

New Higher
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Question
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TGS
J Davidson.



Chapter 11 : How did the Nazis maintain power in Germany between 1933 and 1939?

The previous section ended at the July 1932 election, where the Nazis won more votes than any other party. Hitler was offered political office in a coalition with two other politicians, von Papen and von Schleicher. He refused. He would not share power.

After the November 1932 elections, Hitler refused the chancellorship because President Hindenburg

tried to limit his powers. When he accepted the chancellorship in January 1933, he was one of only three Nazis in a Cabinet of eleven. The Vice Chancellor, von Papen, thought he could keep Hitler under control.

In February 1933, the German parliament, the Reichstag, was burned down. The Communists were blamed. Hitler expelled the Communists from parliament and enforced a state of

emergency where all civic freedoms were suspended. The Nazi party now had complete control of Germany's army, its police force, its government and its economy. Hitler was in power. (BBC Bitesize)

This, very popular section of the course will consider how the Nazis maintained power. Was it due to popular appeal, achievement, or was it control through fear?

How did the Nazis maintain power in Germany between 1933 and 1939?

- 1) Read p.151 and study the timeline. Write down a definition of *Gleichschaltung*.
- 2) What was Hitler's 'first task'?
- 3) What happened on the 27 February 1933, only one week before these elections?
- 4) Let's consider this for a moment. If the communists thought that Hitler was going to get a majority of votes by the German people in agreement to his appointment, do you think the communists would have burnt down the parliament? Or, if Hitler thought that he wasn't going to get a majority of votes by the German people in agreement to his appointment, do you think he would have arranged to burn down the parliament?
- 5) What was the Decree for the Protection of the People and the State?
- 6) What did Hitler do to ensure his success?
- 7) What evidence is there to prove that Hildebrand's quote is correct?
- 8) How did Hitler manage to get the Reichstag vote on the Enabling Act to result in his favour?
- 9) What was the effect of the passing of the Enabling Act?
- 10) According to McKichan, how did the Nazis use the Enabling Act?
- 11) Describe how Hitler dealt with Trade Unions.
- 12) What happened to the remaining political opponents?
- 13) What law was passed on July 14 1933?
- 14) Explain why, the way Hitler dealt with the professions help reduce unemployment.
- 15) Why did most civil servants just carry on their daily business?
- 16) Explain why the Nazis would get little opposition from teachers and doctors.
- 17) Describe how the rule of law in Germany was slowly undermined and the rights of citizens were severely restricted.
- 18) According to David Welch, why did judges and lawyers welcome the Nazi regime in 1933?
- 19) Why did the Catholic church not interfere in the way the Nazis ran Germany?
- 20) Did the Protestant church happily accept Nazi rule?
- 21) Explain why Hitler felt it necessary to get rid of the very people who helped him into power, i.e. Ernst Rohm and the SA.
- 22) Make some notes on the 'Night of the Long Knives', the SS, Himmler and Heydrich.
- 23) Does the result of the plebiscite of 19th August 1934 show overwhelming support for Hitler and the Nazis or does it tell us something more?
- 24) Copy out Simpson's quote.
- 25) So far then, has the textbook mentioned support for the Nazis? Is Hitler in charge and control through support from many sections of German society? How would you sum up how Hitler maintained power at this stage?

How did the Nazis maintain power in Germany between 1933 and 1939?

Hitler used a number of organisations to uphold and extend his control of Germany.

The SS (Hitler's personal body guard). This organisation was made up of fanatical supporters of Hitler. Hitler used them as his execution squad to eliminate his opponents.

The SD (Security Service) and Gestapo (Secret State Police). The SD had an army of informants and hunted down, and also often eliminated, opponents.

The Police force and law courts. Heinrich Himmler, the head of the SS, was also in charge of the police. This meant no-one investigated the crimes committed by the Nazis. Special 'people's courts' made sure that opponents of the Nazis charged with treason were found guilty, even if there was little or no evidence.

Concentration camps. Established in 1933. Opponents of the Nazis and undesirable members of the population, such as Jews, Communists and gypsies, were sent to the camps without trial. The SS, Hitler's most loyal organisation, ran the camps.

The army. After the murder of Rohm, the army pledged their loyalty to Hitler. His plans to rearm the forces and his expansionist foreign policy were popular with them.

The visible evidence of control, seen in flags, symbols and uniforms on the streets, together with the use of informants, made people very cautious. However, the system was not as efficient as it appeared, with security forces often reporting "grumbling" among workers but unable to do much about it. (BBC Bitesize)

Creating a Nazi society - 'The Carrot'

1) How does the textbook describe Nazi tactics to 'win' people over?

2) What was the aim of the Nazi's youth policy?

3) Why do you think the membership to the Nazi youth movement had to become compulsory in March 1939?

4) Make your own notes on the Hitler Youth and the League of German Maidens.

5) Why was it crucial for the Nazis to have the support of the German youth and how successful were they? (Mention any opposition youth groups.)

6) Describe how Nazi ideology entered the classroom and mention how the Nazis altered the curriculum.

Nazi economic policy

1) Explain how public works schemes helped the German economy.

2) What else helped German economic recovery?

3) What did the Nazis do to deflect criticism about worker's decline in their standard of living? (Include Strength through Joy and Joy at Work).

4) Is it true to say that the German working class were persuaded by the Nazis' measures?

5) What did the Nazis promise the lower middle class and did they deliver on their promises? Explain your answer.

6) Describe what the Nazis did to help farmers and whether they were successful or not.

7) Using Mary Fullbrook's quote and the text above it, sum up Nazi attitudes to women.

How did the Nazis maintain power in Germany between 1933 and 1939?

To sum up the economic factor:

The Nazis tried to make Germany self-sufficient - that is, to produce all the goods it needed without having to rely on external supplies. This could be achieved more easily for some types of goods than for others, so the need to obtain access to oil, for example, was part of the reason for Germany's aggressive foreign policy in eastern Europe.

Employment

The Nazis implemented a major programme of public works, such as building and repairing roads, railways and houses. This significantly helped reduce unemployment, as did large-scale military rearmament. With Germany building up its armed forces, thousands of jobs in iron, steel, aviation and shipbuilding were created. After 1935, conscription of men into the army also helped reduce the unemployment figures. This was seen as a benefit to the country and enabled many Germans to accept Nazi rule.

Workers' conditions

The Labour Front prevented strikes. Many Germans preferred low paid jobs to unemployment. *Kraft durch Freude* (Strength through Joy) was an organisation set up to make lives better. This meant loyal workers received benefits such as subsidised theatre visits, sports facilities as well as cheap cruises. Although some disliked being regimented even in their leisure pursuits, others enjoyed the better facilities.

The production of the people's car (the Volkswagen) from 1938 suggested Nazism was benefiting workers because they could put their name down for one of these cars and save money each week for two years to buy one.

Incomes

The government controlled wages and prices but, despite this, the standard of living dropped under Nazi rule. Resources that might have gone towards improving supplies of goods for people to use were diverted into the public works programme and into rearmament. (BBC Bitesize)

Nazism and Ant-Semitism

- 1) Did some Germans support the Nazis because of their anti-semitic policies?
- 2) As this is a topic covered elsewhere in school, make brief notes on what the Nazis did to the Jews, the Nuremberg Laws and *Kristallnacht*.
- 3) Richard Grunberger states that *Kristallnacht* divided Germany into three distinct opinions. What were those three opinions?
- 4) What is the message of Paster Niemoller's poem?

Nazi Propaganda

- 1) According to the textbook, when was Nazi propaganda most effective?
- 2) What was the purpose of Nazi propaganda?
- 3) How influential was it on German workers?
- 4) Which group in society embraced Nazi propaganda with enthusiasm? Why do you think that was?
- 5) Make some notes on how important Hitler himself was in maintaining power in Germany at the time.

How did the Nazis maintain power in Germany between 1933 and 1939?

Maintaining a Nazi society - 'the stick'

The Police State

- 1) Why did Hitler feel the need to create a police state?
- 2) What were concentration camps originally used for and why did most Germans 'grudgingly' approve them?
- 3) Describe how some Germans took advantage of this police state.
- 4) What was the *Gestapo*?
- 5) Many feel Hitler maintained power by creating a climate of fear through this police state and his use of the feared SS. Make some notes on the SS and copy Gordon Craig's quote.
- 6) Explain why Hitler's opponents failed to stop the Nazis doing what they did.

Maintaining a Nazi society - 'The sweetener'

Nazi foreign policy

- 1) There is no doubt that when it came to German foreign policy, Hitler said and did what many Germans wanted to hear and see happen. Make a list of the things Hitler did to reverse the humiliations of Versailles which 'ensured not only public acclaim for him at home but saw his dominance of the army increase.'
- 2) Explain what *Lebensraum* is and how did Hitler start to realise it?
- 3) What was Hitler supposedly to have said in the 'Hossbach Memorandum' and why did it lead to a more aggressive and expansionist foreign policy?

4) What was the *Anschluss*? How do you think this successful reversal of the Versailles Treaty would have gone down with the German people?

5) Read the last paragraph on p.163. A significant reason for Hitler's foreign policy success was Britain's failure to do anything to stop him. How do think Nazi propaganda portrayed his successes?

6) How Hitler achieved so much success in his foreign policy is a course in itself. He was very skillful in what he did - of that there is no doubt. But going back to the main question of this section, namely 'how did the Nazis maintain power in Germany between 1933 and 1939?', explain why the voices of opposition were not heard and why nobody called for Hitler's removal.

Conclusion

1) I can't say I'm that impressed with the textbook's summing up as it doesn't address the question raised in this chapter. Read the paragraph on p.164 and do the Activity on p.165 (the spider diagram) or any other summary activity.

The essay you will do for this section will be very similar to the sample essay 1 on p.165, so make an essay plan for this essay question. If time allows, try writing it out at home before we all do it under exam conditions in class

Link:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/learning/learningzone/>

Type in 'Nazi Germany'

How did the Nazis maintain power in Germany between 1933 and 1939?

What this meant for ordinary people

It is easy to think that all Germans were affected by the Nazis in everything they did, but in practice many were able to continue with everyday life without much change, as long as they were not among the groups that the Nazis persecuted. They may have been irritated by the propaganda and censorship that restricted what they could read in newspapers or see in cinemas or the theatre, but for some there were compensations in Strength Through Joy, in regular employment or even in lower crime rates - as one historian has said, "if nothing else, dictatorships make good police".

There was also a good deal of support for the foreign policy that sought to overturn Versailles - events like the reoccupation of the Rhineland and the Anschluss with Austria were popular, and seen as evidence that Germany was recovering from the humiliations of Versailles.

This does not suggest that Nazi Germany was a pleasant place to live - unless of course you were one of the Nazi elite. There was always an undercurrent of fear, an element of unpredictability, and for persecuted groups it was a terrible tragedy. But many ordinary people learned to put these things in the background and to get on with their lives. Only a few, however, were brave and committed enough to take their resistance beyond "grumbling" and become active opponents of the Nazis. (BBC Bitesize)