him to support the Nazi revolution. He left Kahr to consider his request. Hitler left the Beer Hall for a short time, putting his most famous and trusted supporter in charge, General Ludendorff. This proved to be a huge mistake. As soon as Hitler had left the Beer Hall, Kahr requested that he and one of his most senior generals, Von Lossow, be allowed to leave and prepare for the putsch. Ludendorff let them go. Kahr left and proceeded to report the whole episode to the authorities. The police and army were alerted and prepared to put down the Nazi putsch.

The next morning Hitler, Goering, Rohm and Ludendorff, along with 3000 Nazi Party members and SA men, began their march into Munich. When they reached the city centre they were met by the army and police. Shooting broke out, but the Nazis were poorly equipped and badly organised. Many of their rifles, which they had bought from the German Army, lacked firing pins. They were no match for the state police and the army.

In the scuffle that followed, 16 Nazis and 4 policemen were shot dead. Hitler fled the scene, but was soon captured and arrested, along with Goering, Rohm and Ludendorff. They were all charged with High Treason - a grave offence punishable by life imprisonment.

The aftermath of the Putsch

Publicity

The Munich Putsch was headline news in Germany. Hitler, who was previously known to few people, became a household name overnight. He defended himself at his trial and used his good speaking skills to make long speeches about the weaknesses of the Weimar Republic. He tried to justify his actions and promote his ideas for a safer and more prosperous Germany. German newspapers published long extracts from these speeches day after day, and many readers began to agree with Hitler. They felt that the Weimar government had let them down since 1919 and that something should be done about the weak economy and political bickering that often took place. What was needed was strong leadership and clear, definite political policies. So Hitler and the Nazi Party received a lot of free publicity thanks to media exposure.

Lessons learnt

Hitler realised that trying to seize power using force alone was not going to work. There was little desire amongst the people of Germany for armed revolution. They had seen enough bloodshed over the previous years, so he had to devise a new strategy. Hitler came to the decision while in prison that the Nazi Party would take part in elections and win power democratically. Propaganda would be used to build up support for the party. Once the Nazis were elected to power, then they could stage their revolution.

Time in prison

Hitler was sent to prison for five years for his part in the Putsch, but he got off lightly. He could have faced life imprisonment, but he had the support of the judges, many of whom disliked the Weimar Republic themselves. Hitler was put in a cell in Landsberg prison, which was relatively comfortable. There, Hitler received all sorts of privileges and enjoyed a very easy life. In the end he served only 9 months of his sentence and used this time to write down his ideas. This he turned into a book entitled 'Mein Kampf' ('My Struggle') which became an instant best seller.

After prison

Hitler now set about reorganising the party for the struggle that lay ahead. Young men were recruited into the SA and the party. Hitler knew now that their energy and enthusiasm would be vital for any future success. Joseph Goebbels was put in charge of a new propaganda campaign and regional party branches were set up around Germany, under the control of party officials called Gauleiters. These officials would spread Nazi ideas over a wide area, listen to local complaints and drum up further support for the Nazi cause.

How did the Nazi Party change their tactics after 1923?

The Munich Putsch made Hitler realise that the Nazis could not seize power by force. He therefore tried to build up support for the Nazi Party so that it could take power by democratic means. After his release from prison, Hitler reorganised the Nazi Party to make it more electable.

- The Nazis ran evening classes for their members in order to make them better public speakers.
- Hitler created the SS. These were Hitler's personal bodyguards, chosen from his most loyal and fanatical supporters.
- Hitler reduced the number of Stormtroopers (SA) and changed the way in which he used them. Instead of preventing opponents from disrupting Nazi meetings, the SA disrupted the meetings of their opponents.
- Hitler appointed Josef Goebbels as the head of Nazi propaganda. Goebbels publicised the Nazi Party using posters, speeches, rallies, newspapers and radio speeches.
- Hitler got the support of rich industrialists and businessmen.
- Hitler set up a network of local branches of the Nazi Party.
- Hitler organised the mergers of like-minded political parties with the Nazi Party.
- The Nazis received most of their money from ordinary members, through donations and charges to attend meetings.
- Local branches of the Nazi Party organised public meetings, with visiting speakers.
- The Nazis adopted the raised right arm as a salute and the swastika as their symbol. Hitler designed the Nazi flag.



How did the Nazi Party do in the 1928 election?

Date of Election	Jan 1919	Jun 1920	May 1924	Dec 1924	May 1928
SPD Social Democrats	165	102	100	131	153
Communists KPD/USPD	22	88	62	45	54
Centre Party (Catholics)	91	64	65	69	62
DDP (Democrats)	75	39	28	32	25
Right-wing parties (BVP/ DVP/DNVP)	63	157	156	174	134
NSDAP (Nazis)			32	14	12
Others	7	9	29	29	51
Total Deputies	423	459	472	493	491

The Nazis were very disappointed with the result of the 1928 election. The great majority of workers supported the Social Democrats. With the help of foreign loans, Stresemann had got the economy back on track. Many factory workers felt that they were doing quite well. Those workers who did want major changes seemed to be voting for the Communist Party. Hitler was failing to appeal to workers.

The Nazis were more successful with farmers and the owners of small businesses. These groups had not done well prior to 1928 and started to turn to the Nazis.

More people were members of the Nazi Party in 1928 than ever before. Membership had almost doubled from 1923. However, the vast majority of Germans did not appear to be attracted to the Nazi Party. After all, the Nazis got under 3% of the votes in the 1928 election.



Who did the Nazis appeal to in 1928 and why did others not vote for them?



I was proud to fight for Germany in the First World War. The army was stabbed in the back by the criminals who signed the peace treaty. I loved army life - the uniform, the friendship, the excitement. During the war my life had a purpose. Now I just work in a factory. This country needs strong leadership, like we had in the army. With a strong leader like Adolf Hitler our country could become great again.



I'm a Jewish businessman. I also fought for Germany in the First World War. The Treaty of Versailles was a disgrace. Our government should never have given in to the Allies. During the early 1920s I lost a lot of my savings because of hyperinflation. However, Stresemann seems to have sorted things out and my business is doing well. If the Nazi Party got into power they could ruin all of Stresemann's hard work, and they're not exactly fans of us Jews!



I am a 20 year old student and an active member of the Communist Party. I think the government should be doing more to help the workers. All the money goes to the handful of rich industrialists who own the factories. Things need to change, but the Communists are the only ones who can change Germany for the better. The Nazis would destroy the country completely.



I am a farm worker. The farmer I work for has had to cut my wages. I don't blame him, I blame the government. Farmers are losing out because of low food prices and the politicians don't seem to care. They lost a lot of money during the hyperinflation a few years ago. They have worked hard all their lives but they are struggling to survive on what they receive from the government. The Nazi Party are promising to resolve the problems caused by the Weimar government and I'm inclined to believe them.



My husband's factory is doing very well at the moment. Stresemann has done a great job. The US loans have been a real boost. Business is booming. I'm also pleased that all the political violence has stopped. There is no place for violence in a civilised country. The only thing that scares me is the Communists. It would be a disaster if they took over the country. The last thing we want is for Germany to go the same way as the Soviet Union. The Nazi Party seems to be the only one capable of dealing with the Communists.

Why had the Nazis failed to get into power by 1928?

The 1928 election showed that the Nazi Party was a long way from getting into power. Less than 3 per cent of Germans had voted for the Nazis. As Hitler approached his fortieth birthday his dream of ruling Germany appeared to be fading. Why was this the case, when he had put so much work into reorganising the Nazi Party?

Explanation 1: The Nazis lacked the support of the working class

- Most workers voted for the Social Democratic Party.
- Workers who wanted to see change tended to vote for the Communist Party rather than the Nazis.

Explanation 2: 1924-1929 was a time of peace and prosperity

- Stresemann had managed to solve many of the economic problems of the early 1920s. Loans from foreign countries had helped to rebuild the German economy. As a result, most people felt better off.
- Stresemann had built better relationships with other countries and political violence inside Germany had decreased.

Explanation 3: The Nazis' ideas were too extreme

- People were put off by the Nazis' anti-semitic ideas and their aim of invading other countries.
- The SA were very violent. They were seen by many people as little more than hired thugs.

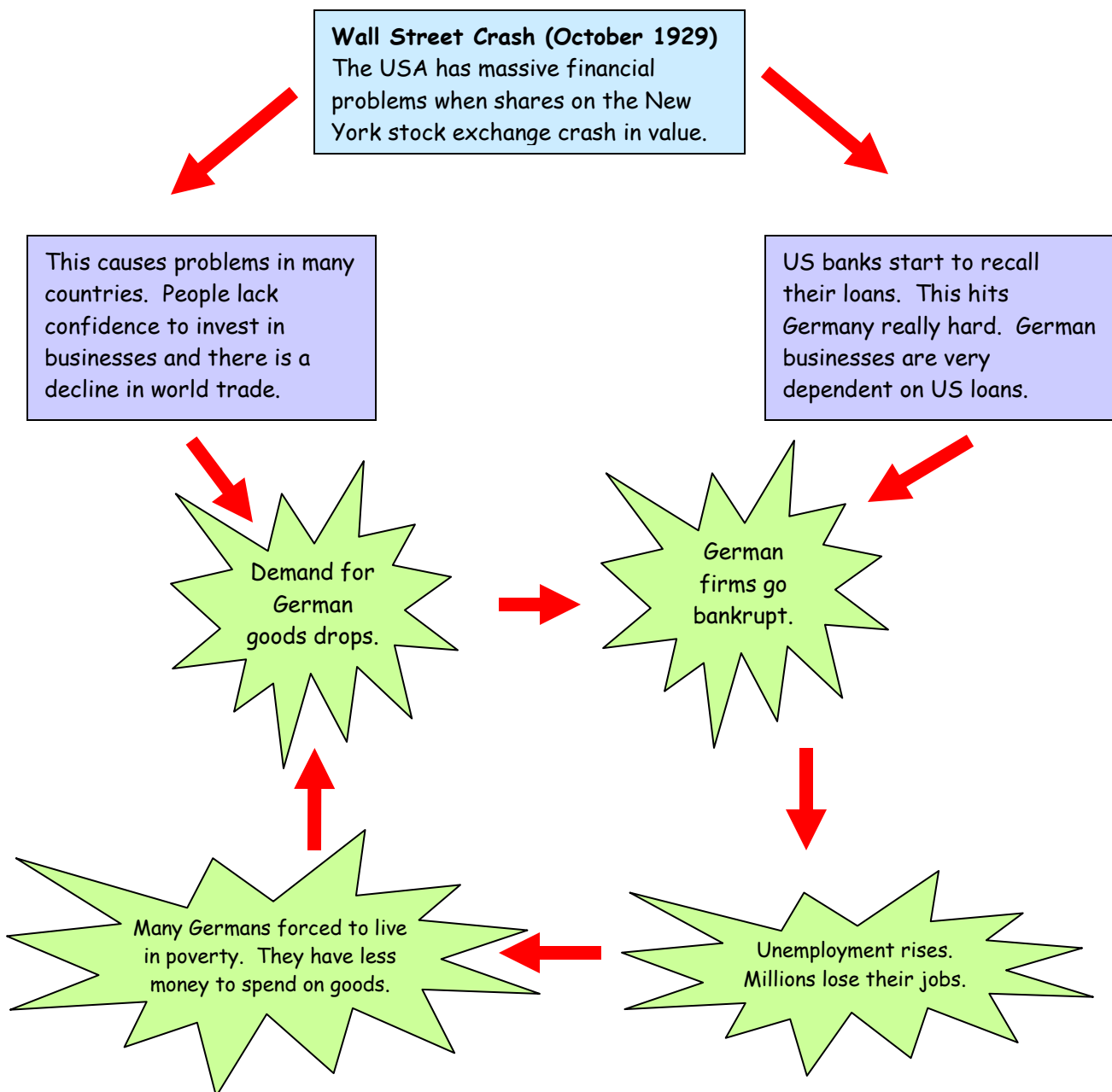


How did Hitler become Chancellor in 1933?

The Wall Street Crash

When the US stockmarket on Wall Street crashed in 1929 it created many problems. People lost the confidence to invest in companies and US banks and businesses lost large sums of money. As a result, one in four people became unemployed.

This created serious problems for countries in Europe that traded with the USA. Germany was particularly badly hit. The whole German economy was very dependent on loans from America. As can be seen in the diagram below, a vicious circle was created, causing unemployment and widespread poverty. This period in German history is known as the Great Depression.



The Great Depression had three main effects.

1. The Depression made life a great struggle for people

The effects of the Great Depression were felt throughout Germany. Many businesses went bankrupt. Those that survived saw their profits drop. Farmers also struggled and many went out of business. By 1932 unemployment had reached 6 million.

2 People thought the government was not doing enough to help

- The government found it difficult to agree on how to respond to the Great Depression. For a long time they did very little to help people in need.
- The government was worried about spending extra money to help people hit by unemployment and poverty. They thought that spending more money could lead to hyperinflation.
- As more people lost their jobs the government received less money from taxes. They responded by cutting back the amount of money that they spent to help those in need.

This led
to ...



3 The Depression increased support for extreme parties

- The Great Depression made people angry. Many blamed the political parties that had been running the country and the democratic way that the Weimar Republic was governed. The depression made the government look weak and powerless. People started to turn to more extreme political parties instead.
- The unemployment and poverty caused by the Great Depression had a significant impact on how Germans voted. As unemployment increased, so did the support for more extreme political parties. Both unemployment and votes for the Nazi Party peaked in January 1932.

Hitler's leadership skills

Hitler was a strong leader who was able to make people believe that he alone could save them from the problems facing Germany. He was also a very charismatic and powerful public speaker. He seemed to be able to identify with his audience and to fill them with a sense of hope.

Hitler's leadership skills played a crucial role in the Nazis' rise to power. His speeches and personality gained the Nazis a great deal of support. He came across as a strong leader who could solve Germany's problems.

Nazi promises

The Nazis concentrated on issues that the German people were worried about. They promised to:

- solve Germany's economic problems
- provide strong leadership
- ignore the Treaty of Versailles
- build up the army
- make Germany a great country again.

Their promises were designed to appeal to everyone, from businessmen and farmers to factory workers and housewives. The Nazis were very flexible in what they said to the German people. If they found that a policy was unpopular, they would simply drop it.

Organisation

The Nazis were able to raise money to fund their election campaigns. A lot of this money came from ordinary members. The Nazis were also able to attract huge donations from rich businessmen like Fritz Thyssen.

Nazi Party members worked hard in their local regions to spread the Nazi message through door-to-door leafleting and public meetings. Nazi posters could be seen everywhere. The Nazis also organised soup kitchens and shelters for the unemployed.

The SA also played an important role. These were violent times. People liked the fact that the SA were prepared to stand up to the Communists, who often fought battles with the police. With their uniforms and marches the SA looked capable of bringing law and order to Germany.

Nazi propaganda

Nazi propaganda was organised by Josef Goebbels. The Nazis used the latest technology - loudspeakers, slide shows and films - to spread their message. In the 1932 election campaign they even used planes to make sure that Hitler could speak in as many places as possible.

The mass rallies that the Nazis held also helped to win them support. Music, lighting and marches gave the impression of discipline and order in a time of chaos. The Nazis also used powerful propaganda posters with simple slogans, like the one shown on the right, to spread their key ideas.

Fear of communism

From 1930 to 1932 support for the Communists increased. The German Communist Party was the largest in Europe, outside the Soviet Union. Many people in Germany feared they would take over the country. The Communists had a lot of support from the working class and close links with the Soviet Union. But German business owners and farmers feared the Communists because in the Soviet Union the Communist government had taken over big industries and farmers' land.

Weak opposition

Opposition to the Nazis was weak and divided. The Nazis' two main rivals, the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party, were bitter enemies. They were not prepared to work together to stop the Nazis. People had lost trust in the parties who had ruled Germany during the Great Depression. They did not seem to be able to do anything to solve the crisis. To make matters worse, they argued amongst themselves about what to do. They did not offer strong, effective leadership.

A political deal

In July 1932 the Nazis won 37 per cent of the vote in the elections. They were the largest party in the Reichstag. However, the Nazis did not have the majority they needed to control the Reichstag.

Hitler demanded to be made Chancellor. However, Paul von Hindenburg (the President) refused. Instead, he appointed his friend, Franz von Papen (leader of the Catholic Centre Party), as Chancellor. Papen soon faced many problems. He did not have the support of the Reichstag. General von Schleicher persuaded Hindenburg to remove Papen. In December, Schleicher became Chancellor.

Papen wanted revenge. He was determined to get back into power and remove Schleicher. The Nazis were still the largest party, so Papen thought he could use them to get power for himself. He met with Hitler and made a political deal. They agreed to form a new government, with Hitler as Chancellor and Papen as Vice-Chancellor. Wealthy businessmen went along with the plan because they believed that Papen, not Hitler, would control the new government.

Papen persuaded Hindenburg to agree to his plan. In January 1933 Hitler became Chancellor. Hindenburg and Papen thought that they could control Hitler. They made sure that only three out of the twelve people who made up the new government were Nazis.



Who did the Nazis appeal to in 1932 and why did some people still not vote for them?



I have lost my job working in the factory. Like most of my friends I am now unemployed. My landlord has kicked me out of my flat because I could not afford the rent. The government is doing nothing to help. They don't care about people like me. The Nazis are the only party who seem to be doing anything. The SA have been running soup kitchens and they have put some of my friends up in a hostel.



My business is really struggling. People just don't have the money to spend anymore. Demand for goods has dropped and so have my profits. I have had to lay off a lot of workers. The situation at the moment really scares me. Hitler blames the crisis on the Jews. With so much bitterness and anger about, people are starting to listen to him. They want someone to blame. I am worried about the safety of my family.



I have not been able to get a job since I left university. I am well-qualified, but with so much unemployment there is little hope for people like me. My boyfriend and I are living in a tent in the local park whilst the rich still live life to the full. The only good news is that support for the Communists is growing. The Nazis keep trying to break up our meetings, but many workers are starting to listen to our message.



The farmer that I used to work for has gone bankrupt. Food prices had been falling for a number of years. The depression made the situation even worse. It was impossible for small farms such as his to survive. I am grateful that he kept me on as long as he did. I have moved in with my parents because I cannot afford a house of my own. It is hard for my parents. They help me out as much as they can, but the government has cut their pension payments again.



My husband's factory has gone bankrupt. The loans that he depended on stopped after the Wall Street Crash. Many of the banks have gone bankrupt too. There is no hope of my husband raising enough money to set up another business. We're having to live off our savings. The government is useless. The different parties spend too long arguing amongst themselves. What we need is a strong leader who can sort out the mess that we are in. Gangs of workers hang around on the streets and there is a lot of violence. I really fear that the Communists could take over. People are desperate and are starting to look for drastic alternatives.

How strong was Hitler's position in January 1933?

When Hitler became Chancellor he was in a very weak position.

- Support for the Nazis had fallen from 37 per cent to 33 per cent during 1932. In order to control the Reichstag, Hitler needed over 50 per cent of the vote. He was a long way from achieving this.
- Hitler could be sacked by President Hindenburg at any time.
- Apart from Hitler, only two other Nazis had been given positions in the new government. The nine other positions were filled by non-Nazis whom Hindenburg and Papen thought they could control.
- Hindenburg and Papen planned to use Hitler like a puppet. Papen boasted to a friend, 'In two months we will have pushed Hitler into a corner so that he squeaks'.

How did Hitler become a dictator?

27 February 1933 - Reichstag fire

The Reichstag building in Berlin was destroyed by fire. Marinus van der Lubbe, a Dutch Communist, was found at the scene. He appeared to have been acting alone but the Nazis claimed that this was the start of a Communist plot to take over Germany. That night 4000 Communist leaders were arrested by the police. The next day Hitler persuaded Hindenburg to grant him emergency powers. This gave the police the power to arrest people and hold them for as long as they wanted, without trial. Thousands of people who opposed the Nazi Party were arrested. The Nazis also banned meetings held by their political opponents and closed down their newspapers.



5 March 1933 - New elections

The Nazis used the police and the SA to put pressure on their political opponents. More than 50 opponents of the Nazis were killed and many more were injured. The Nazis used radio to broadcast their anti-Communist message. This helped the Nazis achieve their best ever election result, with 44 per cent of the vote.

24 March 1933 - The Enabling Act

Hitler wanted still more. He wanted an Enabling Act. This law would give Hitler the power to pass laws without going through the Reichstag or the President. This law would place all the power in his hands.

In order to achieve this he needed to get two-thirds of the Reichstag to support it. They had to be persuaded to give up their power and hand it to Hitler. How did he achieve this?

The Communist Party were banned from voting. The Centre Party were persuaded to vote in favour of the law as Hitler promised to protect the Catholic Church. Only the Social Democrats voted against it. The Enabling Act was passed by 444 votes to 94.

The Weimar Republic and the democracy it brought to Germany had ended. The Reichstag had voted itself out of existence. Germany was now a dictatorship. All important decisions would be made by Hitler and his closest advisers.



2 May 1933 - Trade unions taken over

Trade union offices were taken over and union leaders arrested. All trade unions were merged into one organisation, the new German Labour Front (DAF). The DAF was controlled by the Nazis.

July 1933 - All political parties banned

A law was introduced that banned people from forming new political parties. By this stage the Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party had already been banned. Other political parties had broken up. This new law meant that no new parties could be set up to challenge the Nazis. There was now only one party in Germany.



29-30 June 1934 - Night of the Long Knives

By 1934 Hitler had become concerned at the increasing power of the SA. It had over 3 million members and wanted to take control of the army. The leader of the SA, Ernst Röhm, was a close friend of Hitler's. However, Hitler thought that Röhm was a potential rival.

Hitler had another reason for attacking the SA. He needed to reassure the army. The army was smaller than the SA but it was well-trained and disciplined. It was the only organisation that had the power to overthrow Hitler. Army leaders feared being taken over by the SA and resented the violence they used. The army was supported by powerful businessmen who wanted Hitler to expand the army and buy new weapons.

On the Night of the Long Knives, SA leaders were dragged from their beds, taken to Nazi headquarters and shot dead. Röhm too was arrested. When he refused to commit suicide, he was shot in prison. The Night of the Long Knives sent a warning to the rest of Germany about how ruthless Hitler was in his pursuit of power.



2 August 1934 - Death of Hindenburg

When Hindenburg died, Hitler made himself President as well as Chancellor. He was now the undisputed head of the government and took the title Führer (Supreme Leader).



August 1934 - Army oath

The army took an oath of personal loyalty to Hitler. Hitler was now Supreme Commander of the armed forces. All German soldiers swore to obey Hitler and to risk their life for him at any time.

How did the Nazis use terror to keep control of Germany?



Heinrich Himmler

Childhood: Born in 1900, the son of a teacher. Did well at school.

Appearance and

character: Timid, frail and clumsy. People said he looked like a quiet, small town bank clerk. Hard worker and efficient organiser. Clever at building up his own power. Although he took overall control of the Holocaust, he fainted at the sight of Jews being killed.

Early career: Joined German in 1918 but did not fight. Failed to make a living as a poultry farmer. Joined the Nazi Party in 1923. Took part in the Munich Putsch in the same year.

Role in Nazi

Germany: 1929: made head of the SS - Hitler's private army.
1936: made head of all police in Nazi Germany, including the Gestapo (secret police).
1941: set up the Death's Head units of the SS that ran slave labour camps and carried out the mass murder of Jews.

The SS

SS stands for 'Schutz Staffel', which means protection squad. The black uniformed SS was originally Hitler's personal bodyguard. Himmler built it up and by 1939 it had 240,000 members. All recruits had to be recognisably 'Aryan' - blond, blue-eyed and physically fit. Himmler imposed high physical standards: even having a filled tooth was enough to disqualify you. Himmler trained the SS to be ruthless and fiercely loyal to Hitler. They could arrest people without trial and could search houses.

Concentration camps

As soon as the Nazi Party came to power the SS arrested many Nazi opponents and put them in temporary prisons. Then special concentration camps were constructed, usually in remote rural areas.

At first, inmates were held in the camps for short periods of questioning, torture, hard labour and forced instruction in Nazi ideas. By the late 1930s concentration camps were being run by a section of the SS called Death's Head units, as forced labour camps. Some prisoners were used to work for Nazi-owned businesses. Himmler controlled over 150 companies who used slave labour to make all kinds of goods, including weapons. The camps held Jews, Communists, Socialists, trade unionists, church leaders - anyone who criticised the Nazis.

The Gestapo

This was the state secret police. They could tap telephones, open mail and collect information from a huge network of informers. Informers reported on local people who they believed were 'anti-Nazi'. The Gestapo arrested people without trial, tortured them and imprisoned them in concentration camps.

The police and courts

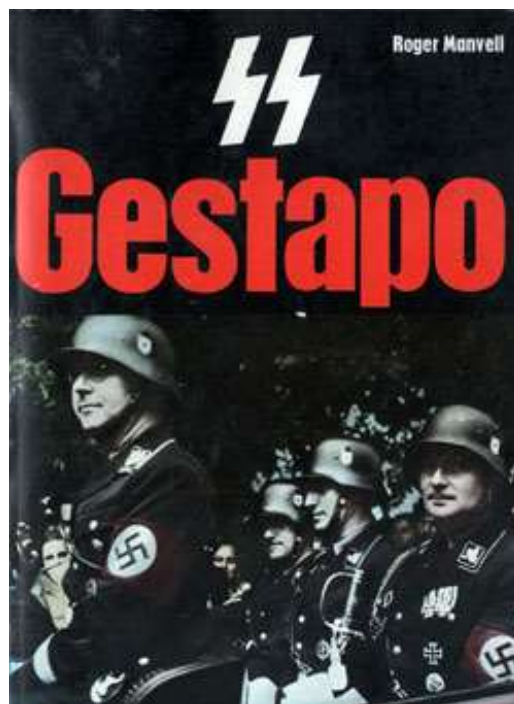
The ordinary police continued with their regular work, but their bosses were all Nazis. This meant that the police became part of the network of informers, collecting information on everyone, whilst ignoring crimes committed by Nazis.

The courts were under Nazi control as well. Nazis were appointed as judges so a fair trial was impossible. The number of offences carrying the death penalty went up from three in 1933 to 46 by 1943. These included: listening to foreign radio stations; telling an anti-Nazi joke; having a sexual relationship with a Jew; and being a habitual criminal.

Local wardens

The Nazi Party had a strong local structure. Every town was divided into small units, called blocks. The Block Warden, a local Nazi, visited every home in the block each week, collecting donations to the Nazi Party and checking up on everyone.

As a Socialist opponent of Hitler said, 'Every staircase has an informer.' The Block Warden wrote a report on everyone in their block. This report could affect whether or not you got a job. The Warden noted any signs of independent thinking, for example, not flying the Nazi flag on celebration days, or not being enthusiastic enough about Hitler and his achievements.



How did the Nazis use propaganda to keep control of Germany?



Josef Goebbels

Childhood: Born in 1897, the son of a poor manual worker. Crippled by polio as a child.

Appearance and

character: Small, walked with a limp as a result of polio. Intelligent and well-educated. Good speaker - second only to Hitler. Spoke in favour of family life and simplicity, but often visited nightclubs, had mistresses and owned several houses.

Early career: Declared medically unfit to fight in the First World War. He tried to make a living as a playwright, then turned to journalism. Joined the Nazi Party in 1922. At first he opposed Hitler, but later supported him.

Role in Nazi

Germany: 1928: put in charge of Nazi propaganda. Brilliant propaganda designer and thinker.

1938: gave orders for Kristallnacht (attack on Jewish property).

1943: put in complete charge of the war effort. As defeat loomed he helped to organise 'total war', raising morale and help for victims of the Allied bombings.

Newspapers

Anti-Nazi newspapers were shut down. Jews were banned from owning or working for newspapers. Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda sent out daily instructions to all remaining newspapers telling them what to print, what kind of pictures should be published and what angle they should take on the news. Display boards were set up in public places so that everyone could read these newspapers.

Rallies

The Nazis always presented an image of order and control to the German people, with their uniforms, meetings, torchlight processions and rallies. Once they were in power, they made their rallies even more impressive. A huge stadium at Nuremberg was specially built for them. Goebbels stage-managed these rallies to give a dramatic impression of overwhelming power and unity.

Radio

Goebbels took over control of all radio broadcasting. Regular programmes included Hitler's speeches, German music and German history - foreign programmes could not be picked up. Cheap radios were made so that as many Germans as possible could listen to Nazi propaganda. By 1939, 70 per cent of Germans owned a radio. Loudspeakers were set up in public squares all over Germany and people were encouraged to listen to important radio programmes and announcements.

Books

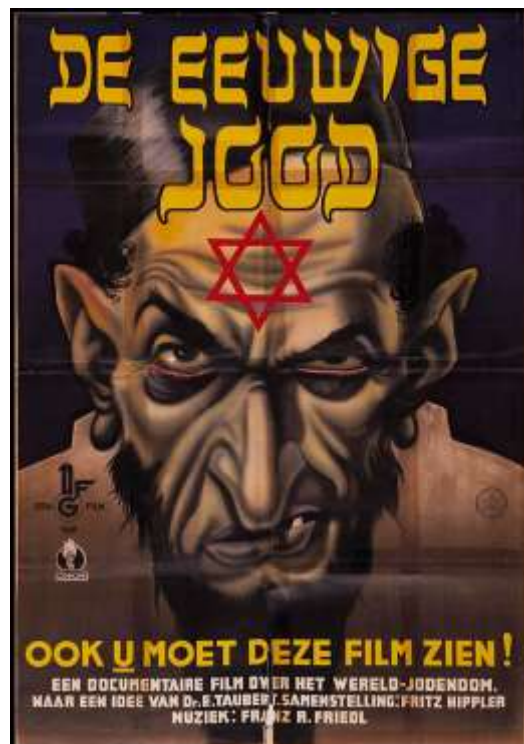
As soon as they came to power, the Nazis organised official book burnings - books were burned in public on massive bonfires. The Nazis burned:

- books by Communists and Socialists
- books by Jews
- books by anyone they disapproved of
- books containing ideas they disapproved of.

By burning books the Nazis were preventing German people from reading and thinking beyond the Nazi message. All new books published had to be censored by Goebbels' Ministry.

Films

The cinema was very popular in most countries in the 1930s. Goebbels controlled all of the films made in Germany. Most were adventure stories, comedies or love stories, but there was always a newsreel film, *News of the Week*. The newsreels were made by Goebbels' film makers and shown before the main film. Some openly pro-Nazi films were made on Goebbels' orders and with strict control of the scripts.



Who opposed the Nazis?



The White Rose Group

A small group of students at Munich University, led by siblings Hans (age 24) and Sophie Scholl (21) and Christoph Probst. They disagreed with the Nazis' aims and persecution of the Jews. They were disgusted with the lack of opposition and wanted to shame the German people for supporting Hitler. They were most active between Summer 1942 and February 1943.

They spread anti-Nazi messages by handing out leaflets, putting up posters and writing anti-Nazi graffiti on walls.

The Nazis branded them as outsiders and enemies of the state. The caretaker saw Hans and Sophie handing out leaflets at university and informed the Gestapo. They were arrested and tortured. On 22 February 1943 they were sentenced to death and executed.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Bonhoeffer trained young men to become Christian ministers. He was against the Nazis from 1933, he pointed out that they were anti-Christian. He opposed their policies on race and euthanasia.

He believed that religion and politics were linked - true religion meant standing up against evil and corrupt governments. When Hitler came to power in 1933, Bonhoeffer left Germany to work in London.

However, when Niemoller set up the Confessional Church which spoke out against the Nazis in Germany, Bonhoeffer returned.

On the outbreak of WWII in 1939, the Gestapo closed down Bonhoeffer's college and banned him from preaching. Over the next few years he continued to work closely with other opponents of Hitler.

In April 1943, Bonhoeffer was arrested with his brother Klaus and brother-in-law. He had used his church contacts to help 14 Jews escape to Switzerland and was accused of plotting against Hitler.

He was held in Buchenwald Concentration Camp until being moved to Flossenbug, where he was executed in April 1945.





Martin Niemöller

Martin Niemöller was a First World War hero (U-boat captain). He was a right wing supporter, and was even a member of the Freikorps after the war. He began to openly oppose the Nazis from the 1930s.

Not many Christian ministers opposed the Nazi persecution of the Jews, and only 50 ministers (out of 17,000) were arrested for opposition activities or speeches. Many ministers had sworn an oath of loyalty to the Führer after he set up the Reich Church.

Many however, refused. Niemöller helped set up an alternative - the Confessional Church - and began to speak out against the Nazis.

In his sermons he spoke out against the arrest of Christian ministers and the Nazi changes to the Christian Church. He did not, however, speak out against Hitler's political ideas or policies, in fact he admitted that Hitler's anti-Semitism was a more extreme version of his own prejudices. He was arrested in 1937 and sent to Dachau concentration camp. He was due to be executed, however he was freed by the Allies shortly before the end of WWII.

Political opponents

The main enemies of the Nazi regime were the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and workers' Trade Unions. They were targeted very early on (after the Reichstag Fire). This was because they had so many supporters. Even when they lost the elections of 1933, they had millions of members.

They wanted workers' rights. The Socialist Party wanted a return to democracy, the Communists wanted a revolution.

The Nazis banned all these organisations. However, members still met in secret - although it was very dangerous because of the risk of arrest. They used passive resistance, such as strikes and handing out leaflets. They also write anti-Nazi graffiti on walls.

From 1933, the offices of all political opponents were ransacked by the SA and later the Gestapo. Their offices were closed, and once the Enabling Act was passed, it became illegal to be a member of these groups. Many were beaten up, tortured and some were killed.

There were 400 strikes between 1933 and 1935, but the Gestapo continued to make arrests - two thirds of the Communist Party's members were arrested.

Many were sent to the concentration camps, many more went into exile abroad or were forced to go underground, holding secret meetings.





The Kreisau Circle

This group was made up of army generals, intellectuals and officials. Many were members of the Nazi Party - but disliked their policies or became disillusioned with Hitler towards the end of WWII (1943-45).

Many of them were middle class and disliked Hitler's working class past. They were also horrified by the actions of the SS death squads in Europe - it went against the army's code of conduct.

There were said to be dozens of plots to assassinate Hitler - this group in particular had regular access to the Führer. The most famous was the July Bomb plot (known as Operation Valkyrie) - organised by Claus von Stauffenburg, a Colonel who had supported the Nazis to begin with, but was disgusted by their anti-Semitism. He planted a bomb in Hitler's military headquarters on a day when he knew Hitler would be there. The bomb exploded and four people were killed, however it failed to kill Hitler because of two main problems - the windows had been left open, lessening the effect of the explosion, and someone had moved the briefcase bomb at the last minute. Despite this, it was the closest anybody had come to killing the Führer. All the plotters were rounded up and executed.

Hitler also used this as an excuse to get rid of other opponents - 5000 people were arrested and executed as a result of this plot, including most members of the Kreisau Circle.

The Edelweiss Pirates

The Edelweiss Pirates was a mostly working class youth group who opposed the Nazi regime. It wasn't one big organisation, but a collection of groups. Local areas had their versions or branches. Numbers varied, but it was popular and in large cities might have had several hundred members.

They used passive resistance to oppose the Nazis. They refused to join the Hitler Youth, and when this became compulsory they avoided meetings at all costs. They wanted to have fun and do what they wanted - not what they were told.

They engaged in various activities to oppose the Nazis - including making up rude alternatives to the pro-Nazi songs sung by the Hitler Youth, drinking, listening to banned music ('degenerate jazz and blues'), having sex and going to dances. Some even beat up Nazi Youth members.

Their unofficial uniform was a checked shirt and wearing badges showing the edelweiss flower (a white Alpine flower which became a symbol of resistance for some).

The Gestapo did investigate the groups. Many members of the Edelweiss Pirates were beaten up, but punishments were not as severe as for adult opponents. Many had their heads shaved. After a Hitler Youth leader in Cologne was killed, some Edelweiss Pirates were hanged in revenge.



Why didn't most Germans oppose the Nazi regime?



I don't like the Nazis, but I'm scared to say so to anyone else. I know exactly what happens to those who do; the Gestapo calls on them one night and they disappear. They get beaten to death in the police station, or on the way there, or in a concentration camp. I daren't say what I think. The local Nazi boss - a dreadful fat lout, used to be a butcher's assistant, no manners at all - knows I don't like them. He's looking for a chance to get me. He even offered one of my servants a thousand marks for any information which could lead to my arrest. My beautiful Germany has been overrun by these pigs! But I've got my estate to manage and my family and servants to think of, I really dare not speak out.



I like the Nazis. I think Hitler is the best thing that has happened to Germany for years. Look what the Nazis have achieved. Look how they have built up our army and navy again. Other countries won't be putting us down so much now! Also unemployment - those layabouts are being made to work instead of living off the ole. There's order on the streets now - none of the noise and violence we had to put up with under that awful Weimar government. The Nazis are organised and focused and Hitler is the strong man we need. Of course, to set Germany straight again has meant taking a firm line with some people, like those Communists who want a revolution here, as in the USSR. They deserve to be locked up. So do all the other bad elements Hitler has removed.



Sometimes I get worried about what the Nazis are doing, but then when I hear them explain things it all makes sense again. My older brother is in the Hitler Youth and gets to go to big torchlight rallies; he says it's a wonderful experience, swept along by the huge crowd all working for the same thing. It's on the radio too; my mum and I listen to Goebbels telling us all the great things Hitler and the Nazis have done and how they're going to make Germany even better. Of course, some bad people have been locked up, but Hitler says they deserved it - and I trust Hitler. My dad reads the papers and he says 'Why should we want to change things when the Nazis are getting everything right? We had all that argument under Weimar and look where it got us.'



I hate the Nazis but what can I do? Since the other political parties have been banned there is nowhere to turn. I feel like I am on my own. I used to read the Socialist newspaper, but it stopped soon after the Nazis took over. The Socialist rallies and meetings I used to go to don't happen anymore. Most of the great speakers, organisers and leaders we used to rely on have gone. Many have died in those awful Nazi camps. There are some old friends I can talk to, of course. We have a grumble and crack a few jokes. But I'm not a heroine; I can't go underground, or sabotage the war factories, much as I'd like to. I wouldn't know how, and I've got my old mother and three children to look after. But we're not going to get rid of Hitler by cracking anti-Nazi jokes. There's no one to lead us anymore. We feel so weak, useless and disorganised.

What was life like for women in Nazi Germany?

All the Nazi leaders were men. The Nazis were a very male dominated organisation. Hitler had a very traditional view of the role of the German woman as wife and mother. It is worth remembering that many women agreed with him. In the traditional rural areas and small towns, many women felt that the proper role of a woman was to support her husband. There was also resentment towards working women in the early 1930s, since they were seen as keeping men out of jobs. It all created a lot of pressure on women to conform to what the Nazis called 'the traditional balance' between men and women. 'No true German woman wears trousers' said a Nazi newspaper headline when the film star Marlene Dietrich appeared wearing trousers in public.

Aimed at the falling birth rate, Hitler offered tempting financial incentives for married couples to have at least four children. Women got a 'Gold Cross' for having eight children, and were given a privileged seat at Nazi meetings. Posters, radio broadcasts and newsreels all celebrated the ideas of motherhood and home building. The German Maidens' League (Bund Deutscher Mädel) reinforced these ideas, focusing on a combination of good physical health and housekeeping skills. This again was reinforced at school.

Will all these encouragements, the birth rate did increase from 15 per thousand in 1933 to 20 per thousand in 1939. There was also an increase in pregnancies outside of marriage. In Nazi Germany it was not considered a social problem if an unmarried woman had a child. In fact, it was encouraged. The Nazis established 'Lebensborns', which were buildings where selected unmarried women could go to get pregnant by a 'racially pure' SS man. These were not buildings that were hidden away in some back street. The government openly publicised them and they had a white flag with a red dot in the middle to identify them to the public.

Opportunities for women were limited. Married professional women were forced to give up their jobs and stay at home with their families, which many resented as a restriction on their freedom. Discrimination against women applicants for jobs was actively encouraged.

In the late 1930s, the Nazis had to do an about-turn, as they suddenly needed more women workers because the supply of unemployed men was drying up. Many women had to struggle with both family and work responsibilities. However, even during the crisis years of 1942-1945, when German industry was struggling to cope with the demand for war supplies, Nazi policy on women was still torn between their traditional stereotype of the mother, and the actual needs of the workplace. For example, there was no chance for German women to serve in the armed forces, as there was in Allied countries.

What was life like for young people in Nazi Germany?

Hitler wanted to turn the young into loyal Nazis. The three greatest influences on young people were their families, schools and what they did in their free time. The Nazis tried to control all of these influences. To a large extent, the Nazis succeeded in creating a generation of loyal, young Nazis. Many young people seemed naturally drawn to Hitler and the emphasis that he placed upon sport, the military, family and the community. However, a minority of young people proved to be fiercely opposed to the Nazi regime.

Education

The Nazis knew that successful indoctrination had to begin in school. They made sure that the whole education system was geared towards presenting children with Nazi views. Many existing school textbooks were recalled and destroyed, being replaced with official Nazi textbooks. These new textbooks were used as vehicles for Nazi propaganda.

History concentrated on the rise of the Nazi Party, the injustices of the Treaty of Versailles (where the German army had been 'stabbed in the back'), the weaknesses of the Weimar Republic, and the evils of Communism and the Jews.

Biology taught that Germans were members of the Aryan race, which was superior to other races due to its greater intelligence and capacity to work hard. Pupils were taught about eugenics, e.g. the supposed 'genetic dangers' of mating with other, 'weaker' races, and how to measure facial features in order to classify racial types.

Geography taught about the land Germany lost under the Treaty of Versailles, and the need for more living space, or Lebensraum, for the expansion of the Master Race.

Even Maths was used to convey Nazi propaganda through 'problem' questions, as this source from an official Nazi textbook shows.

'The construction of a lunatic asylum costs 6 million marks. How many houses at 15,000 marks each could have been built for that amount?'

PE was given a central role. 15% of school time was devoted to PE. Pupils had to pass a PE exam, and unsatisfactory performance could lead to being expelled. This helped to ensure that boys would be fit for any future army service, and girls would be fit for producing as many babies as possible.

Boys and girls were taught in separate schools. Girls spent much less time than boys on academic subjects, as boys were being prepared for the world of work, while girls were being prepared for the world of motherhood. Boys would be the future workers, leaders and protectors of Germany, girls the bearers and educators of a new race of German Aryans.

As a result, girls spent a lot of time in domestic science lessons - being taught how to be ideal wives and mothers. This, it was hoped, would ensure the future development of the Master Race. Timetables also focused heavily upon race studies and eugenics. These subjects informed girls of how best to recognise a fit, healthy Aryan to marry and have children with.

Jewish children found school life very difficult after the Nazis came to power in 1933. They were banned from attending many lessons, on the grounds that many subjects were there to 'increase children's Germanic self-awareness' and it was not right that Jews should attend these. In many other classes, Jews were used as examples of those possessing non-Aryan characteristics, e.g. being brought to the front of the class and having their noses measured in eugenics lessons.

Teachers

The Nazis knew that teachers could play an important role in passing on Nazi ideas and values to young people at an early age. In 1933 it became compulsory for teachers to join the Nazi Teachers' Association, those that refused lost their jobs. By 1936, 32% of teachers had officially become members of the Nazi Party - a higher percentage of members than any other profession. Teachers who appeared to lack sufficient 'loyalty' were rapidly removed from their posts to make way for the more fervent supporters of the Nazi regime. Some leading Nazis had little respect for teaching as a profession however, and believed that youths could be taught Nazi ideals more effectively through membership of the Hitler Youth.

After 1933 Jewish teachers were removed from their posts, as it was deemed undesirable to have Aryan children taught by a Jew. This was part of a wider wave of general persecution that swept through Germany after the Nazis came to power. By 1935 no Jewish teachers were to be found in schools where Aryan children were taught. Some teachers continued to teach in Jewish schools, but by 1942 these schools had been banned altogether.

University education

Universities were also strictly controlled by the Nazis. Many university lecturers, like teachers in schools, were enthusiastic supporters of the Nazis and their ideas. As with schools, those lecturers that were not sympathetic with the Nazi regime were removed from their posts after 1933. By this time, however, many lecturers had decided that they did not want their talents wasted and had left of their own accord, with many moving to live abroad (Albert Einstein being just one example. He left Germany as early as 1932).

Universities lost 15% of their staff in the first eighteen months of Nazi rule. This severely affected the number of students who could take up university places, as well as the actual standard of education that students received. By 1939 there were only about half the number of students in university that there had been in 1933. This was partly down to the Nazi policy of getting rid of potential opponents from universities, partly because the Nazis were making it increasingly difficult for young women to attend courses at university and partly because many leading Nazis failed to realise the importance of higher education in terms of the benefits that can be brought to society through research and further study.

Free time - youth organisations

Youth movements had been popular in Germany for a long time, particularly during the Weimar period. They usually involved hiking, singing folk songs, camping and sport. Churches or political groups ran most of these movements.

The Nazis had formed their own organisation, the Hitler Youth (HJ), in 1926. Its aims were:

- To indoctrinate children with Nazi ideology
- To make them feel part of a mass movement
- To prepare them for a military future.

However, when the Nazis came to power in 1933, they knew it was vital to shut down all youth movements except their own, if they were to make young people loyal to their regime.

By 1936 all other political youth organisations had been ordered to disband, and young people were encouraged to join the Hitler Youth instead. In 1936 The Hitler Youth Law was introduced to encourage youths who had not already joined the HJ to do so. There was also a massive Nazi propaganda campaign to encourage enlistment.

It is easy to see how so many youths were influenced by Nazi propaganda that extolled the virtues of being a Hitler Youth. Young people nearly always look for excitement and adventure and the HJ gave them the opportunity to engage not only in sporting activities, but to participate in hikes, camps and orienteering exercises. They were also won over by the close association with the armed forces. Each member of the HJ received a smart, high quality military-style uniform and a dagger engraved with the slogan 'Blood and Honour'. They learnt how to use a rifle and throw a grenade, how to fight in hand-to-hand combat and to work as a team. And of course, to add to this feeling of importance, members of the Hitler Youth were to be respected within the community as the 'future of Germany'.

Boys

6-10 joined the 'Pimpf' (Little Fellows) for camping activities, wearing miniature SA uniforms and swastika armbands.

10-14 joined the Deutsche Jungvolk (German Young People), to learn about Nazi ideology and military matters.

14-18 joined the Hitler Jugend (Hitler Youth) with a strong emphasis on military training.

Girls

6-14 joined the Jungmadel (Young Maidens) for camping activities, and education about health and motherhood.

14-21 joined the Bund Deutsche Madel (BDM) (League of German Maidens), with a strong emphasis on motherhood and household issues.

By 1939 membership of the Hitler Youth was compulsory. This move was very successful. By 1939, 82% of youngsters aged 10 to 18 were members of the Hitler Youth. But that still meant that 18% of young people refused to join. What happened to them?

The family

The Nazis were confident that the indoctrination of young people that took place in schools and in the Hitler Youth would create a new generation of loyal Nazis.

Many parents who disagreed with some or all Nazi policies tried to carefully educate their children in what they saw as a more appropriate manner at home. This, however, became increasingly dangerous. As the youth of Germany was exposed to increasing levels of propaganda, so the Nazis were better able to persuade young people that the Führer was always right. Children were even used as informants by the Nazis and were encouraged to report any evidence of anti-Nazi behaviour displayed by adults to Nazi officials. School teachers, doctors, neighbours and even parents had to be careful of conveying anti-Nazi views, as they ran the risk of being imprisoned if found out.

What was life like for workers in Nazi Germany?

Hitler's brilliant economist, Dr Hjalmar Schacht, reduced unemployment from 5.5 million in 1932 to 0.3 million in 1938. How did he do it?

- **By a huge building programme.** New motorways (autobahns), railways, schools, hospitals, and houses were built and paid for by the government.
- **By increasing the armed forces from 100,000 to 1,400,000.** All males aged 18-25 had to do two years' military service.
- **By rearming Germany.** In 1936 Hermann Göring produced a Four Year Plan, to prepare Germany for war. New tanks, aeroplanes, guns and battleships were ordered. Industries of all kinds, especially steel, boomed and millions of jobs were created to build these weapons.
- **By removing many women from the employment register.**
- **By removing many Jews from the employment register.**

Trade Unions were abolished and all workers had to join the German Labour Front (DAF), a Nazi-run organisation headed by Robert Ley. The DAF arrange better facilities for workers in factories. An organisation called 'Strength Through Joy' provided workers with cheap cinema and concert tickets, trips and family holidays, even cruises on luxury liners.

However, workers had no rights. Strikes were illegal. The DAF just did what employers wanted. Wages fell and hours of work increased. All young men had to work for the National Labour Service for six months. They were treated as if they were in the army: planting trees and digging ditches, receiving only food, accommodation and pocket money.

The promised *Volkswagen*, a 'people's car' designed by Porsche, for which many workers paid 5 marks a week in advance, was never delivered.

Farmers had been among the Nazis' keenest supporters. The Nazis also believed that German peasant farmers were the backbone of the German 'master race'. They therefore supported small peasant farmers, giving them guaranteed prices for their produce, and security if they fell behind on their rent.

However, encouraging small farms meant that German farming stayed old fashioned and inefficient. The high food prices hit factory workers on reduced wages.

Big businesses really prospered under the Nazis. Workers did as they were told and couldn't strike. Rearmament brought big government orders for iron and steel, explosives and chemicals.

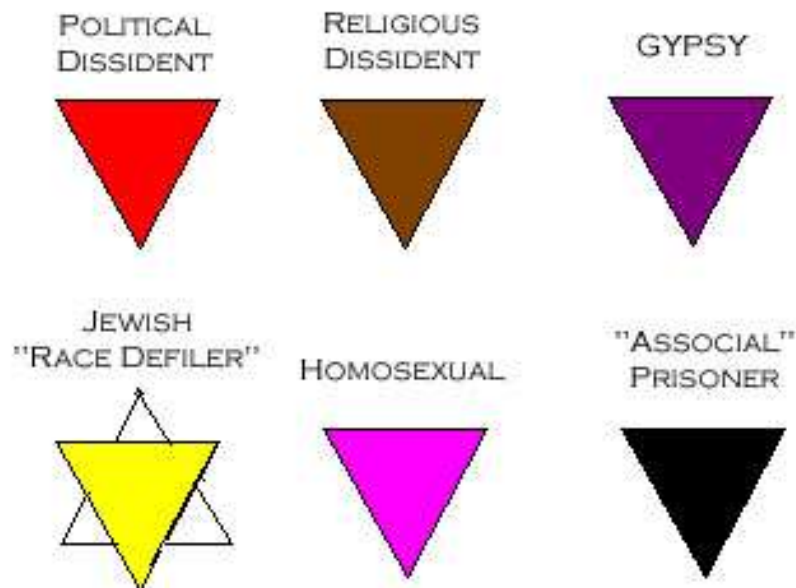
However, small businesses and small shops did less well, losing out in competition with big companies and department stores.



How did the Nazis deal with people who did not 'fit'?

Several types of people failed to meet the Nazi ideal. It was soon very clear that there was no place in Nazi Germany for these 'undesirables'.

- **Those who *wouldn't* work.** Habitual criminals, tramps, beggars, alcoholics and others like them were regarded as socially useless. They were rounded up in 1933 and 500,000 of them were sent to concentration camps.
- **Those who *couldn't* work.** The physically disabled and mentally ill were also regarded as a burden. From 1938 onwards the Nazis began to put such people to death in gas chambers. Around 350,000 men and women who were said to produce 'inferior' offspring, or who carried inherited conditions, were compulsorily sterilised.
- **Those who did not fit into 'normal' families.** This included homosexuals, who were savagely persecuted. About 15,000 were arrested and sent to concentration camps. Many were castrated or used in medical experiments. Himmler was shocked to discover several homosexuals in the SS. He ordered them to be sent to a camp where they were 'shot while trying to escape'.
- **Those who would not make Hitler their first loyalty.** Socialists and Communists refused to do this for political reasons; Jehovah's Witnesses for religious reasons. All were put in concentration camps.
- **Those who were not 'Aryans'.** This included black people, Gypsies and Jews. Some 385 black Germans were compulsorily sterilised. Gypsies were harassed for two reasons; they were not Aryans and they did not do ordinary work. Gypsies were put in concentration camps and around 500,000 were later killed in the death camps.



The Nuremberg Race Laws

The Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935 deprived German Jews of their rights of citizenship, giving them the status of 'subjects' in Hitler's Reich. The laws also made it forbidden for Jews to marry or have sexual relations with Aryans or to employ young Aryan women as household help (an Aryan being a person of Germanic heritage.).

The first two laws comprising the Nuremberg Race Laws were: 'The Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour' (regarding Jewish marriage) and 'The Reich Citizenship Law' (designating Jews as subjects).

Those laws were soon followed by 'The Law for the Protection of the Genetic Health of the German People', which required all persons wanting to marry to submit to a medical examination, after which a 'Certificate of Fitness to Marry' would be issued if they were found to be disease free. The certificate was required in order to get a marriage licence.

The Nuremberg Laws had the unexpected result of causing confusion and heated debate over who was a 'full Jew'. The Nazis then issued instructional charts to help distinguish Jews from Mischlinge (Germans of mixed race) and Aryans.

The Nazis settled on defining a 'full Jew' as a person with three Jewish grandparents. Those with less were designated as Mischlinge of two degrees: First Degree - two Jewish grandparents; Second Degree - one Jewish grandparent.

After the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, a dozen supplemental Nazi decrees were issued that eventually outlawed the Jews completely, depriving them of their rights as human beings.

Kristallnacht

A massive, coordinated attack on Jews throughout the German Reich on the night of 9 November 1938 and into the next day, has come to be known as Kristallnacht, or The Night of Broken Glass.

The attack came after Herschel Grynszpan, a 17 year old Jew living in Paris, shot and killed a member of the German Embassy staff there in retaliation for the poor treatment his father and his family suffered at the hands of the Nazis in Germany.

On 27 October, Grynszpan's family and over 15,000 other Jews, originally from Poland, had been expelled from Germany without any warning. They were forcibly transported by train in boxcars, then dumped at the Polish border.

For Adolf Hitler and Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, the shooting in Paris provided an opportunity to incite Germans to 'rise in bloody vengeance against the Jews.'

On 9 November, mob violence broke out as the regular German police stood by and crowds of spectators watched. Nazi storm troopers, along with members of the SS and Hitler Youth, beat and murdered Jews, broke into and wrecked Jewish homes, and brutalized Jewish women and children.

All over Germany, Austria and other Nazi controlled areas, Jewish shops and department stores had their windows smashed and contents destroyed. Synagogues were

especially targeted for vandalism, including desecration of sacred Torah scrolls. Hundreds of synagogues were systematically burned, while local fire departments stood by or simply prevented the fire from spreading to surrounding buildings.

About 25,000 Jewish men were rounded up and later sent to concentration camps, where they were often brutalized by SS guards and in some cases randomly chosen to be beaten to death.

The reaction outside Germany to Kristallnacht was shock and outrage, creating a storm of negative publicity in newspapers and among radio commentators that served to isolate Hitler's Germany from the civilized nations and weaken any pro-Nazi sentiments in those countries. Shortly after Kristallnacht, the United States recalled its ambassador permanently.

In Germany, on 12 November, top Nazis, including Hermann Göring and Joseph Goebbels, held a meeting concerning the economic impact of the damage and to discuss further measures to be taken against the Jews. SS leader Reinhard Heydrich reported 7500 businesses destroyed, 267 synagogues burned (with 177 totally destroyed) and 91 Jews killed.

Heydrich requested new decrees barring Jews from any contact with Germans by excluding them from public transportation, schools, even hospitals, essentially forcing them into ghettos or out of the country. Goebbels said the Jews would be made to clean out the debris from burned out synagogues, which would then be turned into car parks.

At this meeting it was decided to eliminate Jews entirely from economic life in the Reich by transferring all Jewish property and enterprises to Aryans, with minor compensation given to the Jews in the form of bonds.

Regarding the economic impact of the damage from Kristallnacht and the resulting massive insurance claims, Hermann Göring stated the Jews themselves would be billed for the damage and that any insurance money due to them would be confiscated by the State.

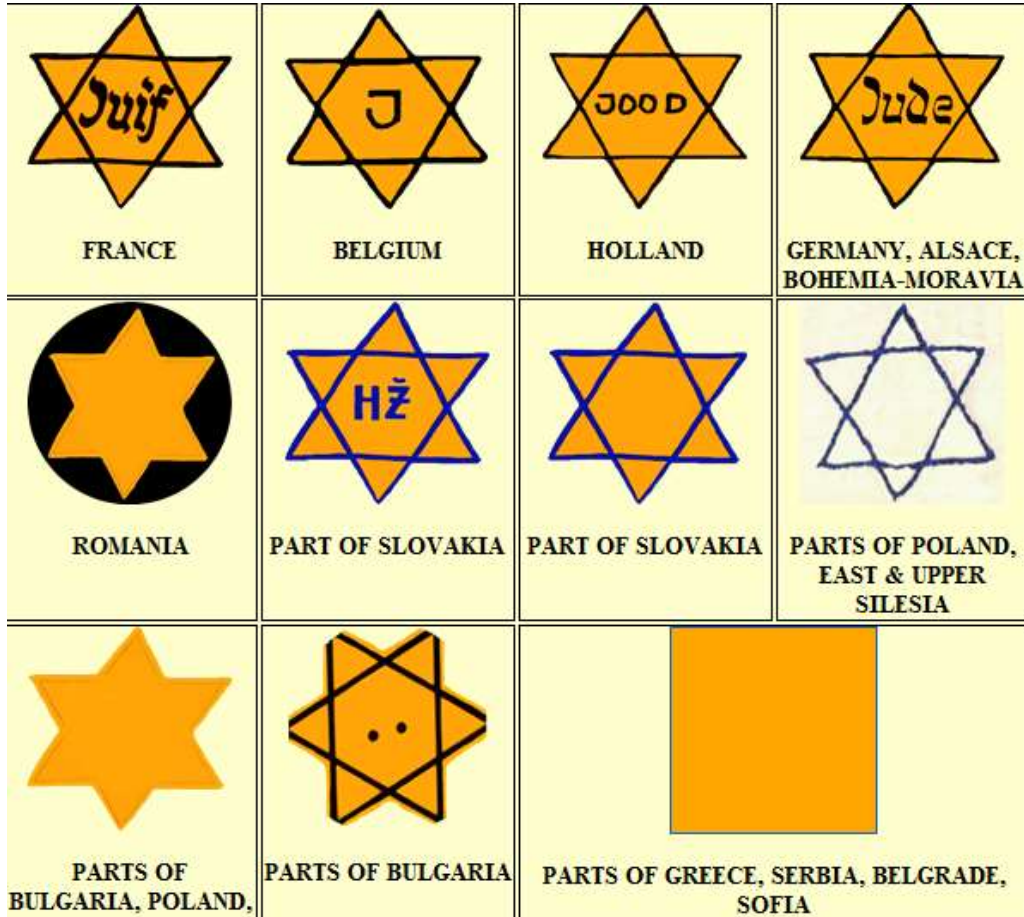
"I shall close the meeting with these words," said Göring, "German Jewry shall, as punishment for their abominable crimes, etcetera, have to make a contribution for one billion marks. That will work. The swine won't commit another murder. Incidentally, I would like to say that I would not like to be a Jew in Germany."

Jewish badges

In November 1939, one year after Kristallnacht, the Nazi government followed the recommendation of leader Reinhard Heydrich and first introduced mandatory ID badges for Jews in Poland. It was announced that 'severe punishment is in store for Jews who do not wear the yellow badge on back and front.'

This Nazi policy was one of the tactics used to isolate Jews from the rest of the population and it enabled the Nazi government to identify, concentrate and ultimately murder the Jews of Europe. Helmut Knochen, chief of the Security Service and the Security Police in France and Belgium, stated that the yellow badge was 'another step on the road to the Final Solution.'

The following are replicas of the badges worn by Jews across Europe:



The badges were often printed on coarse yellow cloth and were a garish yellow colour. The star, which represented the star of David, was outlined in thick black lines and the word 'Jew' was printed in mock-Hebraic type. In the Warsaw ghetto, Jews wore a white armband with a blue Star of David on their left arm. In some ghettos, even babies in prams had to wear the armbands or stars. Jewish shops were also marked with a yellow star.

The star was intended to humiliate Jews and to mark them out for segregation and discrimination. The policy also made it easier to identify Jews for deportation to camps.

Ghettos

During World War II, ghettos were set up in Nazi-occupied Europe by Nazi Germany in order to confine and segregate Jews and sometimes Gypsies into a usually tightly packed area within a city.

Ghettos across Eastern Europe varied in their size, scope and living conditions. The conditions in the ghettos were brutal. In Warsaw, 30% of the city population was forced to live in 2.4% of the city's area, a density of 7.2 people per room. In the ghetto of Odrzywół, 700 people lived in an area previously occupied by five families, between 12 and 30 to each

small room. The Jews were not allowed out of the ghetto, so they had to rely on smuggling and the starvation rations supplied by the Nazis: in Warsaw this was 253 calories (1,060 kJ) per Jew, compared to 669 calories (2,800 kJ) per Pole and 2,613 calories (10,940 kJ) per German. With the crowded living conditions, starvation diets, and little sanitation (in the Łódź Ghetto 95% of apartments had no sanitation, piped water or sewers) hundreds of thousands of Jews died of disease and hunger.

There were three types of ghettos created. Open ghettos did not have walls or fences, and existed mostly in the initial stages of World War II in German-occupied Poland. There were severe restrictions on entering and leaving them.

Closed or sealed ghettos were situated mostly in German-occupied Poland and the occupied Soviet Union. They were surrounded by brick walls, fences or barbed wire stretched between posts. Jews were not allowed to live in any other areas under the threat of capital punishment. In the closed ghettos the living conditions were the worst. The quarters were extremely crowded and unsanitary. Starvation, chronic shortages of food, lack of heat in winter and inadequate municipal services led to frequent outbreaks of epidemics such as dysentery and typhus and to a high mortality rate. Most Nazi ghettos were of this particular type.

The destruction or extermination ghettos existed in the final stages of the Holocaust, for between two and six weeks only, in German-occupied Soviet Union, especially in Lithuania and the Soviet Ukraine, as well as in Hungary. They were tightly sealed off. The Jewish population was imprisoned in them, only to be deported or shot by the Germans, often with the aid of their collaborationist forces.

In 1942, the Nazis began Operation Reinhard, the systematic deportation of Jews to extermination camps. Nazi authorities throughout Europe (eg., France, Italy and many others) would deport Jews to ghettos in Eastern Europe, or most often directly to extermination camps. Almost 300,000 people were deported from the Warsaw Ghetto alone to Treblinka over the course of 52 days. In some ghettos, local resistance organisations staged ghetto uprisings. None were successful, and the Jewish populations of the ghettos were almost entirely killed. On June 21, 1943, Heinrich Himmler issued an order to liquidate all ghettos and transfer remaining Jewish inhabitants to concentration camps. A few ghettos were re-designated as concentration camps and existed until 1944.

Deportation

From the moment the war in the Soviet Union had begun, special Nazi killing squads (Einsatzgruppen) had targeted selected male Jews, and by the autumn of 1941 that policy of murder had been expanded to include the shooting of whole Jewish families in the east. But the Jews of Western Europe were still relatively unscathed by this horror in the Soviet Union - now that was about to change.

As early as mid-August 1941, a number of leading Nazis called for some of the German Jews to be sent east. On 15 August, Leopold Gutterer, state secretary to the Propaganda Minister, Josef Goebbels, said that all the Jews in Berlin who were not working should be 'carted off to Russia... Best of all would be to kill them.' A few days later, Goebbels himself pressed the case for the deportation of the German Jews to Adolf Hitler. But Hitler didn't agree - for him the war was still the absolute priority and he believed the fate of the Jews in Western Europe would probably have to be resolved only at the end of

the war (but he expected the war, certainly in the Soviet Union, to be over very soon). However, in a significant increase in anti-Semitic action against the Jews of Germany, Hitler now agreed that they should be forced to wear the mark of the yellow star on their clothing.

In September 1941, another leading Nazi pressed Hitler to deport the German Jews. Karl Kaufmann, Gauleiter of Hamburg, wrote to Hitler in the aftermath of the bombing raid on the city on 15 September, asking him to permit the deportation of the city's Jews to free up housing for non-Jewish residents whose homes had been destroyed. In response to this - and a number of other - requests, Hitler finally agreed in late September that the German Jews should be sent east. But this was not some kind of seismic shift in Hitler's attitude to the Jews, merely a change in tactical timing. Hitler had now decided that, since he felt the war against the Soviet Union would be over soon, there was little difference in deporting the Jews immediately and deporting them 'when the war was over'.

But where should the Jews be sent? One possibility was the Lodz ghetto in Poland, but this could only be a short term solution, as the ghetto was so overcrowded. Another possibility was to send them into the occupied Soviet Union, where perhaps they could occupy space left by the Jews who had already been killed there. But that seemed an illogical policy - killing one Jew to make place for another?

In October 1941, the Jews of Hamburg were forcibly deported. Lucille Eichengreen, then a seventeen year old German schoolgirl, was escorted with her mother and sister to Hamburg station. As they were taken to the train station, the non-Jewish population watched them 'stony faced. It was either an ugly word or they looked away. It didn't make me feel cross. It made me feel afraid.'

The Madagascar Plan was a proposal of the Nazi government of Germany to relocate the Jewish population of Europe to the island of Madagascar. Franz Rademacher, head of the Jewish Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Nazi government, proposed the idea in June 1940, shortly before France's defeat in the Battle of France. The proposal called for the handing over of Madagascar, then a French colony, to Germany as part of the French surrender terms.

The idea of deporting Polish Jews to Madagascar was investigated by the Polish government in 1937, but the task force sent to evaluate the island's potential determined that only 5,000 to 7,000 families could be accommodated, or even as few as 500 families by some estimates. As efforts by the Nazis to encourage emigration of the Jewish population of Germany were only partially successful, the idea of deporting Jews to Madagascar was revived by the Nazi government in 1940, in spite of the island's limited capacity to support human life.

Rademacher recommended on 3 June 1940 that Madagascar should be made available as a destination for the Jews of Europe. With Adolf Hitler's approval, Adolf Eichmann released a memorandum on 15 August 1940 calling for the resettlement of a million Jews per year for four years, with the island governed as a police state under the SS. The plan was postponed after the Germans failed to defeat the British in the Battle of Britain later in 1940 and was permanently shelved in 1942 with the commencement of the extermination of European Jewry.

The 'Final Solution'

On 31 July 1941, Göring (the Economics Minister) ordered Himmler (the Head of the SS) and Heydrich (an SS general) to carry out the 'final solution to the Jewish question' in Europe. Shooting (carried out by the Einsatzgruppen) and the ghettos were seen as inefficient ways of killing millions of people. In January 1942 Nazi leaders held a Conference at Wannsee, near Berlin, to work out a more 'efficient' way of killing Jews. It was decided to bring in industrial methods. Six special death camps were built, with gas chambers capable of killing 2000 people at once, and large ovens for disposing of the bodies.

All the death camps had good railway links, so Jews could be brought by train from all over Europe, a terrible journey of several days. Many died on the way. Auschwitz was one of these camps, and began killing people by the end of 1941. By the end of the war, 1,100,000 people had been killed in the Auschwitz gas chambers. The other camps were:

- **Treblinka:** at this tiny camp, only 600 metres by 400 metres, at least 850,000 Jews, mainly from Warsaw, but also from elsewhere in Europe, including Hungary and Greece, were killed, as well as over 200 Gypsies and Roma.
- **Sobibor:** at least 300,000 Jews as well as thousands of Soviet prisoners of war were killed here.
- **Belzec:** at least 600,000 Jews, mainly from Poland, and several thousand Gypsies were killed here.
- **Majdenek:** 60,000 Jews from all over Europe, as well as non-Jewish Poles and Russians were killed here.
- **Chelmno:** over 150,000 Jews were killed here.

(Note that these death camps were different from the fifteen concentration camps, which the Nazis had used as early as 1933 to imprison their enemies. Concentration camps were not built to kill people - although many thousands did die in them, of brutality, disease and starvation).

In every country the Nazis ruled, lists of Jews were drawn up. They were taken from their homes and put on trains. On arrival at the camp inmates walked past a Nazi doctor who indicated whether they should go left or right; left to work, right to the gas chambers. About 80 per cent of arrivals were killed at once; those put to work normally lasted just a few months before dying of malnutrition and overwork. By the end of the war some 6 million Jews had been murdered, as well as Gypsies, homosexuals and around 4 million Russian prisoners of war.

However ...

Jews did fight against what was happening to them. Jewish resistance groups took to the countryside and armed uprisings took place in the ghettos. The Warsaw ghetto uprising of 1943 lasted 43 days against the German army. There were also uprisings at the camps. In October 1943, 600 Jews escaped from Sobibor camp in Poland.

Why did Hitler establish the Four Year Plan in 1936?

The year 1936 marked a major turning point in the Nazi economy. Hitler's initial policies had clearly been successful. Confidence was restored and unemployment had been reduced to 1.6 million, so millions of Germans were benefiting. The question now was how to progress. Schacht, who had initially accepted the need for a large increase in public spending to reflate the economy and finance rearmament, was becoming increasingly concerned at the distortion of the economy due to rearmament. Severe strains due to a budget deficit and increasing balance of payments problems were occurring. Schacht wanted to encourage exports and slow the increase in arms expenditure. Hitler became impatient with Schacht's caution and on 4 September 1936 put Goering in charge of a new economic organisation, the Office of the Four Year Plan.

The plan aimed to make Germany ready for war within four years. Priority had to be given to rearmament and Germany has to be made as self-sufficient as possible in food and industrial production, a policy known as autarky. Emphasis was placed on the development of raw materials and machinery production, providing the base for the later concentration on arms production, ready for war in the mid 1940s. Goering, the Commander-in-Chief of the Luftwaffe, now became the major economic figure in Germany. As head of the Four Year Plan he presided over a vast new organisation, typically cutting across existing economic ministries. The Office of the Four Year Plan intervened throughout the economy, issuing a series of regulations controlling foreign exchange, labour, raw materials, prices, etc, thus creating a managed economy. The government set overall targets that private industry had to meet.

How successful was the policy of autarky?

Autarky means economic self sufficiency - that is a country providing all its economic needs within itself, and thus not being dependent upon imports. Hitler considered this crucial for a country geared for war to avoid the damage inflicted by an economic blockade.

Total autarky is very hard to achieve and it was not envisaged that Germany would be totally self-sufficient. It would, however, lose its dependence on other countries for its key commodities. This was initially achieved by:

- Increasing Germany's own production of key commodities, such as iron and food.
- Developing ersatz (substitute) products, for example developing Buna (artificial rubber) to replace rubber imports and using coal to produce oil.

However, it took 6 tons of coal to produce 1 ton of oil. By 1939 Germany still depended on foreign imports for one-third of its raw materials; especially iron ore, oil and rubber. Gradually, another method of 'self-sufficiency' was given more stress: conquering other countries to use their resources (for example, Austrian iron and eventually Russian grain).

Guns or Butter?

The phrase 'guns or butter' relates to the tension between putting economic resources into rearmament and supplying consumer goods, especially food fats, to German consumers. Goering, in a speech, said "would you rather have butter or guns? Shall we bring in lard or iron ore? I tell you, guns make us powerful. Butter only makes us fat." No one actually argued for total concentration on one to the abandonment of another, but there was a debate about priorities. Originally it was assumed that Hitler could afford to give priority to guns and neglect butter, since he was the all-powerful ruler of a repressed population. However, several historians now argue that Hitler was wary of squeezing domestic consumption too far, and that he was concerned to ensure good supplies of butter as well as guns.

	Butter	Guns
Advocates	Schacht Industrialists Some military generals	Göring
Strategies	Develop consumer goods Develop exports Limited rearmament Links with other countries	Major Rearmament Autarky

How did the coming of war change life in Nazi Germany?

In September 1939, German forces invaded Poland. In June 1940 France surrendered and Hitler was master of most of Europe. Many Germans hailed these spectacular conquests as revenge for 1918. But the war was soon to shatter the Germany which the Nazis had created.

The Second World War began in September 1939. By the end of 1942 Hitler had achieved extraordinary military success. German forces had conquered nearly all of Europe, from the Channel to Moscow and from northern Norway to north Africa. Then things began to go wrong.

In 1941 German forces invaded the USSR. Hitler's gamble on the kind of quick victory he had won in western Europe did not pay off: he became bogged down in a four year war that ruined his army. By 1942 it was clear that things were not going well. Hospital trains brought back thousands of wounded. Despite the propaganda, ordinary Germans began to realise that the war was going badly.

Hardship at home. Germany, like Britain, was not self-sufficient in food and the war at sea cut off imported food. Rationing was started right at the beginning of the war, in 1939. Most foods, clothes, even soap were rationed. Hot water was available on only two days a week. Workers in heavy industry and mining, expectant and nursing mothers got extra milk. Rationing meant that, at least until 1943, people got enough food, but it was monotonous. Tobacco was hard to get hold of, and cigarettes became a kind of currency.

Bombing. From 1942 the Allies began what Hitler had promised would never happen: the bombing of German cities. Soon the RAF and US bombers were pounding

German cities every night. The destruction made thousands of people homeless. The enormous raids caused 'fire-storms', in which the intense heat sucked in oxygen and people suffocated even in the shelters. In one fire-storm in Hamburg, in July 1943, 45,000 people died. There were not enough doctors to treat the injured. This was because many were now in the armed forces, but also because of Nazi policies banning women and Jews from practising.

Labour shortages. With most men in the armed forces, there was a severe shortage of labour. Albert Speer, Minister of Armaments and War Production, wanted to conscript women to fill the gap, but ran up against Nazi attitudes against women working. Instead, workers were brought in from all over the lands the Nazis had conquered. By 1944 there were 7 million such foreign workers in Germany. Workers from western European countries were reasonably treated, but Russians and Poles were worked to death in the labour camps.

Propaganda. Nazi propaganda continued throughout the war, encouraging civilians to save fuel, keep a blackout, work in the factories and support Hitler. Many Germans recognised that they were being fed lies and tuned their radios to other broadcasts.

Defeat. By 1943 German forces were being driven back in the USSR and in north Africa, and by 1944 Allied forces were advancing in eastern and western Europe. It was clear that Germany was doomed to a terrible defeat.

Goebbels was put in charge of 'total war'. Nothing mattered except the war effort. All theatres and concert halls (but not cinemas) were closed.

Magazines ceased publication. Professional sport was stopped. No non-military clothing or furniture was made. Sweet shops were closed. Some foods became completely unavailable. Women under 50 were called up to work in factories.

Nazi leaders decided to go down fighting; the result was terrible suffering for the German people. Air raids now took place by day as well as night. In February 1945, Dresden was continuously bombed for two nights; 150,000 people were killed (more than died in the first atomic bombs dropped on Japan in August 1945). With the regular armed forces in tatters, the *Volkssturm* - a kind of Home Guard - was formed in 1945. Every male between 16 and 60 had to join, but by this time in the war only teenagers and the elderly were left.

In May 1945, Hitler, Goebbels (and his family) and other Nazi leaders committed suicide in the ruins of Berlin. Nazism was finished, but at an appalling cost in human lives and suffering.

