

Paper 3: Germany, 1918-39: Core Knowledge 3/4 Control and Dictatorship

Steps to Dictatorship

Jan 1933: Hitler becomes Chancellor but is in a **weak** position - they only had 33% of the vote in the last election and only 3/12 Cabinet ministers are Nazis

Feb 1933: The Reichstag (government) building is set on fire; a Communist called Van Der Lubbe was found there and blamed; Communist Party (KPD) banned.

March 1933: An election is held, the Nazis get 44% of the vote. They had intimidated opponents e.g. 69 people died in the 5 weeks up to the election.

24th March 1933: Hitler is given the power to pass laws without the Reichstag for 4 years - the Enabling Act. It is supported by 444 Deputies. 94 voted against.

July 1933: Hitler bans all other political parties, only the Nazis are left in the Reichstag.

June 1934: Night of the Long Knives - Ernst Rohm (leader of the SA) and 200 other leaders/politicians were murdered to remove Hitler's opponents.

August 1934: President Hindenburg dies, Hitler becomes Fuhrer (leader). The army swears the Oath of Loyalty to Hitler.

Night of the Long Knives

June 1934: 200 leaders/politicians including Ernst Rohm are murdered; the SA is disbanded (closed down).

Why?

Threat: Rohm was a threat to Hitler's power; Goring and Himmler both wanted Rohm gone. Hitler needed to assert himself over leading Nazis to reduce rivalries.

Appease: Army generals wanted the SA gone as they were rivals and undisciplined; wealthy businessmen were also unhappy with the SA; Hitler needed these people on his side to create jobs.

Power: Rohm had 2 million men in the SA; Rohm wanted a total revolution - Hitler wanted to stop him from becoming so powerful he could overthrow Hitler.

Control over religion

Catholic Church (22 million members)

1933: Signed the Concordat with the church - Hitler would not interfere with the church if the church did not interfere with politics (Hitler broke this deal).

1937: 200 Catholic Priests arrested for sexual and financial misbehaviour.

Cardinal Galen delivered speeches that attacked the Nazis - he was too famous to be arrested.

Protestant Church

Reich Church led by Ludwig Muller - supported the Nazis

Confessional Church led by Martin Niemoller - opposed the Nazis.

- it was banned in 1935

- Martin Niemoller was sent to a concentration camp from 1938-45.

German Faith Movement

The Nazis created an alternative church to replace the Catholic/Protestant churches but only 5% of the population joined it.

Police State - **Successes; Failures**

Gestapo - secret police

They had arrested 160,000 people by 1939; arrests were reported in newspapers - increased fear of them.

Only had 40,000 agents for the whole of Germany; only 40-50 agents in major cities such as Frankfurt.

SS - black shirts

By 1939, there were 240,000 black shirts; they were loyal to Hitler personally (Oath of Loyalty)

Some people did not like how brutal they were and SS members requested to move to the army.

SD - ensure there were no enemies within the Nazi party

It attracted educated professionals to its ranks such as lawyers.

A small organisation, worked within the SS - limited impact.

Concentration camps - temporary prisons, initially for political prisoners; first camp was Dachau

Removed mostly political opponents of the Nazis e.g. the Communists after Reichstag Fire. 150,000 inmates by 1939.

Many early concentration camps were poorly built - some were built in abandoned warehouses.

Legal system

Judges were often supportive of the Nazis and willingly passed harsh sentences on criminals e.g. in 1934, special People's Court setup for treason - 7000 out of 16000 cases led to death sentences.

Some judges refused to take the Oath of Loyalty and were forced out of their jobs.

Propaganda and censorship - **Successes; Failures**

Joseph Goebbels was the Minister for Propaganda.

Around 1 million people attended the Nuremberg rally each year; 'Triumph of the Will' was a documentary shown in cinemas about the 1934 Nuremberg Rally.

The Nazis provided cheap radios - ownership increased to 70% by 1939.

1936 Olympics - spent 42 million Reichsmarks; a 4 hour film, 'Olympia' was produced about these games.

Posters often featured Hitler e.g. the 'Ein Volk, Ein Fuhrer' poster (One People. One Leader).

Cheap theatre tickets were made available; plays incorporated Nazi messages.

20,000 books were burned in May 1933 written by Jews and other anti-Nazis.

Radio wardens had to be appointed to ensure people were listening to the radio.

Hitler was furious when the black American athlete Jesse Owens won 4 gold medals.

Anti-Semitic (Jewish hating) films were unpopular with audiences.

Some actors left Germany due to their treatment of Jews e.g. Marlene Dietrich.

Young people did not like the Nazi approved music as they banned jazz and swing, which they enjoyed.

Writing in newspapers became stale and boring, newspaper sales dropped by 10%.

Opposition to the Nazis

Opposition from the church: Bishop Von Galen criticised the Nazis in his sermons. He helped to end their T4 Euthanasia programme (which saw disabled children being murdered on Death Wards).

Martin Niemoller spoke out against anti-Semitism and formed the anti-Nazi Confessional Church.

Opposition from Youths: there were about 5000 Edelweiss Pirates - working class children who refused to join the Hitler Youth and hung out together listening to banned music.

The Swing Youth were middle class children who hated the Nazis - the boys grew their hair long and the girls wore make-up.