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Power and Authority in the Modern World 1919–1946

Stage 6 Topics in Modern History



TROY NEALE & MELISSA BRIGHT

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About the authors

TROY NEALE

Troy is Head Teacher History at Macquarie Fields High School. He is a successful author of junior and senior history textbooks and has received the Premier's Scholarship for Modern History. Troy has written teaching resources for NESA and is a HSC marker for Modern History.

MELISSA BRIGHT

Melissa is a highly engaging Modern and Ancient History teacher working in a professional and high-achieving HSIE Faculty at Elderslie High School. She has also been an HSC marker for Modern History, is a co-author of *Cambridge Checkpoints HSC Modern History* and has written teaching resources for the NSW Department of Education.

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Introduction

This book has been written to closely follow the NSW Stage 6 Modern History syllabus outcomes for the Core Unit: **Power and Authority in the Modern World 1919–1946** and offers students a broad perspective on the rise of fascist, totalitarian and militarist movements that emerged after World War I. The book offers a close study of the international conditions which brought about dictatorships in the contemporary world and the different types of regimes which emerged. *Power and Authority in the Modern World* also sets out the many efforts of the international community to maintain peace and collective security during this tumultuous period in modern history. Through the lens of Nazi Germany and Hitler's dramatic rise to power, students are introduced to the concepts of dictatorship and the impact they had on the German nation and the world including the collapse of liberal and democratic governments. The book examines the way in which the Nazi dictatorship stripped individuals of their citizenship and human rights. It explores perspectives on the nature of control and how power and authority can be used and abused in modern times to deny individual freedoms and civil liberties. *Power and Authority in the Modern World* uses easy-to-follow chronologies and a glossary of terms for rapid student reference. Key individuals, historically important terms and concepts are briefly summarised and explained at the end of each chapter for students to revise. The text also enables students to practice using their knowledge and skills by engaging with primary and secondary sources and exploring the opinions of a number of historians on important events that shaped and influenced the rise of dictatorships and the world's search for peace and security.

PART 1

The end of World War I and peace treaties





1

An overview of the peace treaties that ended World War I and their consequences

At the end of this topic you should attempt to answer the following question:
What were the consequences of the peace treaties which ended World War I?

Key syllabus features

The key features are:

- A survey of the peace treaties which ended World War I and their effects.

The key features provide the basis for HSC examination questions.

1.1 The Treaty of Versailles

FOCUS QUESTION

In what way did the peace treaties create the foundation for future conflict?

CHRONOLOGY

- 1918** • Armistice is signed; Treaty of Armistice of Mudros signed between the Ottoman Empire and the British ending conflict in the Middle East
- 1919** • **Treaty of Versailles**, St Germain and Neuilly are signed
- 1920** • Treaty of Trianon and Sevres are signed
- 1923** • The Treaty of Lausanne is signed
- 1926** • Germany admitted to the **League of Nations**

Armistice: 11 November 1918

The fighting in World War I was concluded by the armistice that was signed on 11 November 1918. This armistice was requested by the German Supreme Command. The terms of the armistice set out for Germany by Marshall Foch, Commander of the Allied Forces, required the German army to immediately withdraw from France, Belgium and Alsace-Lorraine and to surrender vast amount of war materials and weapons. Germany was to release all Allied prisoners of war, however German prisoners of war would not immediately be released. After this end to the warfare a number of fundamental problems still needed to be resolved:

- How would the war be settled?
- How would a new peace be maintained?
- What would be the fate of the Central Powers?
- Who would pay for the damage caused during the war?

To solve these problems a peace conference was held in 1919 at the Palace of Versailles in France. Thirty-two nations met to resolve the complicated issues that had resulted from the four long years of devastation that was the Great War. The victorious Allies needed to make peace treaties not only with Germany but also with her allies: Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey. All 32 nations sent delegates to the Paris Peace Conference, however the major decision-makers were the leaders of France, Great Britain and the United States. Collectively they were known as the Big Three.

The Treaty of Versailles



Figure 1.1 (Left) Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Wilson – the leaders of the Big Three – at Versailles. (Right) Paris Peace Conference 1919, Hall of Mirrors, Versailles

France was represented by Georges Clemenceau – a very experienced politician who became French Prime Minister in November 1917. He was nicknamed ‘the tiger’ because of his determination to exact revenge from Germany and to keep her militarily and economically weak. He was determined to obtain the best possible deal for France and its future security in Europe.

Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States, had joined the war against Germany on 12 April 1917. He had vastly different priorities from Clemenceau at the Peace Conference. Wilson had studied the reasons for the outbreak of the war and wanted to remove the causes of war to make the world ‘safe for democracy’. Wilson had a proposal of **Fourteen Points**, which were to be the basis for negotiations. Unlike the vengeful Clemenceau, President Wilson was an idealist who desired the end of **secret treaties** and alliances which had caused the war in the first place. To prevent war, he formulated Article 14, the creation of a League of Nations which would be the cornerstone of the Peace Treaties and provide **internationalism** and **collective security**.

In general, Wilson's key principles were:

- Freedom of the high seas
- The removal of secret treaties
- National **self-determination** by state groups in Europe
- Free and open trade
- Reduction in military numbers
- Collective security
- Not forcing Germany to pay for the war.

David Lloyd George, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, accepted many of Wilson's ideas in the Fourteen Points. He knew the responsibility for the war was not solely Germany's and exacting a harsh revenge would prevent lasting peace. However, like Clemenceau, his country had lost many thousands of lives and suffered enormously during the war. During the 1918 general election his party had campaigned on the slogans of 'hang the Kaiser' and 'make Germany pay'. He knew that revenge was a popular short-term goal but in the long term it would be harmful to humiliate the powerful German nation. He famously stated in private, 'We cannot both cripple her [Germany] and expect her to pay'.

After much negotiation, the Treaty – consisting of 200 pages with 440 separate articles and a covenant to establish the League of Nations – was ready to be signed. On 28 June 1919 two German ministers under orders from President Ebert travelled to the Palace of Versailles near Paris and signed the Treaty on behalf of the German government, as it was presented to them with no possibility of negotiations or Germany would face an invasion.

The Treaty of Versailles 1919 – cause of grievances for Germany

Clause of the Treaty	Settlement	Grievances
Military	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German army reduced to 100 000 soldiers • No tanks or air force allowed • U-boats prohibited and Navy restricted 	The honour of the German military is destroyed; a nation who thought they were seeking an honourable peace is crippled and humiliated.
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany must accept responsibility for starting the war – War Guilt Clause 231 • Pay for the entire cost of the war – reparations bill £6.6 billion to be paid. The amount was unknown at the time, and determined in 1921 to be £6.6 billion. • Belgium and France to be given machinery and infrastructure • Coal and timber – 8 million tons each year to be given to France 	The Germans are forced to admit they are solely responsible for causing the war. Most Allied Generals and leaders did not believe this. To add insult to injury, Germany is forced to pay massive and unlimited costs for the damage caused by both sides during the war, which equates to millions. Economically, the German people are crippled.

Continued ➤

Clause of the Treaty	Settlement	Grievances
Territory and colonies	Germany lost significant territory to Poland, including an area once known as East Prussia. The Rhineland in Western Germany was demilitarised. Germany was to give up claim to all of her overseas colonies and possessions in Europe. These included the coal-rich Saar region and Alsace-Lorraine. She also lost colonies in Africa and the Pacific.	Germany is humiliated and loses many of the areas under her control which had the capacity to assist her to pay the massive reparations bill imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. Germany is forbidden to unite with Austria, her German-speaking neighbour.
War criminals	As part of the War Guilt Clause Article 231, a list of Germans responsible for the war was made; it included Kaiser Wilhelm II and his chief generals. They were to be arrested and tried. This never eventuated and the Kaiser left for exile in Holland.	Not only would Germany be solely responsible for the war but also its leaders were to be labeled as war criminals.
League of Nations	A League of Nations was to be established. All the nations involved in the Paris Peace Conference were to join and other nations would follow. The aim was to prevent wars from starting by collective security.	Germany is not admitted as member of the League of Nations despite repeated requests at the Paris Peace Conference. Only in 1926 was Germany accepted into the League of Nations.

1.2 Other peace treaties

The Paris Peace Settlement contained five separate treaties. The main treaty was with Germany, but there were four others which were created to deal with her allies of the Central Powers – Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary and Turkey. These separate treaties followed the same principles laid out in the Versailles treaty and were named after places in France. Importantly, the principle of self-determination – one of Wilson’s fourteen points – was one of the key objectives behind the separate peace treaties created with the Central Powers. For Turkey, the war in the Middle East had officially ended on 30 October 1918, with the Armistice of Mudros which was signed between the Ottoman Empire and the British.

Peace treaties with the Central Powers

Treaty	Conditions
Trianon-Hungary	Lost territory to Romania and Yugoslavia, military reduced to a 35 000 standing army
Saint Germain-Austria	Lost territory to Czechoslovakia, Poland and Italy, military reduced to a standing army of 35 000
Neuilly-Bulgaria	Lost territory to Greece, £90 million to pay in reparations, standing army reduced to 20 000

Continued ➤

Treaty	Conditions
Sevres-Turkey Lausanne (1923)	<p>Lost territory to Greece, Turkey's empire in the Middle East and North Africa become mandates of France and Britain, standing Army limited to 50 000.</p> <p>As the result of a revolution in Turkey in 1919, the Treaty of Sevres was rejected by the new Turkish Nationalist government and Turkey entered into the Lausanne Treaty in 1923. This permitted Turkey to maintain a full standing army, not pay any reparations and revoked the land concession to Greece.</p>

1.3 Consequences of the peace treaties

Activities

Source analysis 1.1

Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions that follow. The economic historian J.M Keynes, who was a delegate for the British at the Paris Peace Conference, stated that:

Source 1A

The Treaty of Versailles includes no provision for the economic rehabilitation of Europe, nothing to make the defeated Central Powers into good neighbours, nothing to stabilise the new states of Europe.
... Germany was in effect engaged herself to hand over to the Allies the whole of their surplus productions in perpetuity.

The consequences of the peace treaty would be harsh for Germany whose people would come to call the treaty a **diktat** – dictated peace. On the day of the signing, 28 June 1919, a newspaper in Berlin carried this ominous headline:

Source 1B

VENGEANCE! GERMAN NATION:
Today in the Hall of Mirrors a disgraceful treaty is being signed. Never forget it. There will be vengeance for the shame of 1919.

The Treaty of Versailles had crippled and humiliated Germany by taking away land, army and money with no negotiations possible. The German Field Marshall von Hindenburg explained that:

Source 1C

The German army was stabbed in the back. No blame is to be attached to the sound core of the army ... It is perfectly clear on whom the blame rests.

Von Hindenburg and many of the German people believed that Germany could have won the war, but it was 'stabbed in the back' by the socialist politicians who signed the armistice on 11 November 1918 and agreed to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. These politicians were known as the

November Criminals. This notion festered amongst many German people who blamed politicians and the international community for punishing the German people unjustly.

Questions

- a From Source 1A, outline the problems J.M Keynes identified with the Treaty of Versailles.
- b Using Source 1B and your own knowledge, explain why many Germans believed that the Treaty of Versailles was a shameful peace treaty and what exactly 'vengeance' might mean in the future.
- c How useful would Source 1C and Source 1D be for a historian studying the attitudes of both the German and Allied military leaders to the German surrender in World War I?
- d Using all four sources and your own knowledge, explain why many Germans felt betrayed by the politicians who signed the terms of the Peace Treaty.

Source 1D An illustration of German politicians known as the November Criminals performing the 'stab in the back'



President Wilson's ideas about making the world safe for democracy, and his attempt to bring about the principle of self-determination in his Fourteen Points, are considered by some historians as far too idealistic, and left a number of issues unresolved that would sow the seeds for future conflict. Other historians have argued whether any other kind of peace would have been possible under the circumstances. They have also questioned what the German peace terms might have been if they had been the victors.

The consequences of the Treaty of Versailles

Nonetheless, the 1919 Treaty of Versailles was marred by trying to meet different and conflicting objectives from the major nations of Britain, France and the USA. The French were not content with the quest for security and the American Congress did not ratify the treaty in its Congress. For the Japanese delegates at the conference, the quest for a racial equality clause was rejected outright by the European delegates. Japan also expected to gain more of Germany's former trading rights in China and this was also opposed, leaving Japan unsatisfied.

Italy likewise was bitterly disappointed after the Paris Peace Conference because it did not gain more territory, including the Adriatic port of Fiume and a share of Germany and Turkey's colonial possessions.

The principle of self-determination and the re-drawing of the map of Eastern Europe to create new nation-states such as Czechoslovakia,

Hungary and Yugoslavia caused issues of racial minority status and territorial inconsistency, for example:

- separation of East Prussia from the main bulk of German territory (through the Polish Corridor)
- placing Danzig under the League of Nations control (despite being a mainly German population)
- placing 3.5 million Germans under Czech rule in the Sudetenland.

The consequences of the Treaty of Versailles were harshest for Germany. Its loss of territory and economic punishment would feed hatred of internationalism, and aid in bringing to power Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party who were determined to destroy and overturn every clause of the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler famously vowed to tear up the 'diktat' of Versailles, and once in power he pursued an aggressive foreign policy agenda which included:

- rearmament and Rhineland remilitarisation
- *Anschluss* (Austria union)
- transfer of Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia
- Danzig and Polish Corridor territorial claims.

The delegates who created the terms of peace treaties had been struggling to achieve peace with varied and conflicting aims, including:

- the restoration and creation of independent nations
- the reward and compensation of the victorious allies
- the destruction of German **militarism**
- a system of peace and security for the future.

The Treaty of Versailles broke up the old empires of Europe but at the same time created more colonial possession for the victors and led to the creation of new unstable nations.

During the inter-war period, the League of Nations maintained peace via collective security, but at the same time militant regimes began to emerge. Ultimately, the long-term consequences of the peace treaties and the effects of the Great Depression would see the continued rise of dictatorships across Europe, as well as militaristic governments in Japan and Europe that would set the world on a course to another devastating world-wide conflict.

Summary

- Armistice ends World War I on 11 November 1918
- Paris Peace Conference held in 1919
- Germany forced to accept guilt for causing the war
- President Wilson announces his Fourteen Points on which to base the Peace Treaty
- Germany is forced to pay reparations and loses her colonies, territories and military.

Personalities

The Big Three



Figure 1.2 Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924) was the 28th President of the US from 1913–21. He was a member of the Democratic Party and had been a professor of history. He brought America into World War I in 1917 and then drew up Fourteen Points to try and end it. He aimed to have the Treaty of Versailles based on these points.



Figure 1.3 David Lloyd George (1863–1945) was a Liberal. After being Chancellor of the Exchequer, he became Prime Minister of Britain from 1916 until 1922. He was responsible for organising Britain in the war and for drawing up the Treaty of Versailles, where he found himself torn between the ideas of Wilson and those of Clemenceau.

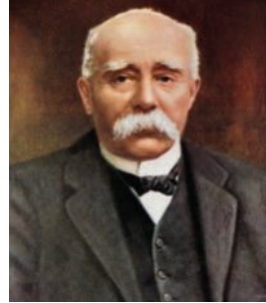


Figure 1.4 George Clemenceau (1841–1929) was a very experienced politician who became French Prime Minister for a second time in November 1917. He was nicknamed ‘the tiger’ because of his determination to fight on in the war and to get the best possible deal for France in the Treaty of Versailles.

Groups

League of Nations: a precursor to the United Nations; an international organisation which aimed to settle disputes between countries and prevent war; member nations were meant to be protected by the concept of ‘collective security’

Terms

collective security: the cooperation of several countries in an alliance to strengthen the security of each

diktat: a dictated peace

Fourteen Points: a speech by Woodrow Wilson to the US Congress on 8 January 1918 that outlined a plan for the reconstruction of Europe and reformation of the international order after the war. The last point was the creation of the League of Nations

internationalism: the principle of cooperation among nations, for the promotion of their common good

reparations: payments made by a defeated nation after a war to pay for damages or expenses it caused to another nation. After World War I the Paris Peace Conference imposed reparations upon the Central Powers following their defeat by the Allied and Associate Powers. Each of the defeated powers was required to make payments in either cash or kind.

secret treaties: an international agreement in which the contracting parties have agreed to conceal its existence or at least its substance from other states and the public

self-determination: the ability or power to make decisions for yourself, especially the power of a nation to decide how it will be governed

standing army: a nation's regular and professional armed force

Activities

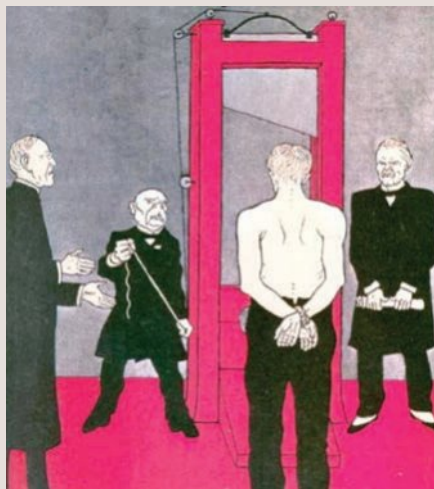
Thinking historically 1.1

1. The Germans had lost the war and expected a difficult treaty. However, they were surprised and angered by its ultimate harshness. Explain why the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles were imposed by the Allies and why they were so bitterly resented by the Germans.
2. Explain why would it be so difficult for Germany to pay the reparations demanded of it by the Treaty of Versailles.

Source analysis 1.2

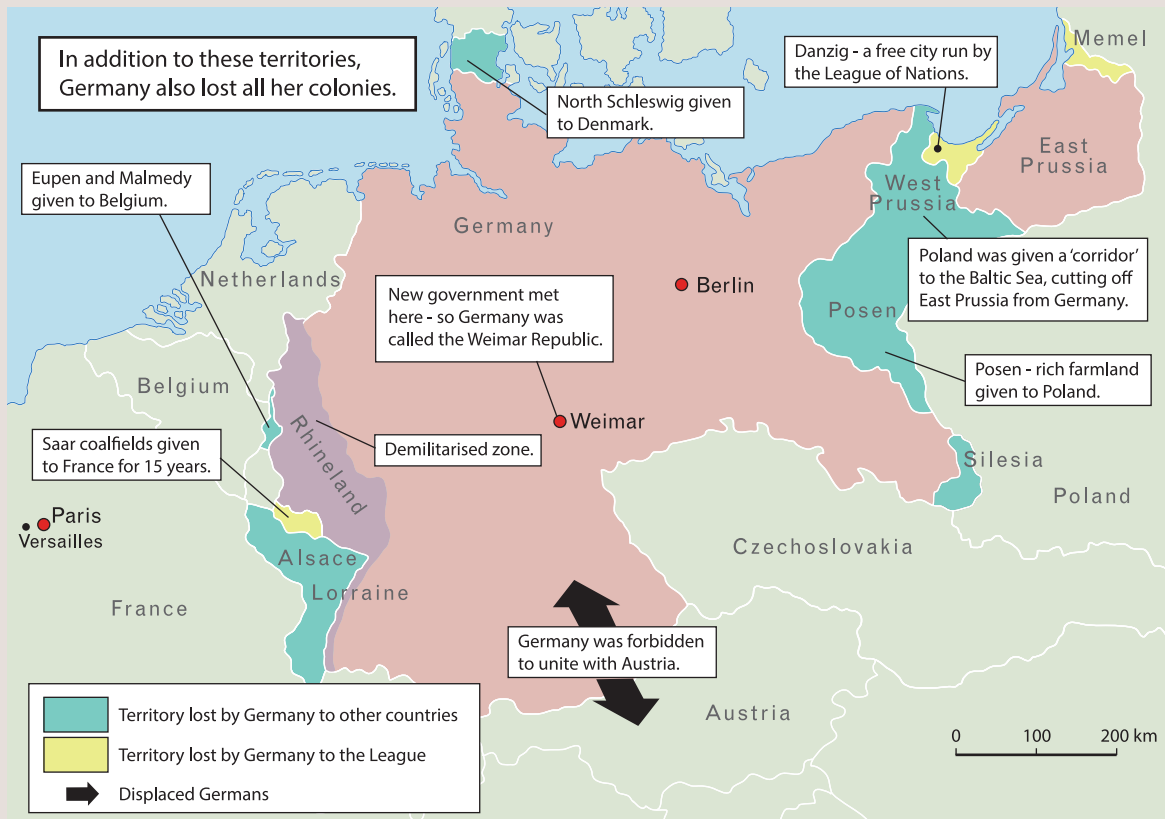
Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions which follow.

Source 1E This cartoon appeared in the German satirical magazine *Simplissimus*, 3 June 1919.



Territory removed from the German Empire in Europe due to peace treaties after World War I.

Source 1F



1. Examine Source 1E.
 - a Name the men in black jackets.
 - b Who is the shirtless victim?
 - c What symbolism is conveyed here about the Treaty of Versailles?
2. Examine Source 1F.
 - a List the territories Germany lost to other countries.
 - b Of these territories, which do you think would have been the most contentious to Germany and why?
 - c Define 'demilitarised'. Can you think of any reasons why France would want the Rhineland demilitarised?

PART 2

The rise of dictatorships after World War I





2

The rise of dictatorships after World War I

At the end of this topic you should attempt to answer the following question:

What social and political conditions enabled the rise of dictatorships in Europe and Japan after World War I?

Key syllabus features

The key features are:

- The circumstances that enabled dictators to rise to power between the wars.
- A survey of the features of the dictatorships that arose in Russia, Italy and Japan.

The key features provide the basis for HSC examination questions.

2.1 The conditions that enabled dictators to rise to power in the interwar period

What were the similarities and differences between the dictatorships which arose in Europe and Japan in the interwar period?

FOCUS QUESTION

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1917 | • Russian Revolution |
| 1918 | • Murder of the Romanov family |
| 1922, October | • King Victor Emmanuel names Benito Mussolini as Italian Prime Minister and gives him control over government |
| 1924 | • Lenin, leader of Soviet Russia, dies |
| 1928 | • Stalin launches the First Five Year Plan to make the Soviet Union into a world industrial power |
| 1929, October | • New York Stock Exchange crashes, resulting in a worldwide economic depression |
| 1931, September | • Japanese troops attack Mukden, Manchuria. China appeals to the League of Nations for assistance |
| 1933, January | • Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany |
| 1933, February | • League of Nations receives Lytton Commission report on Manchuria and censures Japan for breaking international law. Japan announces her withdrawal from the League |

- 1935, October** • Mussolini invades Abyssinia. League of Nations imposes economic sanctions against Italy
- 1936, July** • Spanish Civil War begins
- 1936, October** • Hitler and Mussolini send troops to Spain to support the Nationalists
- 1936, October** • Hitler and Mussolini sign the Rome-Berlin Axis
- 1937** • Japan launches full-scale war on China
- 1938** • Chamberlain, Hitler, Mussolini and Daladier sign Munich Agreement, giving the Sudetenland to Germany
- 1939** • Germany and Italy sign the Pact of Steel pledge to support each other in the event of war
- 1939, August** • The Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact stuns the world. Hitler is now free to invade Poland
- 1939, 1 September** • German Army invades Poland
- 1939, 3 September** • Britain, France, India, Australia and New Zealand declare war on Germany and World War II begins

Italy and Japan – The Treaty of Versailles

The Treaty of Versailles not only angered and humiliated the German nation, it also planted the seeds of distrust and frustration in the two countries who helped the Allies defeat the **Central Powers** during the war: Italy and Japan. Although Italy was a victor in the war, she came away deeply dissatisfied with the Treaty of Versailles. In 1920, via the secret **Conference of London**, the Allies promised Italy a great amount of territory including Trentino, the South Tyrol, and parts of Dalmatia, and islands in the Aegean Sea and a protectorate over Albania if she left the Central Powers and joined the Allies. Italy's President Orlando was originally part of the 'Big Four' at the Paris Peace Conference, however he walked away in disgust as it transpired that Italy was to get very little out of the Peace Settlement. Italy was given only Trentino, Trieste, Tyrol and was not given Fiume or any former German colonies, nor any land in Asia Minor, Dalmatia or Albania. Like the Germans, the interwar Italian government protested against the disloyalty of the French and the British. This shared anger helped to lay a foundation for German-Italian cooperation in years to come.

Japan Japan had been an ally of Great Britain since 1902 and had made an important naval contribution to the Allied war effort. Japan believed that her support of the Allies would win her respect and esteem from the victorious powers. This would not be the case and the powers at the Treaty of Versailles rejected Japan's bid for the creation of a 'racial equality' clause in the Treaty of Versailles. The Japanese regarded the rejection of the racial equality cause as a personal insult, and were also deeply concerned with the United States taking land in the Pacific which the Japanese considered to be in their sphere of influence. To add insult to injury, the **Washington Naval Treaty of 1922** saw Japan's naval capacity severely limited compared to that of Britain and the United States, angering the Japanese military leaders.



Figure 2.1 (Left) General Hideki Tojo, Prime Minister of the Japanese Empire (Centre) Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini (Right) Joseph Stalin

Japan resented the Western powers and began to openly agitate for its own sphere of influence in the Asia-Pacific region.

However, Japan was granted a permanent seat on the Council of the League of Nations, and Germany's rights in Shandong territory along with Germany's more northerly Pacific Islands were handed to Japan to govern, under the South Pacific Mandate.

Across a range of countries, many people were ready to listen to any party or individual who offered solutions to these issues. This situation created the perfect atmosphere for dictators to rise to power.

The hope of a lasting peace and continued economic prosperity which was the promise of the **Golden Twenties** was shattered by the Great Depression of the 1930s. Across the world, living standards fell, businesses closed and unemployment soared to record highs.

The Great Depression

The Great Depression had its roots in World War I. European economies had collapsed under the economic strain of four long years of fighting. The USA had come to Europe's aide with large loans to the Allies, Germany and many other European nations. On 24 October 1929, the **Stock Market Crash**, or Wall Street Crash, of 1929 commenced. The USA immediately lost economic confidence and called in these loans from European nations. This had a catastrophic knock-on effect. Many banks closed their doors as people rushed to withdraw their savings. At the same time, large companies collapsed and unemployment rose to staggering heights. As the world economy buckled, people felt threatened and insecure and began to question if democratic governments were able to fix the worsening social and economic problems.

By the early 1920s in Russia, a powerful communist dictatorship led by Vladimir Lenin, then Joseph Stalin, ruled with an iron fist. In Italy, Benito Mussolini was swept to power on a wave of support for his fascist principles of **authoritarian** control of the state. By the early 1930s, in Germany Adolf Hitler ruled as **Führer**. In Japan, a drive towards ultra-nationalism, imperialism and militarism, or rule by military leaders, replaced the former democratic system of government, and the emperor was revered as a symbolic god-like figure of this movement.

2.2 Overview of the features of the dictatorships which emerged in Russia, Italy and Japan

Totalitarianism A totalitarian dictatorship maintains control over every aspect of a population's public and private life. During the economic crisis of the Great Depression many people came to believe that a totalitarian system of government could offer control and solutions. **Totalitarianism** also provided a sense of security and direction for the future. The communist dictatorship of Russia and the fascist dictatorship in Italy both used aspects of totalitarianism. They both had strong and charismatic supreme leaders and allowed only one political party. Most political and civil rights were denied to citizens and terror tactics were used by the police and secret government forces to control or eliminate any opposition. Both used **propaganda** to control what information people had access to in order to influence their thinking.

There were fundamental differences in the regimes however, as the Italian fascist government believed in extreme nationalism while Communist Russia advocated the spreading of ideas worldwide as part of an ongoing communist revolution. The Communists attempted to end private ownership of property and production, and to end social class distinction. Fascist governments supported a class-based society and rights to private property.

Revolution in Russia The once-great Russian Empire, which was ruled over by the 300-year-old Romanov Dynasty, was by the early 20th century on the brink of collapse from within. Compared to the rest of Europe, Russia was economically and technologically backwards, and ruled by authoritarian Tsar Nicholas II. At the start of World War I, Russia was an Allied power as part of the Triple Entente with France and Britain. Russia suffered greatly during the war – the poorly equipped and poorly led Russian army faced a modern German army which quickly defeated the majority of the Russian forces early in the war at the Battles of Tannenberg and Masurian Lakes. Both these battles wiped out the majority of the Russian forces, and by the end of 1914 Russia had lost over one million men through casualties, death or as prisoners of war. The heavy



Figure 2.2 Russian soldiers surrender to German forces at the Battle of Masurian Lakes, 1915. It is likely that the Germans made the Russians reenact their surrender for this photo.

cost of the war caused the Russian economy to collapse, producing many food shortages and political strikes and protests by soldiers and citizens; Russia wavered on the edge of revolution for a number of years.

After the spontaneous revolution of February/March 1917, Tsar Nicholas had no choice but to abdicate the throne. He was replaced by a democratic Provisional Government. On 6 and 7 November 1917 (or 24 and 25 October on the Julian calendar), revolutionaries led by **Bolshevik** leader Vladimir Lenin launched a coup and captured the Winter Palace in Petrograd, where the leaders of the Provisional Government were based. Lenin quickly established a Soviet government that would be led by councils of soldiers, peasants and workers. The Bolsheviks and their allies occupied government buildings and other important locations in Petrograd. The new Bolshevik government replaced the Tsarist autocracy with the world's first communist state, which would eventually expand to become the Soviet Union, overseen by Lenin.

To consolidate their power, the new Soviet government ordered the Ural Regional Soviet to murder the Russian Imperial family who had been under house arrest at the House of Special Purposes at Yekaterinburg since the outbreak of the revolution. On the night of 16–17 July 1918, the Tsar and his family were gathered for a family portrait when they were suddenly and violently murdered by Bolshevik soldiers.



Figure 2.3 Tsar Nicholas II and Tsarina Alexandra and their children, circa 1914 (L to R) Olga, Maria, Nicholas, Alexandra, Anastasia, Alexei and Tatiana

On 21 January 1924, Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, died. The new leader of communist Russia, Joseph Stalin, desired to strengthen the communist state and his own personal power. Stalin used his own secret police the Cheka, later the NKVD (the Peoples Commissar for Internal Affairs), to prevent any opposition against his rule and to imprison anyone who spoke out against him. During his dictatorship many political opponents were banished to **Gulags** in Siberia. In 1936, Stalin began the **Great Purge** to eliminate all political rivals in the Communist Party. There were many false accusations and **show trials** of suspected political opponents. This resulted in the death of many individuals deemed to be disloyal to Stalin.

Communism in Russia

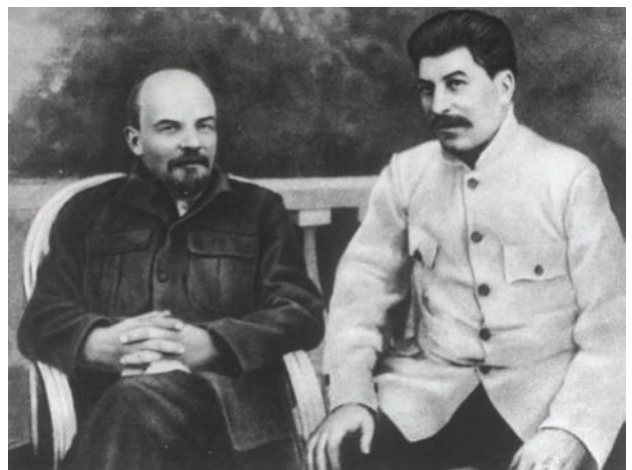


Figure 2.4 Russian Communist leaders Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin – Gorki, Russia, 1922

Stalinism Once Stalin gained unchallenged political control, he then wanted to ensure the survival of the communist state in the modern world and saw the need to strengthen the economy of the Soviet Union. To do this, Stalin created a succession of Five Year Plans – which were socialist in principle. Lenin had introduced a preceding policy, the New Economic Policy (NEP), based on capitalist principles in order to jump-start the struggling Soviet economy. Stalin's Five Year Plans were intended to improve the economy and the industrial capacity of the Soviet Union, whilst remaining true to the principles of socialism. Under the Five Year Plans, targets were set to drastically increase production of steel, coal, iron and agricultural output. Unfortunately, these were often unrealistic targets that resulted in failure. To ensure the success of his Five Years Plans, Stalin seized control of all privately



Figure 2.5 'Thanks to Beloved Stalin for Our Happy Childhood!', propaganda poster demonstrating the Cult of Stalin, 1936

owned factories and farms and began a process of **collectivisation**. Many families now worked on collectives together to provide food for the nation. However not all farmers agreed to the policy of collectivisation and some rebelled by burning their crops and killing their livestock in protest at the policy. These policies caused many food shortages and famines across the country and resulted in the deaths of millions of Russian people. Many of those who protested against Stalin's policies were rounded up by the secret police and punished severely and sent to forced labour camps. By the late 1930s Stalin had turned the Soviet Union into a powerful industrial nation and a one-party totalitarian state.

A cult of personality was created around Stalin, and his image dominated everyday life in the Soviet Union. All major buildings and factories displayed pictures and busts of Stalin and every household had a picture of Stalin on display. The Cult of Stalin was successful in associating him with every positive facet of life in Soviet Russia. Stalin's dictatorship has become known more widely as Stalinism and it is interchangeable with totalitarianism. Although strictly speaking the Communist Party was not a totalitarian organisation, the control and oppression of the party by Stalin resulted in a system of absolute control and suppression of Russian society during his dictatorship.

Fascism in Italy Benito Mussolini rose to the position of Italian Prime Minister in October 1922, and by 1925 he had eliminated all potential sources of political opposition. His **Corporate State** was concerned with improving working and living conditions, as well as the economy and relations with the Catholic Church. In Italy, the church held a lot of power, as did the monarchy. While not as harsh as Nazi Germany, the death penalty and the secret police, known as the **Blackshirts**, were hallmarks of Mussolini's fascist state. Mussolini wanted to build an empire like that of Ancient Rome. Italian foreign policy was therefore geared towards military preparedness and national glory.

Although **fascism** existed as a political ideology before World War I, it was Mussolini who brought fascism to prominence with his desire for Italy to be a great and powerful state. As a political philosophy, fascism is based on extreme nationalism focused on mainly military power to control the people. It is also based on militaristic ideals of courage, unquestioning obedience to authority, discipline, and physical strength. Hitler, who was an early admirer of Mussolini, we will look at in detail over the coming chapters. Nazi Germany is perhaps the most famous of fascist dictatorships. Many fascist movements also had imperialistic goals, such as Mussolini's ambitions for Northern Africa.

Immediately after World War I, Italy suffered from a number of strikes during a time of great industrial unrest amongst the working class. After the communist revolution of 1917 in Russia, there was a genuine threat of the spread of **communism** in nations such as Italy. Taking advantage of the economic distress and political despair Italy found itself in, Mussolini, who was originally a socialist revolutionary, created a new political movement in 1919 called the Fascio di Combattimento (League of Combatants) which started off as a very small movement with only a few hundred members, but which quickly grew in size. Mussolini was able to gain the support of left-wing interventionists, radical nationalists, and World War I veterans who were all strong proponents of Italian nationalism and opponents of communism. With the promise of creating a stronger Italy, he formed an alliance with these groups to create his fascist movement. As a champion of nationalism, militarism, and authoritarian rule, Mussolini promised to solve the nation's deep economic and political problems, as well as securing land that Italy was promised in the Treaty of London. In 1921 Mussolini founded the National Fascist Party, and used this movement as a way to transform the old multiparty political system into a fascist monopoly.

In 1922, Mussolini and his National Fascist Party united with the other fascists groups and moved to take power in Italy. Mussolini had threatened the liberal leaders of Italy that 'either the government will be given to us or we shall seize it by marching on Rome.' Along with senior members of the Party, Mussolini planned that fascists from all across the country would travel to Rome, and every key public building would be taken over and placed into the hands of the Fascist Party, under his control. King Victor Emmanuel wanted to avoid conflict and possible civil war and knew that the liberal government was deeply unpopular. Mussolini met with Emmanuel on 29 October 1922, and Mussolini was soon after sworn in as Prime Minister of Italy. The fascists still marched on Rome, though now in triumph under their new leader **Il Duce**.

The March on Rome, 1922



Figure 2.6 Benito Mussolini and Fascist Party leaders during the March on Rome, 1922, which marked the beginning of his dictatorship of Italy

The Invasion of Abyssinia, 1935 After coming to power in 1922, Mussolini spoke of creating a large Italian empire. Italy already had three colonies in North Africa: Libya, Eritrea and Somaliland. In 1935, Italian troops invaded Abyssinia. The League of Nations attempted to impose sanctions against Italy but this proved ineffectual and merely annoyed Mussolini who now looked increasingly toward Hitler as another European dictator who was prepared to pursue an aggressive foreign policy and thwart both collective security and the League of Nations's attempts to maintain peace.

The Spanish Civil War, 1936 In 1936, civil war broke out in Spain between the Republican and Nationalist forces. The Republicans were supported by the socialists, communist and the left-wing groups. The Nationalists were supported by the landowners, the church and the fascists of Spain, led by General Franco. The Russians sent troops to support the Republicans. France and Britain stayed out of the conflict, but the war brought the two powerful nations of Italy and Germany together. In 1936, Mussolini and Hitler signed the **Rome-Berlin Axis**. Later on that year, Germany also signed an anti-Comintern (or anti-communism) pact with Japan to keep in check the power of Russia. When Italy joined the pact in 1937 this became known as the **Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis**, bringing three major dictatorships into the same camp. The Spanish Civil War witnessed Italy and Germany supporting each other politically and militarily on the international stage, but the foundation of the pact was well underway before this event. Hitler's position in Europe was reinforced by his support of the right wing dictator General Franco. Co-operation in the Spanish war strengthened the bond between Italy and Germany, and the formation of the Rome-Berlin Axis further cemented Italy and Germany as strong allies.

Militarism in Japan Japan's economy was severely affected by the Great Depression. Japan had a booming silk trade and export prices fell by 50 per cent by 1931. Half the factories in Japan were closed as a direct result of the worldwide economic collapse. As in Germany and elsewhere there was wide-spread unrest amongst the people which soon spread to the military. For the military, the immediate answer to the impact of the Depression was a strong government at home and economic expansion to overseas territories controlled by Japan. A brief period of democracy and modern culture had flourished in Japan after World War I but this soon gave way to increasing internal division between the politicians and the military sections of society over the rejection and discrimination against the Japanese by the Western Powers. In 1923 the **Great Kanto Earthquake** destroyed much of Tokyo and devastated Japan's economic capacity, which brought about a dark period that was aggravated by the global depression in 1929. To the military, Emperor Hirohito was a god who was the symbolic and spiritual leader of the people of Japan. Because of this, the citizens supported the rise of militarism led by powerful leaders such as Hideki Tojo who ruled in the name of the emperor.

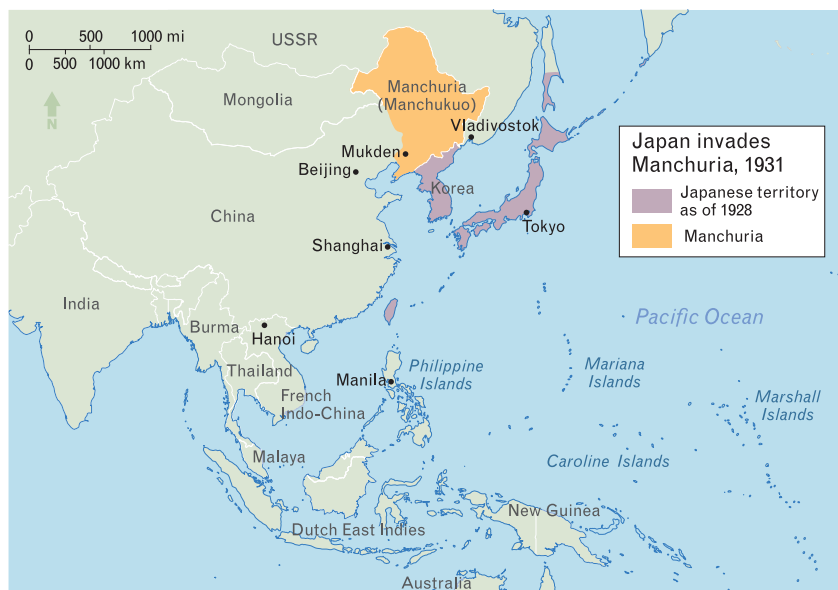


Figure 2.7 Map showing the invasion of Manchuria by Japan, 1931

In 1931 the Japanese army sent a small troop of soldiers to the rich industrial province of Manchuria in China's north. The Japanese already had a base near Port Arthur which they had been granted in their defeat of Russia in the **Russo-Japanese War** of 1904 to 1905. The Japanese troops blew up the Japanese-owned railway near Mukden, and the Japanese government then placed the blame on the local Chinese and used this as pretext for the full invasion of Manchuria. The League of Nations failed to stop the invasion, and from 1932 to 1936 Japan expanded further into China as the power of the militarists inside the Japanese government grew stronger. Japan's expanding ambitions in China led to further disputes with the League of Nations and with Britain and the United States, and these disputes eventually drove Japan into a military alliance with Germany and Italy.

The invasion of Manchuria

In 1932 a number of powerful coups occurred which culminated in the assassination of Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi by a group of junior naval officers. In 1936 a number of important Japanese civilian leaders were also murdered by military officers. While those who plotted the coups were executed, the coups led to a consolidation of power among military leaders who increasingly took over ministerial positions. By the late 1930s, Japanese militarists had almost full control of government decision-making. In the later part of the 1930s Japan began to recover from the Depression and started to rapidly industrialise. As a result, more raw materials were required than could be sourced in Japan itself, and the military-led government looked overseas to expand the Japanese empire. Japanese nationalists promoted the concept of a **Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere** in which Japan, as the superior Asian race, was entitled to expand its empire by colonising Asian nations.

Expansion of the Japanese Empire



Figure 2.8 Japanese soldiers during the invasion of Manchuria



Figure 2.9 Against a background of their respective flags, German and Japanese officials toast the new Axis Pact in Tokyo.

Summary of the characteristics of fascism

- Supported by the middle class, industrialists and the military
- Supreme leader
- Charismatic leader
- Authoritarian
- Anti-communist
- State more important than the individual
- Action-oriented
- Nationalist
- Racist
- One-party rule
- Economic functions controlled by the state or corporations of the state

Key personalities, groups and terms



Figure 2.10 Vladimir Lenin

Personalities

Vladimir Lenin: Born 22 April 1870, in Simbirsk, Russia. Founder of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), leader of the Bolshevik Revolution (1917), and leader (1917–24) of the Soviet Union. He was the founder of the organisation known as **Comintern** (Communist International). He combined his philosophy with Marx's works which famously became Marxism-Leninism; this became the communist philosophy and worldview. Lenin died 21 January 1924, in Gorki, Russia.

Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin: Controversial Russian dictator, born in Georgia in the Russian Empire in 1878 to a poor family. Early in his life he was attracted to the principles of Marxism and the politics of Vladimir Lenin. He joined the Bolshevik party early and made a name for himself with his organisational capability. Stalin quickly rose through the ranks to become the party's General Secretary. He first used his post to consolidate his position and then to eliminate all his rivals to become the supreme leader of the Soviet Union. Stalin continued to rule Russia with an iron fist until his death on 5 March 1953 at the age of 74. Although he was credited by some for transforming Russia from a backward country to a major world power, he was also responsible for millions of deaths and deportations of his own citizens deemed to be enemies of the state.



Figure 2.11 Stalin



Figure 2.12 Benito Mussolini

Benito Mussolini: Born in 1883 in Italy, a committed socialist as a youth, but was expelled by the party for his support of World War I. In 1919, he created the Fascist Party and made himself dictator, holding all the power in Italy. He made key tactical mistakes during World War II and was hanged by his own people in 1945.

Emperor Hirohito: Born in 1901 in Tokyo, Japan. He was Japan's longest-reigning monarch, ruling from 1926 to 1989 as emperor. Hirohito was seen as a god by the Japanese people. Japanese soldiers were loyal to him during World War II and his role in the aggressive Japanese military policy is debated by historians. After the war, the new constitution drafted by the United States transformed Japan into a constitutional monarchy so that sovereignty lay with the people instead of the emperor. Hirohito died in Tokyo on 7 January 1989.



Figure 2.13 Emperor Hirohito



Figure 2.14 Hideki Tojo

Hideki Tojo: Born in Tokyo in 1884, the son of a general. Tojo was a supporter of Adolf Hitler, and encouraged closer links between Japan and Germany and Italy. In September 1940, the three Axis powers signed the Tripartite Pact. Appointed Japan's Minister for War in July 1940, Tojo became Japan's Prime Minister in 1941 and within two months had ordered the attack on Pearl Harbor. As well as Prime Minister and Minister for War, Tojo was also appointed Home and Foreign Minister.

In 1944 he became Chief of the Imperial Japanese Army General Staff and he ruled as dictator, only answering to Emperor Hirohito. After Japan's defeat in the Battle of Saipan, Tojo publicly lost the Emperor's support and was forced to resign from the positions of Prime Minister and Chief of the Imperial Japanese Army on 18 July 1944. Tojo was executed by hanging on 23 December 1948.



Figure 2.15 Tsuyoshi Inukai

Tsuyoshi Inukai: Japanese politician, cabinet minister, and Prime Minister of Japan from 13 December 1931 to 15 May 1932, when he was assassinated by 11 junior naval officers during a coup.

Terms

authoritarian: enforcing strict obedience to authority at the expense of personal freedom

Blackshirts: member of the armed squads of Italian Fascists under Benito Mussolini, who wore black shirts as part of their uniform

Conference of London: a secret pact between the Triple Entente (France, Russia and Great Britain) and the Kingdom of Italy. Its aim was to secure Italy as an ally. The Italian government was promised large amounts of land by the Triple Entente powers to sign the Treaty

Corporate State: Mussolini's fascist regime believed in a 'third way', claiming that the corporate state was a genuine alternative to capitalism and communism, and would solve all class and economic problems via collaboration

fascism: a political system based on a very powerful leader, state control, extreme pride of country and race, and in which political opposition is not allowed

Golden Twenties: the inter-war period that witnessed great economic, social and cultural prosperity and attempts at internationalism and collective security to prevent war

Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere: a concept proposed by Japan to capture European-controlled Asian territories, to supply resources needed to support Japanese expansionism

Great Kanto Earthquake: Tokyo-Yokohama earthquake of 1923 struck with a magnitude of 7.9 in the heart of the Tokyo-Yokohama metropolitan area

Il Duce: National Fascist Party leader Benito Mussolini was identified by Fascists as Il Duce (The Leader) of the Fascist movement

Japanese militarism: refers to the ideology in the Empire of Japan that militarism (the idea that having strong armed forces is crucial) should dominate the political and social life of the nation

Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis: also known as the **Axis**, this group was made up of the key nations that fought in World War II against the Allied forces. The Axis powers agreed on their opposition to the Allies, but did not completely coordinate their activity

Russo-Japanese War: fought between the Russian Empire and the Empire of Japan over rival imperial ambitions in Manchuria and Korea between February 1904 and September 1905

Stock Market Crash: the Wall Street Crash of 1929 began on 24 October 1929 (Black Thursday), and was the most devastating stock market crash in United States history, and marked the start of the Great Depression which lasted throughout the 1930s

Volksgemeinschaft: German concept of ‘people’s community’, or uniting people for a national purpose

Washington Naval Treaty of 1922: signed on 6 February 1922, the Treaty dramatically limited the naval armaments of Japan

Activities

Thinking historically 2.1

1. Explain why both Japan and Italy felt cheated by the Allied powers in the Treaty of Versailles.
2. Outline the main beliefs of fascism and militarism.
3. Explain how the ambitions of Japan and Italy were similar and how they differed from those of communist Russia.
4. Explain the purpose and aims of Stalin’s Five Year Plans.
5. What methods did Stalin use to maintain control in Russia?

Source analysis 2.1

Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions which follow.

Speech by Mussolini, 2 October 1935

Source 2A

It is not only our Army that marches to its objective, 44 million Italians march with that Army, all united and alert. Let others try to commit the blackest injustices, taking away Italy’s place in the sun. When in 1915, Italy united her fate with the Allies, how many promises were made? To fight the common victory Italy brought her supreme contribution of 670 000 dead, 480 000 disabled and more than a million wounded. When we went to the table of that odious peace they gave us the crumbs of the colonial booty.

A.P Adamthwaite, *The Making of the Second World War*, 1977

Source 2B

In 1933, Dr Wellington Koo, China’s representative to the League of Nations Assembly, warned: ‘The absence of any effective action by the League over Manchuria has encouraged those who all along had been proclaiming the belief that “might is right”.’

Source 2C Kochan and Abraham, *The Making of Modern Russia*, 1983


Deranged or not, Stalin remains a towering figure in world history. He had galvanised the forces that built a new form of society, presided over an ultimately triumphant war [World War II] and by careful diplomacy had made Russia the second greatest power on earth. He has destroyed the country ways, thrown down old gods ... He died as he had lived, a remote, cruel deity, but for many a deity all the same.

Source 2D Soviet leader under Lenin, Leon Trotsky, at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, November 1922

In September 1920 the working class of Italy had, in effect, gained control of the state, of society, of factories, plants and enterprises ... In essence the working class had already conquered or virtually conquered.

Questions

- a** Using Source 2A explain how Mussolini justifies his takeover of Abyssinia.
- b** Using Source 2B propose how inaction by the League of Nations over Japan's invasion of Manchuria would have encouraged other dictatorships to pursue aggressive foreign policies.
- c** Assess the interpretation of Stalin offered by the historians in Source 2C. From what you have learned about Stalin, do you agree with this interpretation? Why/why not?
- d** Explain how Source 2D relates to Mussolini's rise in Italy.



PART 3

The Nazi regime to 1939

3

The rise of the Nazi Party in Germany

At the end of this topic you should attempt to answer the following question:

What social, political and economic conditions enabled Adolf Hitler to bring the Nazi Party to power in Germany in 1933?

Key syllabus features

The key features are:

- The ascendancy of the Nazi Party and Hitler in Germany and the downfall of the Weimar Republic.

The key features provide the basis for HSC examination questions.

3.1 The collapse of the Weimar Republic

FOCUS QUESTION

How did Hitler bring the Nazi Party to power in Germany in 1933?

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1918 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Armistice signed, WWI ends• Mutiny of sailors in Kiel – German Revolution• Kaiser abdicates and Germany declared a Democratic Republic |
| 1919, 28 June | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Treaty of Versailles signed in the Hall of Mirrors in France |
| 1922 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Germany defaults on reparations and French and Belgium troops occupy the Ruhr Valley |
| 1923 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Period of hyperinflation |
| 1923 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beer Hall Putsch in Munich fails |
| 1929 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wall Street crash – the Great Depression starts• Death of Gustav Stresemann |
| 1932 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nazi Party wins 230 seats in the Reichstag election. Hitler loses to von Hindenburg for Presidency |
| 1933 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hitler, leader of the Nazi Party, appointed Chancellor by President von Hindenburg• <i>Enabling Act</i> Passed |
| 1934 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Night of the Long Knives, Nazis arrest and murder SA leaders• Hitler becomes Führer• Germany introduces military conscription |

- 1935**
 - Nuremberg Laws, Anti-Jewish laws. Sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews made illegal
- 1936**
 - Germany occupies the Rhineland
 - Berlin Olympic Games
- 1938**
 - *Anschluss* union of Germany and Austria
 - Munich Conference – appeasement and German occupation of Sudetenland
 - Night of the Broken Glass (*Kristallnacht*): Jews murdered, synagogues and Jewish businesses destroyed
- 1939**
- August**
 - Germany and Italy agree to a military alliance
 - Germany declares Slovakia as an independent nation under German protection
- September**
 - German invasion of Poland
 - Britain and France declare war on Germany

Some historians have argued that the **Weimar Republic** began in crisis and ended the same way, claiming that the inherent weakness in the Weimar constitution doomed the republic from the outset. Others have blamed the Great Depression for causing the collapse of democracy and creating the unique social and economic circumstances that led to the failure of democracy and the rise of Nazi dictatorship.

Collapse of the Weimar Republic

The Weimar Democratic Republic emerged in Germany as the imperial army was facing defeat and the navy was on the brink of mutiny. Many German people were at the point of starvation and revolution. Germany did not have a long tradition of democracy, but a democratic Germany was a precondition set by the Allies for an armistice and peace treaty. The conditions for an experiment in democracy could not have been more hostile, with strikes and political and economic tensions crippling the country.

Weimar – an experiment in democracy

During World War I, Field Marshall von Hindenburg and General Ludendorff were running Germany as a military dictatorship. Kaiser Wilhelm had simply become a national figurehead with no real power. As defeat for Germany grew closer, the German High Command was desperate to hand over the responsibility for the war to a civilian government and wash their hands of the German failure.



Figure 3.1 Adolf Hitler standing next to General Erich Ludendorff, one of Germany's foremost generals of World War I, facing trial for the failed Munich Beer Hall Putsch, 1924

In July 1917, the Reichstag passed the **Peace Resolution** seeking peace without territorial gains. Many German nationalists however felt cheated and wanted to fight on. They believed that the politicians had stabbed them in the back, because no Allied soldier had set foot on German soil and at one point the German army looked like it could take Paris – so how was defeat possible? The politicians who signed the peace terms become known as the **November Criminals** and this idea would fuel the contempt that helped to create the Weimar government.

Immediately after the war, Germany was in a disastrous political situation. Prince Max von Baden was appointed the new Chancellor of Germany, General Ludendorff was dismissed from the High Command and Germany became for the first time a **constitutional monarchy**.

At the same time at the Port of Kiel, mutiny broke out amongst the German sailors who refused to attack the British Royal Navy. German workers set themselves up in ‘soviets’ based on the Russian model and similar revolutionary action spread quickly across Germany.

In Bavaria a Soviet revolutionary government was established by the socialist leader Kurt Eisner. At the same time, the Kaiser was forced to **abdicate** and leave Germany to live in exile in Spa (Holland). The abdication

of the Kaiser was followed by the resignation of his cousin Prince Max von Baden, leaving no contenders for the crown of Germany. Friedrich Ebert became the new Chancellor and in an attempt to stop Germany sliding into further chaos and revolutionary anarchy, Ebert negotiated with General Groener, Head of the High Command, to form a new democratic government. The **Ebert-Groener Pact** was created and Germany was declared a republic and signed the armistice with the Allies.



Figure 3.2 German sailors meeting at Kiel, 28 October 1918

Revolution, rebellion and murders

The new democratic experiment faced many immediate and dangerous problems. Three main socialist groups were competing for power and helped to start a revolution in 1918: The **Social Democratic Party**, the Independent Socialists and the **Spartacists**. They each had their own ideas about how to change Germany. The strongest and most radical of these were the Spartacists, who took their name from Spartacus, a Roman gladiator who led a rebellion of slaves against the slave-masters of Ancient Rome. Their leaders were Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, who

planned to overthrow the new Ebert government in a revolution and set up a Council of Workers or 'soviets' who would then implement socialist reform across Germany.

In January 1919, a **putsch** (uprising) was brought on by the Spartacists, led by Liebknecht and Luxemburg. The government under Ebert had gained the support of the **Freikorps** (ex-soldiers) who had come home from the war. These ex-soldiers were hard men who hated communists and socialists and were keen to assist President Ebert to suppress their forces. On 10 January, over 2000 Freikorps attacked the Spartacists in Berlin; bitter street fighting ensued for the next three days. On 15 January the Freikorps arrested both Luxemburg and Liebknecht. After beating them both savagely, they were executed and Rosa Luxemburg's body was dumped in a canal. After preventing the communist revolution, Ebert held an election for a new parliament and his Social Democratic Party won a majority of the seats and was able to form a government. On 11 February, in the central German town of Weimar, far away from the violence in Berlin, Ebert was officially elected the first President of the new German Republic – the Weimar Republic.

The Freikorps



Figure 3.3 Spartacists in Berlin mounting a machine gun onto the back of a captured lorry, January 1919



Figure 3.4 The aggressive ex-soldiers Freikorps with armoured tank. The skull and crossbones was the symbol of the Freikorps.

Threats to the new republic

The most controversial feature of the Ebert's new Weimar government was the constitution. Adopted in August 1919, the constitution offered the German people many new freedoms, including equality before the law, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, equality of the sexes, freedom of religious practice, and a social welfare system. Importantly, it included the vote for all citizens over the age of 20. True democratic power seemed to be in the hands of the people via the Reichstag (parliament). However, the old ruling elite – the army, the judiciary and bureaucracy – were unchanged and remained hostile toward the Weimar Republic. The problems built into the constitution provided legal and constitutional loopholes that could be manipulated by politicians, such as Hitler. The democratic scope of the new constitution ended up hamstringing the Weimar Republic government. **Emergency decrees** created by the constitution provided the legal right of the President to rule by emergency decree and to dismiss the Reichstag (Article 48). The President could override any aspect of the new constitution and use the military to keep order. Hitler would use this loophole, once he became Chancellor in 1933, to destroy the Weimar Republic.

Another aspect of the constitution which appeared to be very democratic was the voting system. **Proportional representation** meant that the number of members of parliament (representatives) in the Reichstag was in direct proportion to the number of votes gained in an election. This would allow smaller parties to have power and be represented. However, it did not lead to greater democracy – instead it meant that no government majority could be formed and the only way to form government was via coalitions and political compromise/intrigue. Twenty-one coalition governments were formed in Weimar Republic between 1919 and 1933.

Impact of the Treaty of Versailles

Germany had lost World War I without a single Allied soldier setting foot on German soil. Under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany lost her entire empire (including overseas colonies), military power was severely restricted, and Germany was forced to pay for the damage caused to Allied nations during the war (**reparations**). Most importantly, Germany had to accept responsibility for causing the war (Article 231, the 'war guilt clause'.) In addition to these conditions the new German government had to accept:

- paying 132 billion gold marks in reparations
- the demilitarisation of the Rhineland
- the occupation of the coal-producing Saar region
- union between Austria and Germany was forbidden
- total disarmament of the military, including the end of conscription, and a ban on tanks and heavy artillery.

The German delegation objected strongly to the Treaty, but was forced to sign or face further military invasion beyond the de-militarised zones and possible military occupation of Germany. The new Weimar government considered the Treaty to be a diktat but was forced to sign the treaty at the Hall of Mirrors, Versailles, on 28 June 1919. The first Chancellor of the

Weimar Republic, Chancellor Scheidemann, resigned in protest. Germans angrily denounced the terms of the Treaty and considered Germany to have become a 'nation in chains'. The impact of the Treaty of Versailles was ultimately that it gave fuel to the fire of the right-wing nationalists to seek revenge in the future.



Figure 3.5 A disabled German soldier begging on the streets of Berlin, 1919. This type of image fuelled the hatred of the November Criminals and the politicians of the Weimar government who signed the Treaty of Versailles.

The *Reichswehr* (army) revolted when attempts were made to reduce the size and strength of the German military as was required by the Treaty of Versailles. The Freikorps again intervened with violence. Encouraged by the army and led by General Ehrhardt, they launched a putsch to march on Berlin, overthrow the Weimar government and establish a right-wing government led by Wolfgang Kapp and reinstall the German monarchy. The Kapp government survived only four days before order was restored in Berlin. Kapp fled to exile in Sweden and President Ebert and the Weimar government were able to return to Berlin. Despite the return of democratic government, the extreme right-wing organisations undertook numerous political assassinations, including those of Matthias Erzberger who signed the Treaty of Versailles for Germany and

The Kapp Putsch, 1920



Figure 3.6 Defending the Reichstag – soldiers guarding an entrance to the Reichstag during the failed Kapp Putsch, Berlin, Germany, 1920

Walter Rathenau, Foreign Minister. Between 1919 and 1922 there were 376 political assassinations committed by members of the extreme right-wing.

Changes to social life

Germany during the Weimar Republic became a centre for artists from all over Europe; Berlin was the place to be to experiment with modernity. The German film industry boomed along with new ideas in architecture, music and art. Berlin was said to be the new Paris. Women started to become more liberated during this time and they entered parliament and the professions which were traditionally dominated by men. The 'New Woman' was educated, single and financially independent. However, despite these new opportunities, most German women still followed traditional roles.

Occupation of the Ruhr, 1922

Germany was already crippled by massive debt from the Treaty of Versailles and was forced to default in 1922 on delivery payments of coal and telegraph poles to France. As a result, French and Belgian troops occupied the coal-rich area of the Ruhr valley. This caused passive resistance and strikes by German workers in the area. The loss of the coal-rich area created more liability for the already debt-ridden Weimar government. To fix this problem more bank notes were printed, causing the devaluation of the German mark and subsequent hyperinflation. Unemployment soared and it was the middle class who were most affected by hyperinflation. The middle class relied on investments, savings, income from pensions or rents, not on agricultural and industrial outputs. When undervalued banknotes not backed by the gold standard engulfed the economy, their true value plummeted and price and wages increased. As a result, hyperinflation eroded the cash savings of the middle class and disrupted commercial activity which damaged the German economy further.



Figure 3.7 Printing of banknotes during hyperinflation, Berlin 1923

Gustav Stresemann

In 1923 the leader of the German People's Party, Gustav Stresemann, ended hyperinflation. He stabilised the currency, replacing the overinflated German mark with the Rentenmark and resuming reparation payments

to the Allies. Under his leadership the Weimar Republic was far more politically and economically secure. He attempted to place Germany back on the world stage and forecasts looked promising for the Weimar Republic. As the situation calmed down, many Germans supported the agenda of government and did not vote for extreme parties such as the communists or right-wing groups.

As Foreign Minister, Stresemann signed off on a number of significant treaties to stabilise and secure Germany's future:

- Dawes Plan (1924) – A plan to solve the problems of reparations by reducing the repayments and spreading them over a longer timeframe (60 years). America gave loans to Germany to help her rebuild and repay.
- Treaty of Locarno (1925) – Acceptance of Germany's new borders, and Germany admitted to the League of Nations.
- Young Plan (1929) – Further reduction in reparation debt owed by Germany to the Allies.



Figure 3.8 Gustav Stresemann, German statesman, liberal politician and chancellor

The German economy, while prospering, was in a risky position like many other world economies before the Great Depression struck. Germany relied heavily on foreign loans to make reparations and for industrial investment. On 29 October 1929, the US stock market collapse sent the world into an economic free-fall. German trade collapsed, the government

The impact of the Great Depression



Figure 3.9 Protestors in Berlin carrying a sign reading '2 million unemployed' 1930,

was unable to secure foreign loans and the United States demanded loans be repaid. In 1931, unemployment peaked at around 20 per cent. By 1932, there were 7 million unemployed people in Germany and the population was suffering. The economic collapse of 1929 intensified feeling of hostility towards the Weimar Republic and paved the way for the collapse of democracy.

Summary

- Kaiser Wilhelm abdicates and Germany declared a democratic republic
- Germany faces rebellion and revolution from both the left and right during the early stages of the republic
- Both the Spartacists and Kapp Putsch fail to overthrow the government
- The Weimar Republic is declared with Ebert as its President
- Germany experiences hyperinflation in 1923 and further economic problems as a result of the occupation of the Rhur valley by French soldiers
- Gustav Stresemann ends hyperinflation and stabilises the economy and Weimar Germany enters a period of prosperity and international growth in what is sometimes referred to as the 'golden years', including a rise in freedoms and cultural experimentation
- Germany suffers as the result of the Great Depression and people start to look at alternative parties for answers to their economic problems
- The Weimar government once again becomes unstable.

3.2 The rise of the Nazi Party and Hitler



Figure 3.10 Hitler as he is known to the world; leader of Nazi Germany, and a fiery and effective orator



Figure 3.11 (Left) School-aged Hitler, 1899 (Right) Hitler as a soldier in 1916, standing on the right

Adolf Hitler was not German by birth; he was born in Austria and lived there until he was 24 years old. He was born on 20 April 1889 in the town of Braunau. His father was an authoritarian customs official and his mother was a housewife. Hitler left school at the age of 16 with no formal qualifications after failing his final examinations. After the death of his mother in 1907, he left for Vienna, the capital of Austria, with the intention of becoming a great artist. Hitler attempted to gain entry to the prestigious Academy of Arts in Vienna, but was rejected more than once. He made his living by drawing postcards and street art in Vienna and lived in hostels for down-and-outs. Hitler fled Austria in 1909 to avoid military service in the Austrian army. He moved across the border to Germany and lived in the city of Munich.

Adolf Hitler

Once war broke out in 1914, Hitler became enthused by the idea of war and joined the German army where he quickly proved to be a brave soldier doing dangerous messenger work. He received six medals including the Iron Cross First Class for bravery, which was a rare distinction for a volunteer soldier. However, Hitler never rose above the rank of Corporal. During his fighting time he was temporarily blinded by British mustard gas. Hitler's war experience intensified his already extreme feeling of patriotism for the German cause. It was in hospital recovering from his gas attack that he heard news of the German surrender and reportedly cried in despair.

After the war, Hitler remained in Munich and became a V-Man – an army spy who investigated emerging political groups and reported their activities to the government. One such group was the **German Workers' Party**, ex-soldiers under the leadership of Anton Drexler. They were a very small group with only six members, but their political ideas appealed to Hitler. It was when Hitler heard news in 1919 of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles

that he decided to become a political figure with the aim of destroying the Treaty and building a 'New Germany'. Under his leadership he wanted to restore Germany to the European stage and create a great economic and political power as revenge for defeat in World War I. *Please note more detail on Hitler's life is provided in chapter 6.*

The rise of the Nazi Party

Not long after he spied on the German Workers' Party (or DAP) Hitler decided to join the group. Hitler had great ability as an orator and organiser and soon became the party's leader. In February 1920, the DAP became the **National Socialist German Workers' Party** – the NSDAP or Nazi Party.

With the threat of increasing communist influence and the string of Weimar coalition governments unable to effectively rule Germany, the door was open to a third force to find solutions, and the Nazi Party soon moved up to fill this opportunity. The Nazi Party under Hitler's

leadership became an extreme right-wing group motivated by the 'stab in the back' mentality, and benefitted from growing membership due to the economic hardships faced by the middle class as a result of the Great Depression. By 1923, the Nazi Party had 30 000 members. It had a specially designed flag to attract attention to the party – the swastika, an ancient religious symbol which shows a crooked cross on a white and red background.

The National Socialist German Workers' Party issued the **Twenty-five-point program** describing its aims.

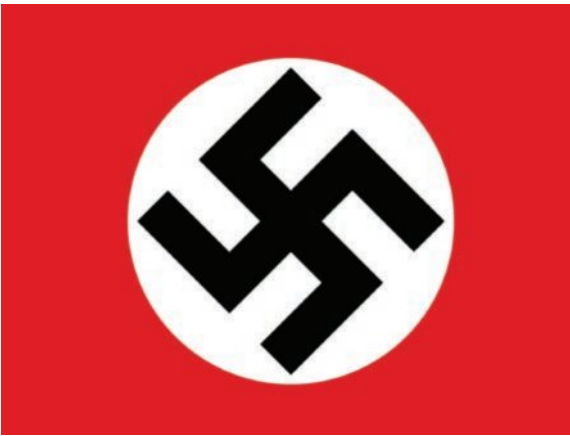


Figure 3.12 Swastika flag of the Nazi Party

Some of the demands of the Nazi Party

- We demand the union of Germans to form a greater Germany.
- We demand the abolition of the Peace Treaties of Versailles and Saint Germain.
- We demand land and territory for the nourishment of our people – *Lebensraum* or living space.
- None but those of German blood may be a member of the German nation. No Jew therefore may be a member of the German nation.

Hitler wanted the creation of a racially pure German state, which would be the most dominant power in Europe. He desired to create a master race of German people and to have Jews eliminated from all power and influence in Germany and throughout Europe. The Nazi Party organised large rallies to protest the Weimar government, the threat of communism and the Treaty of Versailles. The Nazis also believed in an international conspiracy against Germany, which had allowed them to be sold out by the November Criminals.

Nazi meetings were particularly violent and members of opposing parties would try to interrupt Hitler and others when they were speaking. In 1921, Hitler set up the **Sturmabteilung** (Storm Troopers) or SA to keep control of the meetings. The SA were also known as the brownshirts (similar to Mussolini's Blackshirts) due to their distinctive brown shirts. The SA were usually thugs and ex-soldiers who were led by Ernst Röhm, and Hitler used them as his private army to keep control of political rallies which were growing larger in size.

In November 1923, Hitler decided that the Nazi Party had the numbers to overthrow the Weimar government. This was at the height of hyperinflation and the Ruhr crisis, and Hitler saw his opportunity. He planned to march on the Bavarian Beer Hall and disrupt a meeting of Bavarian government leaders, forcing them to tell the audience that they would support Hitler in taking over the government. At this point General Ludendorff, a German war hero, was to declare that he too would support Hitler. The attempted putsch failed as the Bavarian leaders ordered the army to arrest Hitler, Röhm and the SA. After a street battle and gunfire, sixteen Nazis were killed and Hitler and Ludendorff were arrested. While the Munich Beer Hall Putsch failed, the publicity from the trial was great a success for Hitler because it provided him with the political platform he desired. The trial lasted for 24 days and everything Hitler said was front page news to millions of German readers.

The Munich Putsch, 1923



Figure 3.13 Truck carrying Nazis during the Munich Beer Hall Putsch, 1923



Figure 3.14 Hitler holds a Nazi flag just before the launching of the Munich Beer Hall Putsch in 1923

Hitler impressed the judges at his trial and he was given a sentence of only five years (for high treason) with parole after six months. The popular General Ludendorff was set free. Hitler served his sentence in the Landsberg Fortress outside Munich. While in Landsberg prison, Hitler was allowed many visitors and spent his time writing his manifesto *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle). This lengthy and rambling text outlined his political ideas for his new Germany, and described his hatred of the Jewish race.

Prison and *Mein Kampf*



Figure 3.15 Hitler, Hess, and fellow prisoners in prison at Landsberg in 1924 after the failed Munich Beer Hall Putsch



Figure 3.16 *Mein Kampf* is an autobiographical manifesto in which Hitler outlined his political ideology and future plans for Germany

In December 1924, he was released after serving only nine months of his five-year sentence.

Hitler's path to power

In February 1925, after being released from prison, Hitler summoned his followers in the Nazi Party to a meeting in the backroom of a restaurant in Munich. At this meeting, he reorganised the Nazi Party and informed supporters how he intended to take the party to power, and outlined his change of political tactics.

Instead of working to achieve power by armed putsch, we shall have to hold our noses and enter the Reichstag ...

Adolf Hitler, quoted in *Rise And Fall Of The Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany*, William L. Shirer, 1959, p. 119

Support for the Nazi Party

The electoral share of the Nazi Party grew from 2.6 per cent of votes in 1928 to 37.3 per cent in 1932. In the election of September 1930, the Nazi Party secured 107 seats in the Reichstag. This rise in popularity can be attributed to the work of Adolf Hitler and his leadership of the party. Of particular importance was his ability to use his public speaking skills to inspire and make promises of a bright future to the German nation. At his rallies he would captivate the audience with speeches that started slowly and built to a crescendo, often without the aid of a microphone as his voice rumbled into the audience. Many Germans including Albert Speer admitted to being hypnotised by Hitler's speeches.

Under his control, the Nazi Party became a truly national party which mobilised support within many groups who had not been interested in politics before. The traditional Nazi support-base was the rural Protestant German population and members of small working-class villages and

agricultural towns. As the impact of Great Depression worsened, the Nazi Party broadened its support-base to include the majority of the working class, however the unemployed continued to support the Communist Party. While it is debated amongst historians the exact percentage of support from different demographics it is generally accepted that the Nazi Party attracted a broader spectrum of support than any other German political party in the Weimar period. By July 1932, the Nazi Party was the largest party in the Reichstag.

Propaganda was the key to Nazi Party's success. Hitler's speeches and the Nazi's 25-point program offered promises to all German citizens and provided a scapegoat for all Germany's problems: every problem facing Germany was the fault of either the Jews, or the November Criminals, or both. Propaganda is using biased information to promote particular ideas or politics, and selling these ideas to the masses. Joseph Goebbels was the head of the Nazi party propaganda machine and he effectively communicated the messages and images of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party. Goebbels made movies of Hitler's speeches and stage-managed the backdrops, including arranging massive audiences and mass rallies using Nazi symbolism, and flying Hitler all over Germany to give his famous speeches at multiple rallies across the country. The Nazi Party machine also used the SA to beat up Communists and other political parties, making it impossible for them to campaign against the Nazis.

Propaganda



Figure 3.17 Joseph Goebbels, Nazi Propaganda Minister

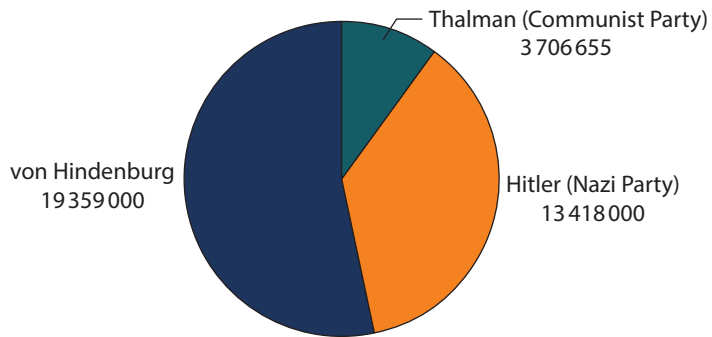


Figure 3.18 Swastika adorned flags at a Nazi rally in Germany

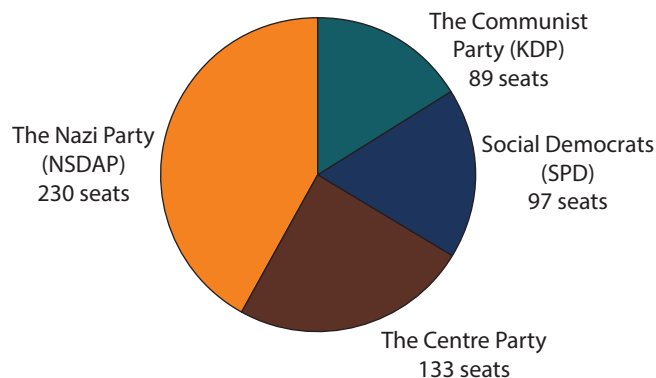
The 1932 elections

The year 1932 was critical for Germany and the Nazi party. In that year three elections were to be held, one for the position of President of Germany and the other two for control of the Reichstag. By election time 1932, millions of Germans were prepared to vote for the Nazi Party, drawn to the promises of Hitler to turn around the worsening unemployment and to restore the power and prestige of Germany on the world stage.

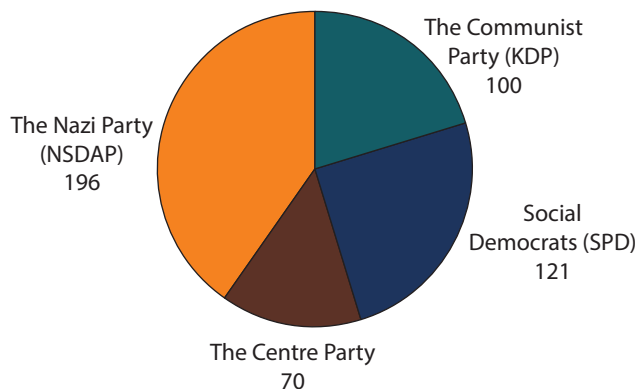
1932 Elections for the Presidency of Germany, March 1932



Elections for control of the Reichstag, July 1932



Elections for control of the Reichstag, November 1932



By July 1932, the Nazi Party was the biggest political party in the Reichstag. The growth of Nazi electoral support from 1930 to 1932 was a significant factor in Hitler's rise to power because it placed the Nazi leader in a very good position to lead a right-wing authoritarian government. By turning the Nazi Party into the most popular German political party, the voters of Germany had helped Hitler to use his political skills to put pressure on von Hindenburg to make him Chancellor. Hitler demanded the job of Chancellor but was blocked by the recently elected President of Germany, 84-year-old Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg. Von Hindenburg did not trust Hitler to govern democratically. For the time being, Franz von Papen remained Chancellor and Hindenburg would use the emergency decrees (Article 48) in the constitution to govern, even though von Papen had only 97 seats in the Reichstag. Von Papen demanded a fresh election in November 1932, seeking more support for his leadership in the Reichstag.

Even after the Nazi party lost almost two million votes and 34 seats in the November Reichstag elections, Hitler was still the most popular candidate and the Nazi party remained the largest party. Again Hitler demanded the position of Chancellor and again he was refused by von Hindenburg.

The use of rule by emergency decree by Article 48 of the Weimar constitution was untenable, and was resented by many politicians and the army. A leading general in the army and defense minister Kurt von Schleicher, a close military friend of von Hindenburg, advised von Hindenburg that the army would not allow von Papen to continue to rule by emergency decree and that the army would not support the government. Von Hindenburg removed von Papen from the Chancellorship and installed von Schleicher as Chancellor. Schleicher was having the same difficulty governing the Reichstag as von Papen, so von Hindenburg asked him to resign only 57 days later. In less than one year, Germany had had two Chancellors, and this unrest ultimately caused President von Hindenburg to summon Adolf Hitler to his chambers on the 30 January 1933 and offer him the position of Chancellor of Germany. Von Hindenburg believed that he could control Hitler by giving him the position of Chancellor. Von Papen was to be Vice-Chancellor and only a handful of Nazi Party members would be ministers in the government – no legislation could pass without von Hindenburg's approval. Hitler would be given the title he wanted but would be controlled like a puppet.

November Elections

Hitler offered the chancellorship



Figure 3.19 Adolf Hitler shakes hands with Paul von Hindenburg, President of the German Reich, after being appointed to the Chancellorship, 30 January 1933

Summary

Reasons Hitler came to power:

- Hitler was a great orator; he was promising the restoration of Germanic national pride and told people what they wanted to hear. He also provided convenient scapegoats, namely the Jews.
- Although together they had more support than the Nazis, the moderate political parties would not work together.
- The Great Depression which struck in 1929 caused poverty and massive unemployment. This created distrust and resentment towards the government. People lost confidence in the democratic system and turned towards the extremist political parties such as the Communists and Nazis during the Depression.
- Through violence, the SA silenced all of Hitler's opponents.
- Goebbels' propaganda campaign was very effective and it won support for the Nazis. The Nazis targeted specific groups of society with different slogans and policies designed to win their support.
- Hitler was offered power in a political compromise created by von Hindenburg and von Papen who unwisely believed they could manipulate him.
- Bitter about the Treaty of Versailles, the people of Germany supported Hitler because he promised to tear up the 'diktat' and restore German pride.
- The old guard and wealthy and powerful businessmen provided Hitler money and support in order to take power in Germany.

Summary

Steps in Hitler's rise to power:

- The Great Depression struck and the coalition government under Hermann Müller and the SPD attempted to raise taxes and pay for welfare benefits for the unemployed. The right-wing parties wanted to cut taxes. As a result, the Müller coalition collapsed.
- President von Hindenburg used **Article 48** to override democracy and install authoritarian government. Heinrich Brüning of the Centre Party formed government without parliamentary support.
- Brüning's plan to solve German problems failed and von Hindenburg again used Article 48 to dissolve the parliament and call fresh elections.
- During the 1930 elections, socialists and moderates lost seats to the Nazi Party, which increased its vote from 2.6 to 18.3 (107 seats) – mostly from the depression-affected middle class. Voters were moving away from the parties that supported the Weimar Republic.
- On 29 May, von Hindenburg forced Brüning to resign and appointed Franz von Papen as the new Chancellor.
- Nazis started violent protests on the streets of Germany, attacking socialists and Republicans.
- July 1932 – fresh elections were called, and the Nazi Party won 37.3 per cent of the vote (230 seats), making it the majority party in the Reichstag. Right-wing parties now controlled the Reichstag.
- November – President von Hindenburg replaced von Papen with the defense minister Schleicher as Chancellor; new elections were held, and the Nazis lost around 2 million votes (196 seats) and the Communist vote increased significantly.
- 30 January 1933 – Schleicher also unable to govern. President von Hindenburg invited Adolf Hitler of the Nazi Party to form a government and become Chancellor of Germany with von Papen as Vice-Chancellor, believing they could use Hitler as a political puppet.

Personalities

Rosa Luxemburg: German-Polish-Jewish Marxist. She became a German citizen and was a member of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD). Luxemburg worked in partnership with Karl Liebknecht and supported the Spartacist uprising of 1919, which was defeated by the Freikorps. Luxemburg was executed for her involvement.



Figure 3.20 Rosa Luxemburg

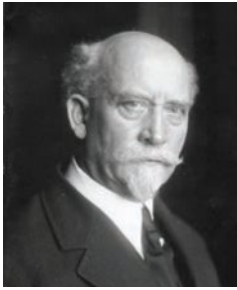


Figure 3.21 Philipp Scheidemann

Philipp Scheidemann: German politician of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). On 9 November 1918, during the German Revolution of 1918–1919, he proclaimed Germany a republic and became Chancellor of the Weimar Republic in 1919.

Karl Liebknecht: German socialist and a co-founder with Rosa Luxemburg of the Spartacist League and the Communist Party of Germany. He supported and organised the Spartacist uprising of 1919. The uprising was defeated by the Freikorps (paramilitary units formed of World War I veterans). Liebknecht and Luxemburg were executed.



Figure 3.22 Karl Liebknecht



Figure 3.23 Friedrich Ebert

Friedrich Ebert: A German politician of the Social Democratic Party of Germany and the first President of Germany from 1919 until his death in office in 1925.

Franz von Papen: Chancellor of Germany in 1932 and Vice-Chancellor under Hitler in 1933–34. He was a close adviser to President von Hindenburg in the late Weimar Republic. Von Papen believed that Hitler could be controlled once he was in the government. He persuaded von Hindenburg to appoint Hitler as Chancellor but von Papen and his allies were quickly nullified by Hitler and he left the government after the Night of the Long Knives.

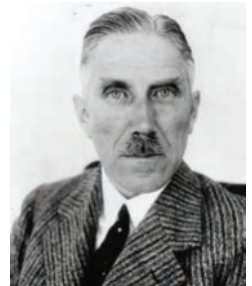


Figure 3.24 Franz von Papen

Groups

German Communists Party (KPD): founded in the aftermath of World War I by socialists opposed to the war, led by Rosa Luxemburg. After her death the party became gradually ever more committed to Leninism and later Stalinism. During the Weimar Republic period, the KPD usually polled between 10 and 15 per cent of the vote and was represented in the Reichstag and in state parliaments. The party was dissolved in March 1933.

Freikorps: in the aftermath of World War I and during the German Revolution of 1918–19, Freikorps consisting largely of World War I veterans were raised as right-wing paramilitary militias, ostensibly to fight on behalf of the government.

NSDAP: National Socialist German Workers' Party (abbreviated NSDAP), commonly referred to as the Nazi Party

Spartacists: 1914–19, a German revolutionary socialist group led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht and named for Spartacus, the leader of the 73 BC slave revolt against Rome. It formed the nucleus of the German Communist Party and was bloodily suppressed in 1919 and its leaders killed.

Terms

constitutional monarchy: a form of government in which a monarch acts as head of state within the parameters of a written constitution and parliament

Ebert-Groener Pact: an agreement between President Ebert and Wilhelm Groener (German Army) that ensured the safety of the new Weimar Republic in its early days, in return the army would maintain its independence

emergency decrees: the emergency presidential decree under Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution, which gave the president the power to take any measure necessary to protect public safety without the consent of the Reichstag.

Kapp Putsch: led by Wolfgang Kapp, an attempted coup on 13 March 1920 aimed to overthrow the Weimar Republic and establish a right-wing autocratic government in its place

November Criminals: the nickname given to the German politicians who negotiated and signed the armistice which ended World War I in November of 1918 and resulted in the 'stab in the back' theory propagated by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party

Peace Resolution: passed by the Reichstag in an attempt to seek a negotiated peace to end World War I. The resolution called for no annexations, no indemnities, freedom of the seas and international arbitration. It was ignored by the German High Command and by the Allied powers.

proportional representation: characterises electoral systems by which divisions in an electorate are reflected proportionately in the elected body. If $n\%$ of the electorate support a particular political party, then roughly $n\%$ of seats will be won by that party.

Weimar Republic: the name given to the German government between the end of the Imperial period (1918) and the beginning of Nazi Germany (1933). The Weimar Republic (and period) draws its name from the town of Weimar in central Germany where the constitutional assembly met.

Activities

Thinking historically 3.1

1. Outline the political problems Germany faced at the end of World War I.
2. Why did many Germans refer to the Treaty of Versailles as a 'diktat'?
3. Briefly explain the significance of both the Spartacist uprising and the Kapp Putsch.
4. What fundamental problems continued to exist during the 1920s that threatened democratic stability in Weimar Germany?
5. Explain how the Great Depression helped the rise of extremist parties in Weimar Germany.
6. What were the objectives of the NSDAP's 1923 (Beer Hall) Munich Putsch? Why did this putsch ultimately fail?
7. Assess the role propaganda played in the rise to power of the Nazi Party.
8. Explain why von Hindenburg did not trust Hitler and why he thought he could control him.
9. Explain the steps that occurred which saw von Hindenburg offer Hitler the Chancellorship of Germany in 1933.

Source analysis 3.1

Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions which follow.

Speech by Adolf Hitler, 8 November 1923 at the Munich Beer Hall Putsch

Source 3A

Now I am to carry out the vow I made five years ago when I was a blind cripple in the army hospital: to neither rest nor sleep until the November Criminals have been hurled to the ground, until on the ruins of their pitiful Germany of today has risen a Germany of power and greatness.

Adolf Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, 1925

Source 3B

Since I had stood at my mother's grave I had not wept ... now I could not help it ... all personal suffering vanishes in comparison with the misfortunes of the fatherland ... so it all had been in vain ... all the sacrifices ... the hunger and thirst ... the shame of indignation and disgrace burned my brow. In these nights hatred grew in me, hatred for those responsible for this deed. Kaiser William II had held out the hand of friendship to the leaders of Marxism, without suspecting that the scoundrels have no honor. While they still held the Imperial hand in theirs, their own hand was reaching for the dagger. There is no making a pact with Jews.

Source 3C An eyewitness to a meeting between von Hindenburg and von Papen

Hindenburg replied that because of the tense situation he could not ... risk transferring the power of government to a new party such as the National Socialists ... which was intolerant, noisy and undisciplined.

Source 3D A photograph of the crowd listening to the announcement of the start of World War I in Munich, Germany, 2 August 1914. The inset image shows a man who appears to be Adolf Hitler.



Questions

- a** Using Source 3A and Source 3B and your own knowledge, who and what does Hitler blame for Germany's defeat?
- b** Would you describe the views expressed in Sources 3A and 3B as fact, opinion or judgement? Explain your answer.
- c** How useful would Source 3A and 3B be to a historian studying the reasons for the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party in Germany? What strengths and limitations do they have as historical sources?
- d** Using Source 3C what evidence can you find to support President von Hindenburg's view of the Nazi Party?
- e** Explain the significance of Source 3D. Consider how useful the source would be to a historian studying the reasons for the rise of Adolf Hitler up to the early 1930s and its strengths and limitations as a historical source.



4

The initial consolidation of power: 1933–1934

At the end of this topic you should attempt to answer the following question:
How did Hitler turn Germany into a dictatorship?

Key syllabus features

The key features are:

- The initial consolidation of Nazi power between 1933–34.

The key features provide the basis for HSC examination questions.

4.1 Key events in the Nazi consolidation of power, 1933

How did Hitler consolidate his power and rule Germany as a dictatorship between 1933 and 1934?

FOCUS QUESTION

CHRONOLOGY

1933

- 27 February** • Reichstag Fire blamed on Marinus van der Lubbe, a young Dutch communist
 - 28 February** • *Decree for the Protection of the People and the Reich*
 - 5 March** • The last free election for Germany
 - 24 March** • *The Enabling Act* passed
 - 1 April** • National boycott of Jewish businesses
 - 7 April** • *Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service*
 - 2 May** • Abolition of trade unions
 - 10 May** • Book burnings
 - May—June** • Concentration camps set up to house political prisoners, 30 000 imprisoned by end of June 1933
 - 14 July** • All opposition political parties abolished in Germany
 - 20 July** • Concordat is signed with the Catholic Church
- ##### 1934
- January** • *Law for the Reconstruction of the Reich*, the governments of the German states abolished

- 30 June** • Night of the Long Knives
- 2 and 3 August** • Von Hindenburg dies. The positions of president and chancellor are combined to create that of Führer. Personal oath of loyalty to Adolf Hitler by the armed forces.

Consolidation of power, 1933–34

When Adolf Hitler was appointed German Chancellor in January 1933, Vice-Chancellor von Papen declared ‘we’ll have to push Hitler into a corner and he can squeal to his heart’s content’. Hitler’s political rivals completely underestimated his skill and his determination to break up the power of the old coalitions in the Reichstag and transform Germany into a one-party state. Historian Alan Bullock stated, ‘Rarely has disillusionment been so complete and so swift’.

The politicians who thought they could control Hitler made two important mistakes in making him Chancellor. Firstly, the prestige and authority that came with the office and the nationwide publicity bolstered his image and popularity. Secondly, they provided Hitler with the political initiative to create laws and take action as he had promised in his campaigns. Hitler had no intention of engaging in the traditional style of politics and started to remove the restrictions placed on him by the Reichstag. Hitler’s first priority as Chancellor was to call for fresh elections to be held in March 1933 to secure his position.

Reichstag fire

Prior to the elections the infamous **Reichstag fire** took place and was skilfully used by Nazi propagandists. The fire was painted as a communist-inspired arson attack and the culprit was identified as a young communist, Marinus van der Lubbe. In response to the fire, Hitler drafted and had von Hindenburg sign a law using the emergency decree (Article 48) the **Law for the Protection of the People**. This law severely restricted legal rights and protections for citizens and enhanced the power of the state, all under the excuse of protecting Germany from the attack by communist forces. The threat of communism inspired the Nazis further and the propaganda effort for the 1933 elections was enormous. Goebbels organised massive rallies with giant swastikas while at the same time the SA were closing down communist newspapers and rounding up all opposition parties.

The last democratic elections, 1933

Reichstag elections March 1933

Political party	Seats
The Communist Party (KDP)	81
Social Democrats (SPD)	120
The Centre Party	73
The Nazi Party (NSDAP)	288
Minor parties	85

In 1933 the last free democratic elections were held in Germany and the Nazi Party increased its seats in the Reichstag, securing 44.9 per cent of the vote. However this was still not a majority even though it made them



Figure 4.1 Firemen work on the burning Reichstag in February 1933, after fire broke out simultaneously in 20 places. This enabled Hitler to seize power under the pretext of protecting the country from the menace to its security.



Figure 4.2 Dutch communist Marinus van der Lubbe was accused of starting the fire.

the most popular party in Weimar. A majority government was created by forming a coalition with the National Party (which had won only 8 per cent of the votes).

It is important to understand that Hitler consolidated his power for the majority of the time in a constitutional and legal manner. Hitler swiftly created the *Enabling Act* which gave him total control to make laws without Reichstag approval. The Reichstag ratified the law with the exception of one Social Democrat vote and effectively voted itself out of existence. The *Enabling Act* freed Hitler from any legal restraint by the Reichstag, the President and the

voters, and it was an important step on the road towards dictatorship. Hitler had become the puppet master rather than the puppet, and with that, democracy and the Weimar Republic were dead.

The legal revolution

Nazi power was consolidated by the process of *Gleichschaltung* or centralisation. Via this process the media, police, education, universities, civil service, law courts, trade unions and youth groups came under the total control and direction of the Nazi Party. As part of Nazification, all books and literature deemed to be un-German were banned and burned. The *Law Against the Formation of Parties* saw all opposition parties banned and dissolved.

National boycott of Jewish businesses

During his election campaigns, Hitler and the Nazi Party played on the fears of the voting public and used Jews as scapegoats for many of Germany's economic and social problems. On 1 April 1933 a 24-hour national boycott on Jewish businesses was put into force by the SA. No citizen was allowed to trade with Jewish-owned businesses and the SA used violence to enforce the boycott. This anti-Jewish boycott marked the first important act against a minority in Germany, and more extreme measures were to take place over the coming years as Hitler consolidated his power.

The concordat

Hitler was aware of the need for support from the strong Catholic Church, and the Church likewise hoped for an arrangement with the Nazi Party that would allow it to continue its religious goals. On 20 July 1933 a **concordat** was signed between the Nazi Party and the Catholic Church. Essentially, the Church would not engage in any political activity or use their position to influence anti-Nazi support. In return, Hitler assured the Church that the State would defend the Catholic Church's religious role and its right to control its own affairs.

By 1933 most political parties had already been banned including the Communist Party and the Social Democrats. Some parties such as the **Catholic Centre Party** had disbanded. To reinforce *Gleichschaltung* – the idea of centralisation of power – all political parties were banned, even the German National People's Party who had allied with the Nazi Party to help them form a majority. The Nazi Party became the only legal political party in Germany, and eventually Germany and the Nazi Party became one entity.

Banning of political parties and abolition of trade unions

On 2 May 1933, all trade unions were abolished and their leaders arrested. No union representation would be tolerated under Nazi control. This strategy formed part of Hitler's grand plan where all elements of German life were brought under state control with the process of *Gleichschaltung*.

Because Hitler came to power legally, any action against the State could be deemed illegal. To deal with opponents of the Nazi state, concentration camps were set up immediately after the 1933 election. The first camp was in Dachau and was coordinated by Himmler. The conditions in the camps were harsh and acted as a reminder to every German citizen of the danger of acting against the Nazi state. By the end of 1933, over 30 000 political prisoners were housed in concentration camps. The job of hunting down political enemies or suspected spies was given to a new unit called the **Gestapo** under the command of Hermann Göring. The rounding up of enemies of the Nazis into concentration camps was a successful strategy that would have dire consequences for the Jewish population during **the Holocaust**.



Concentration camps

Figure 4.3 Political prisoners stand during a roll-call at Dachau concentration camp, Germany, 1933

Hitler attempted to inspire the entire community to develop a feeling of being one *Volk* or *Volksgemeinschaft* – a racially pure and united community working against the common enemy: Jews and Communists. In the Nazi state, the individual was unimportant, and only obedience to the leader and doing the 'Führer's will' was acceptable. The Reich Minister of Propaganda and People's Enlightenment, Joseph Goebbels, ordered the SA to round up all non-Aryan works or writing by Jews, intellectuals, pacifists, and any

Book burning



Figure 4.4 Nazis burning non-Aryan literature. Their spirits rising with the flames, these young Nazis burst out in cheers as they salute their leader in Berlin's Opernplatz (now Babelplatz) during the book burning in which 20 000 volumes were reduced to ashes.

literature which challenged the authority of Nazi ideology. All such material was to be burned or otherwise destroyed. Many universities were raided, and **synagogues** lost sacred texts. The Hitler Youth and the SA regularly engaged in book burning in the streets of Germany.

4.2 Key events in the Nazi consolidation of power, 1934

The Night of the Long Knives, 1934

Hitler had eliminated all opposition by banning political parties and imprisoning their members. In order to fully consolidate his power, Hitler



Figure 4.5 Adolf Hitler, with SA Chief of Staff Ernst Röhm, reviews an SA display in June 1933

needed to face a potentially far more dangerous challenge to his control from inside his own ranks. This challenge came from the SA. The SA was under the leadership of Ernst Röhm, one of Hitler's oldest allies, numbered over three million men by 1934 and acted as Hitler's personal army.

The official army of Germany, the *Reichswehr*, perceived a threat from the SA. Likewise, both von Hindenburg and Hitler saw the SA as a very real threat to both their positions. The SA held the view that

they had assisted the Nazis and Hitler to win the first revolution against Communists and the left-wing parties and now wanted a second revolution against the forces of the right – the old traditional sources of power in Germany – the industrialists; the businessmen who backed both Hitler and von Hindenburg. Essentially, the SA was demanding privileges and a better quality of life for their efforts in bringing Hitler to power. Of particular concern to the *Reichswehr* and President von Hindenburg was Röhm's ambition to merge the SA with the *Reichswehr* and create a people's army. The idea of the violent street thugs of the SA (the brownshirts) ruling alongside the German *Reichswehr* was intolerable to the military commanders.

As the situation grew tense between the SA and the regular army, Hitler was summoned to a meeting on 21 June 1934 with President von Hindenburg and General von Blomberg, the War Minister. Hitler was given an ultimatum by the president to deal with Röhm and the SA or the army would take power. Hitler desperately needed the power of the regular army to maintain control. Hitler acted rapidly and used the SS under the command of Goebbels, Göring and Himmler to purge the SA leadership. On 30 June 1934, the **Night of the Long Knives**, Röhm and all the major leaders of the SA were rounded up and executed. Over 400 people were killed during the purge, and Hitler also had his old enemies executed during the terror – Socialist leader Gregor Strasser and his predecessor General von Schleicher, the last Chancellor of the Weimar Republic. The Night of the Long Knives confirmed Hitler's ability to use terror tactics and deathly violence to enforce control and the *Reichswehr* were grateful for the removal of their enemy the SA, however they did not appreciate the increased power and the influence of the SS, Hitler's personal bodyguard.



Figure 4.6 Hitler and von Hindenburg in 1933

The death of President von Hindenburg

President von Hindenburg died on 2 August 1934, and Hitler seized the opportunity to combine the Presidency and Chancellorship and become Führer. All military personnel were ordered to swear a personal oath of loyalty to the Führer of Germany. Hitler's power was now absolute.

Summary

- January 1933: Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.
- Hitler uses the Reichstag to transform his democratic position into dictatorial power.
- Hitler calls an election and uses the Reichstag fire as propaganda to blame Communists and introduce the *Law for the Protection of the People*.
- Hitler uses his power in the Reichstag to pass the *Enabling Act* which gives him total control to make laws without the Reichstag approval.
- Using the power this gives him to make his own laws, he sets up the Gestapo, bans trade unions and opposition parties and sets up concentration camps.
- The Night of the Long Knives, July 1934: Hitler uses the SS to arrest Röhm and all leaders of the SA, executing them in cold blood. Over 400 people are killed during the purge.
- 2 August 1934: von Hindenburg dies and Hitler declares himself Führer.

Key personalities, groups and terms

Personalities



Figure 4.7 Ernst Röhm

Ernst Röhm: Commander of the SA stormtroopers (brownshirts), a German military officer and an early member of the Nazi Party. He was a close ally of Adolf Hitler and a co-founder of the Sturmabteilung (SA, Storm Battalion). From 1934, the German army feared the SA's power and began to see Röhm as a possible enemy. Röhm was executed during the Night of the Long Knives in 1934.

Paul von Hindenburg: German Field-Marshal and statesman who commanded the German military during World War I. After the war he was elected President of the German Reich. He played a key role in the Nazi rise to power when in January 1933, he appointed Adolf Hitler Chancellor of Germany.



Figure 4.8 Paul von Hindenburg

Groups

Reichswehr: the military organisation of Germany from 1919 until 1935, when it was united with the new Wehrmacht

Gestapo: Nazi secret police established by Hermann Göring in 1933 and later overseen by Himmler

Terms

concordat: an agreement or treaty, especially one between the Vatican and a secular government relating to matters of mutual interest, in this case the Catholic Church and the Nazi party

Enabling Act: a 1933 Weimar Constitution amendment that gave the German Cabinet – in effect, Chancellor Adolf Hitler – the power to enact laws without the involvement of the Reichstag

Gleichschaltung: a process which attempted to Nazify Germany by forcing into line all aspects of society

the Holocaust: the systematic state-sponsored killing of six million Jews and millions of others by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during World War II

Law for the Protection of the People: this law nullified many of the key civil liberties of German citizens and was used as the legal basis for the imprisonment of anyone considered to be opponents of the Nazis, and to suppress publications not considered friendly to the Nazi cause

Night of the Long Knives: also called Operation Hummingbird, or the Röhm Putsch, a purge that took place in Nazi Germany from 30 June to 2 July 1934, when the Nazi regime carried out a series of political executions intended to consolidate Hitler's absolute hold on power.

Activities

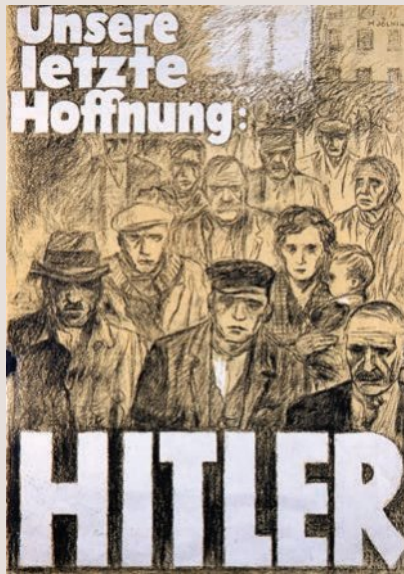
Thinking historically 4.1

1. Use the timeline and identify the key events in the period of Nazi consolidation of power.
2. Who was responsible for the Reichstag fire? What was their background?
3. Explain how the Nazi party used the Reichstag fire for propaganda purposes.
4. Explain the law which was enacted after the Reichstag fire.
5. Explain the results of the 1933 election for the Nazi party.
6. Why was the *Enabling Act* so important to Hitler's consolidation of power?
7. Outline how the Nazi party dealt with enemies of the state from 1933–34.
8. Who was Ernst Röhm?
9. Why did Hitler order the Night of the Long Knives?
10. What was the significance of the Night of the Long Knives?

Source analysis 4.1

Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions which follow.

Source 4A Our last hope: Hitler, Nazi election poster, 1933



Source 4B Nazi election poster aimed at students, 1933



Source 4C Nazi election poster, 1933



A.J.P Taylor, Who burnt the Reichstag?, *History Today*, Volume 10, Issue 8, August 1960

Source 4D

... even if they (the Nazis) had nothing to do with the fire ... this does not justify their subsequent illegalities and the reign of terror, they remain the evil men they always were. But the affair should change our estimate of Hitler's methods ... far from being the far sighted planner, he had a genius for improvisation ... he had no idea how he would transform his position into a dictatorship. The solution came to him amongst the smoldering ruins of the Reichstag that February evening. It was in his own words, 'a heaven-sent opportunity'.

H. Holborn *A History of Modern Germany, 1840–1945*, 1969

Source 4E

The Army was not prepared to accept the SA leaders as officers. Röhm was angry. Noisy talk was heard in his camp demanding a second revolution to separate Hitler from his cooperation with the Generals ... it is possible that Röhm might have led a revolt against Hitler.

Questions

- a** Use Source 4A to explain the message it is trying to convey to the voters. How useful would such a poster be to a historian studying who voted for the Nazi party?
- b** Use Source 4B to interpret the message the artist wants to convey to young Germans. Why do you think the Nazis would target university-age people?
- c** Referring to Source 4C, propose why Hitler is portrayed alongside von Hindenberg in this poster?
- d** Using Source 4D, what is the historian A.J.P Taylor's judgment about the role of the Nazis in the Reichstag fire?
- e** How does Source 4E provide support for Hitler's ordering of the infamous purge on the SA during the Night of the Long Knives?
- f** 'Secondary sources of evidence are likely to be more helpful in finding the causes of an event than primary sources.' Use the information you have learned so far to decide whether you agree with this statement.



5

The nature of Nazi ideology

At the end of this topic you should attempt to answer the following question:
What was the nature of Nazi ideology?

Key syllabus features

The key features are:

- The character of Nazi ideology.

The key features provide the basis for HSC examination questions.

5.1 Nazi ideology

FOCUS QUESTION

What did the Nazi party believe?

Nazism was a nationalist ideology concerned with Germany and German national interests. The key objectives of Nazi ideology were based on:

- abolishing the Treaty of Versailles
- restoring the German economy and achieving economic self-sufficiency
- rebuilding military strength
- providing employment and security for the German people via national self-sufficiency – a concept known as **Autarky**.

The Nazis had little interest in international relationships, except to advance German interests. The Nazi state detested diplomacy and despised all efforts at collective security and internationalism such as the ideologies practiced by the League of Nations. A key function of Nazi ideology was a strong leader who dominated the Nazi Party: a **Führer**.

In his speeches, which some listeners described as hypnotising, Hitler revealed a powerful *Weltanschauung* or worldview which he had also expressed in the manifesto he wrote while in Landsberg prison, *Mein Kampf*. He talked about how Germany was in danger from both communists and Jews and his belief that the 'pure' **Aryan** race was supposedly superior to all other races, particularly to Slavs and Jews, which he considered sub-human. As a result of this, Hitler believed that racial superiority in living space, or *Lebensraum*, for the German race would need to be occupied to the east of Europe at the expense of the lower races. **Social Darwinism** played a critical role in Nazi ideology because the Aryan race needed to fight to ensure its

superiority. War and expansion therefore were central tenets of Nazi ideology and seen as necessary in order for a nation to reinvent itself and develop. Hitler tried to reach all German people of *Volksgemeinschaft* or ‘people’s community’. The principle of *Volksgemeinschaft* was that all Germans should unite and work together to reduce differences in class, wealth and standards of living. In reality, the Nazis had no concern for socialism or social equality. Despite this, *Volksgemeinschaft* was a central feature in NSDAP propaganda, to give the impression that the Nazi state was a unified society.

In the strict hierarchical society that Germany had become under the Nazi Party, Hitler himself embodied the national spirit. This became known the *Führerprinzip*, a term that meant the placing of all authority in Hitler’s hands; nothing happened without his authority. Hitler was the supreme ruler in all areas of national life – political, cultural, religious and social. Ultimately, the goal was to enforce Nazi ideology by way of centralisation or *Gleichschaltung*, to bring all political life under the Party’s control. This did not mean however that the entire country ran in an orderly or efficient manner under Hitler’s direct rule. Hitler would make ministers in his cabinet compete for his favour and deliberately ran a chaotic system which required him to be the ultimate decision maker. Hitler had established the basis of arbitrary rule – decision making not based on laws. The ideology of the Nazi party had turned Germany into an absolute authority, and this became institutionalised in both state and domestic affairs and all individuals were expected to conform to the ideology of the state.

The Führerprinzip



Figure 5.1 *Der Führer*. A strong leader was central to Nazi ideology. This powerful image with religious undertones was produced by the Nazis in the 1930s. The German text translates to ‘Long live Germany!’.

Summary of Nazi ideology

- The Nazis called their ideology National Socialism.
- Nazi ideology was not articulated in as much detail as some other political doctrines. It was however loosely defined in Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* and by the 25 Points.
- Nazi ideology revolved around a single powerful leader: a Führer leading a powerful and authoritarian state dedicated to militarism, and the subordination of the individual to national interests and purity of race.
- Nazi ideas centered on restoring German supremacy by restoring the economy, ending unemployment by engaging in mass building programs and increasing industrial capacity.
- The Nazi Party also wanted to remove Germany from all international treaties.
- The Nazis sought to reinvigorate traditional 19th-century values of authoritarian government and social conservatism, reinforcing these in rhetoric and propaganda.

Social Darwinism

The idea that the Aryan race was superior and some races – Jews in particular – were ‘subhuman’



Führer

The idea that instead of democracy there should be a single leader with complete power



Nazi ideology



Germany was in danger from communists and Jews, who had to be destroyed



Lebensraum

The need for the German nation to expand its ‘living space’



Autarky

The idea that Germany should be economically self-sufficient, not reliant on international trade



A strong Germany

The idea that all German-speaking people should be united in one country, and that the Treaty of Versailles should be abolished

Key personalities, groups and terms

Terms

Autarky: the idea that Germany should be economically self-sufficient

Führer (German for leader): the idea that there should be a single leader with complete power rather than a democracy

Führerprinzip: the principle which Hitler made the base of the party, placing all authority in his hands; nothing happened without his authority

Lebensraum: the need for 'living space' for the German nation to expand

Social Darwinism: a theory that argued the human race was subject to the same laws of natural selection as animals. Based on Charles Darwin's work and used to justify racist views, since discredited

totalitarianism: a system of government that is centralised, dictatorial and requires complete subservience to the state

Volksgemeinschaft: the concept of a 'people's community'; reinforced the view that the German people were racially pure and united against the common enemy, Jews and communists

Activities

Thinking historically 5.1

1. Outline the key ideas of Nazi ideology.
2. Explain the role that race played in Nazi ideology.
3. How did the Nazi State perceive Germany's relationship to international affairs?
4. Outline the role of the *Führerprinzip* in Nazi ideology.
5. Hitler's role was the lynchpin to the operation of the Nazi State. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Source analysis 5.1

Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions which follow.

William Carr, *A History of Germany: 1815–1945*, 1979

Source 5A

Nazi Germany was a confused jungle of overlapping authorities all ultimately dependent on the Führer but usually in conflict with each other. The Nazi hierarchy was riddled from top to bottom with bitter rivalries and feuds between individuals and institutions ... By playing off one set of advisers against another Hitler could maintain and enhance his own authority as the one stable and constant factor in an uneasy balance of forces.

Source 5B Allan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*, 1991

The outside world's picture of a monolithic, totalitarian state run with typical German efficiency (is a myth).

Source 5C Hitler speaking in the Reichstag on 30 January 1937

I speak prophetically. Just as the discovery that the Earth moved around the sun led to a complete transformation of the way people looked at the world, so too the blood and racial teachings of National Socialism will change our understanding of mankind's past and its future.

Source 5D A Nazi poster from 1935, 'Hitler is building up. Help out. Buy German goods'





Questions

1. What insights does Source 5A provide about how the Nazi State was organised?
2. How do Sources Source 5A and Source 5B correspond with one another?
3. What evidence does Source 5C provide about the role of race in Nazi ideology?
4. Using Sources 5A, B, C and your own knowledge, discuss how Hitler's role at a practical and ideological level was critical to the working of the Nazi State.
5. Explain the meaning behind Sources 5D and 5E. What do they have in common?



6

The role of prominent individuals in the Nazi State

At the end of this topic you should attempt to answer the following question:

How was the Third Reich governed and what role did each of the prominent individuals play?

Key syllabus features

The key features are:

- The role of key individuals in Nazi Germany.

The key features provide the basis for HSC examination questions.

6.1 Adolf Hitler

FOCUS QUESTION

Who were the prominent individuals in the Nazi State and what roles did they play?

Early life

Born in 1889 in Braunau, Austria, Hitler dreamed of becoming an artist but was rejected from the Vienna Academy of Fine Art. It was after this that he started to develop his political ideas including his aversion to communism and hatred of Jews. He served in the German Army during World War I and wept uncontrollably upon hearing of Germany's defeat. After the war he was employed to spy on subversive political parties but then decided to join one, the German Workers' Party. It was renamed the **National Socialist German Workers' Party** (NSDAP or Nazi Party) and Hitler became its leader in 1921. Imprisoned for his role in the failed Beer Hall Putsch of 1923, Hitler set about writing his life story and visions for Germany's future. The resulting book, *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) outlines his theories about race and politics.

Leader of the Nazis

Undisputed leader of the Nazi Party when it came to power in 1933, Adolf Hitler governed Germany much the same way he did the Party. However, there is some debate amongst historians regarding the exact nature of Hitler's role in the Nazi State.

One view places great emphasis on the importance of the *Führerprinzip*, which is best understood as the 'leadership principle'; Hitler made this the basis of the Party. All authority rested in his hands and what he said became law. Nothing happened without his authority and his final decision could

supersede all laws, rights and systems. Furthermore, no major initiatives were possible without his backing and no individuals could gain power without his favour and support. This ‘intentionalist’ type of approach to the role of Hitler:

... sees in the confused lines of authority in the Third Reich a reflection of a calculated policy of ‘divide and rule’, testimony therefore to Hitler’s pivotal role, his real power ...

Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretations*, Bloomsbury, 2015

Proponents of this view also point to Hitler’s position as Führer of the Third Reich, arguing that he possessed absolute power, ruling by decree with no parliament to control his authority. Additionally, all soldiers had to swear an oath of loyalty to the Führer and all sections of the Nazi State were under the direct control of Hitler. They also suggest that Hitler was a driven and dedicated ideological dictator who avoided the day-to-day trivial matters of government and instead concentrated on his master plan, including expanding the German Reich and implementing his racial policies, preferring to rule through his trusted deputies Hermann Göring, Joseph Goebbels, Heinrich Himmler and Martin Bormann.

Other historians put forward the view that Hitler was an ineffective dictator who encouraged a chaotic regime, in which his subordinates competed against each other to accumulate more and more personal power and prestige. Further undermining the effectiveness and efficiency of his government, Hitler maintained the old existing civil service, but added to it a whole new level of Nazi bureaucracy. This meant that there was much overlapping and doubling-up of departments and positions, which were filled by individuals seeking to build their own personal empire. This system often resulted in the strongest and most politically cunning individuals winning out and asserting their personal authority. Additionally, Hitler himself was a lazy ruler who intervened in domestic policy only when he wished, preferring instead to give his subordinates the freedom to run their departments as they liked, as long as they were loyal to him. Historian Hans Mommsen considers that Hitler was:

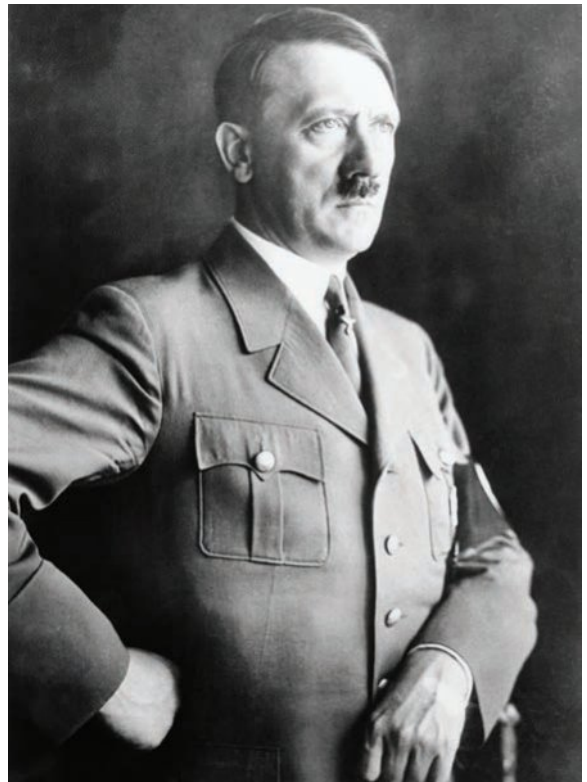


Figure 6.1 Adolf Hitler, leader of the Nazi Party and Führer of Germany

... unwilling to take decisions, frequently uncertain, exclusively concerned with upholding his prestige and personal authority, influenced in the strongest fashion by his current entourage, in some aspects a weak dictator.

Hans Mommsen cited in Ian Kershaw's *The Nazi Dictatorship*, Arnold, 1985, p. 62

In the end, with Berlin surrounded by Soviet troops, Hitler chose to commit suicide in his bunker rather than be captured by the Soviets. He married his long-time mistress Eva Braun and then, on the morning of 30 April, shot himself while Eva took poison. Germany surrendered seven days later.

6.2 Key players

Here are some of the most prominent individuals who fought for power and prestige in the Nazi State under Hitler until 1939.

Hermann Göring

Born in 1893 in Bavaria, Germany, Göring served in the German Air Force as the Commander of a fighter squadron in World War I, and was awarded the highest award for bravery. A member of the Nazi Party since 1922, Göring was wounded during the failed Munich Beer Hall Putsch in 1923. Göring was a member of the Reichstag from 1928, and in Hitler's government he initially served as Minister without Portfolio, Minister for Aviation, which included command of the **Luftwaffe**, and Acting Minister for the Interior for Prussia; it was in this last position that he replaced many senior Prussian civil servants and police chiefs with Nazis, as well as establishing the Gestapo in 1933. He played a crucial role in helping to consolidate the Nazi's rule by enlisting over 50 000 SA and SS men as auxiliary policemen, thus legitimising their violence against political opponents, especially socialists, communists and trade union organisations.

Alongside Heinrich Himmler, Göring encouraged Hitler to purge the SA in the Night of the Long Knives, especially its leader Ernst Röhm, whom Göring viewed as a rival and potential obstacle in his quest to become Germany's Commander-in-Chief.

Despite not actually being the Minister for Economics, in 1936 Göring was given the task of carrying out Hitler's economic aims, by creating the Four Year Plan Organisation. The plan's objective was to prepare Germany's economy for potential war by increasing food



Figure 6.2 Top Nazi Party members march in remembrance of the 1923 Beer Hall Putsch, Munich, Germany, November 9, 1938. Hermann Göring is pictured facing Hitler.

production and attaining self-sufficiency in raw materials like oil, rubber and metals. To this end, he exercised almost complete authority over the distribution of investment capital, raw materials and labour, and by all accounts, he achieved mixed success.

In addition to this role, in 1937 Göring began his program of Aryanisation, a process which involved both the heavily discounted purchasing of Jewish firms by German capitalists, as well as the confiscation of Jewish economic assets. The following year, he also banned Jewish firms from receiving government contracts. He was said to have been angered by the destruction of Jewish property which resulted from *Kristallnacht* – he had wanted to plunder, not destroy. Adding salt to the wound of the damages done to the Jewish communities, it was Göring's idea to fine Germany's Jewish population for the damage inflicted upon their businesses and synagogues during the incident.

Göring was Hitler's official deputy and held enormous potential power as Hitler's nominated successor. He was also considered vain and power-hungry, like most other leading Nazis. Under his authority, Himmler and his SS took over the Gestapo, the Luftwaffe was expanded, and Germany's Jews were bled of their wealth. Göring surrendered to the Allies in May 1945 and was convicted of crimes against humanity during the **Nuremberg** War Crimes Trials in 1946. Sentenced to death by hanging, Göring committed suicide by ingesting a cyanide pill he had smuggled into his prison cell.

Born in 1897 in Rheydt, Germany. Also referred to as 'the little doctor', Joseph Goebbels was a Party member since 1925, and the Party's **propaganda** chief since 1929. Goebbels enjoyed considerable control and influence over the media and German culture as Hitler's Minister for Propaganda and Public Enlightenment. In this role, Goebbels was responsible for the dissemination of Nazi ideas via German radio and newspapers, promoting German foreign policy achievements, as well as preventing any criticism of Hitler or the Nazi Party from being spoken or published. It was up to Goebbels, as historian Peter Longerich puts it, to:

Joseph Goebbels

...show off the extent to which Party and state were able to dominate the public sphere of the Third Reich by means of National Socialist symbols, rituals, propaganda and rhetoric.

Peter Longerich, *Goebbels*, 2015

All aspects of culture were under the control of his Reich Chamber of Culture, including literature, art, music, radio, theatre and film, all of which were used to promote Nazi beliefs and values, as well as German nationalism and the superiority of the German race. He is also credited with creating and sustaining the Führer myth, which fashioned an image of Hitler as humble, dedicated to the German people, and capable of extraordinary feats.



Figure 6.3 Joseph Goebbels, Nazi Propaganda Minister

In addition, he used his influence over the media and arts to encourage the spread of anti-Semitic propaganda and sentiment, and played a pivotal role in advocating and organising the ‘spontaneous’ violence against Germany’s Jews during *Kristallnacht* in November 1938.

A proponent of ‘total war’, Hitler also appointed Goebbels State Commissar for the Implementation of Total War in July 1944. Unpopular with other leading Nazis, partly due to his affairs with young film actresses, Goebbels nonetheless played an essential role in the Nazi state due to his brilliant and effective skills as a propagandist and public speaker.

At the end, Goebbels was with Hitler when he committed suicide and served as Chancellor for a single day before he and his family also committed suicide on 1 May 1945.

Heinrich Himmler Born in 1900 in Munich, Germany, Himmler began training to become an officer during World War I but the war ended before he saw active service. A member of the Nazi Party since 1923, Himmler took part in the failed 1923 Beer Hall Putsch. A committed nationalist who held anti-Semitic and racist views, Himmler exercised considerable power in his position as head of the SS, or *Reichsführer SS*, a position which he held from 1929. The SS was an organisation which was originally formed to serve as Hitler’s personal bodyguard, but under Himmler’s leadership, it expanded to become an elite, fanatical force tasked with identifying and eliminating disloyal elements and opposition to the Nazi Party. According to historian Peter Longerich, Himmler saw his SS as the:

... racial vanguard for future ‘Blood and Soil’ policies.

**Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler: A Life*,
Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 740**

To this end, Himmler formed an internal police force named the SD (**Sicherheitsdienst**), and appointed Reinhard Heydrich as its head. With the exception of Prussia, by early 1934 Himmler quickly assumed control over the political police in all German states, and within a year he also took control of the Prussian secret state police, the Gestapo, from Hermann Göring.

An ambitious man who sought to enhance his own power within the Party, Himmler resented the fact that his SS was subordinate to the

SA, and actively encouraged Hitler to purge the SA by feeding him false information regarding Ernst Röhm's personal ambition and alleged desire to seize power. Himmler's SS were instrumental in eliminating Röhm and the leadership of the SA during 1934's Night of the Long Knives, and Himmler was rewarded in June 1936 by his appointment as Chief of the German Police.

This meant that Himmler now had sole authority over all security organisations directly responsible for hunting down political opponents and implementing the Nazi Party's programme of terror. This included the management of concentration camps and death camps.

In October 1939, Himmler was appointed by Hitler to the position of Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood and given the task of organising the repopulation of Western Poland following the Wehrmacht's successful invasion. It was also his responsibility to work towards a 'settlement of the Jewish problem.'

Himmler was also responsible for the creation of specialised combat divisions, known as the *Waffen SS*, which fought alongside the Wehrmacht during World War II.

Regarded as a ruthless empire-builder who accumulated more and more power in his role as *Reichsführer SS*, Himmler played a significant role in eliminating opposition to Hitler and carrying out the Nazi Party's reign of terror. In addition, he played a direct role in the attempted extermination of Europe's Jews as part of the Final Solution.

The circumstances of his death are much debated after he attempted to flee from the Allies at the end of the war. Arrested on his way to Switzerland, Himmler, who was dressed as a member of the Field Police and carried papers with the name Heinrich Hitzinger, was questioned by British officers. On 23 May 1945, upon realising his true identity the officers conducted a body search, leading Himmler to bite down on a cyanide capsule hidden in his tooth. The most commonly accepted explanation is that he wished to deprive the hangman the satisfaction of his death. Conspiracy theorists believe he was killed by British Intelligence to prevent him from publicly revealing his secret peace negotiations with the Allies, which are said to have begun in 1943 and would have been highly humiliating for the British Government.



Figure 6.4 (Left to right) Joseph Goebbels, Adolf Hitler, Ernst Röhm (behind), Hermann Göring and Heinrich Hinmler at a pre-war conference in Berlin

Reinhard Heydrich

Born in 1904 in Halle, Germany, Heydrich was a gifted student and talented athlete. Too young to serve in World War I, he joined the local Freikorps before enlisting in the German Navy at the age of 22. After rising through the ranks to become involved in the intelligence section, Heydrich left the Navy in 1931 and joined the Nazi Party, becoming a member of the SS. Efficient and power hungry, he quickly rose through the ranks to become Himmler's deputy and was appointed Head of the SD, expanding the organisation to include an enormous network of informants to spy on opposition and suspicious individuals. Heydrich used the intelligence-gathering resources available to him in this position to aid Himmler in his quest to gain control of the political police in every German state. Working in close cooperation with Himmler, Heydrich was appointed head of the Reich Main Security Office in 1939, giving him formal control of the SD, the criminal police forces, and the Gestapo, which he had already expanded into a national organisation to hunt down political enemies and opponents who were placed in detention as a pre-emptive measure or for their 'own protection'. In addition to this, Heydrich also controlled the Central



Figure 6.5 Reinhard Heydrich, high-ranking Nazi official

Immigration Office and Central Resettlement Office, positions which involved the removal of non-German populations from German-occupied territories throughout central Europe, especially Jews, who were deported to the East.

In 1941, Heydrich was tasked with arranging a total solution to the Jewish question in Nazi-occupied territories, leading him to chair the Wannsee Conference in January 1942, where the Final Solution to the Jewish problem was agreed on. As such, he shared the same degree of direct responsibility for the implementation of the Holocaust as his superior, Heinrich Himmler.

Supremely arrogant and confident in his authority as Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia (Czechoslovakia), Heydrich met his untimely end in mid-1942 when wounded by free Czech agents who had thrown a bomb at his open-top car. He died of his wounds on 4 June 1942 and received an extravagant funeral in Berlin.

Born in 1906 near Cologne, Germany, Eichmann grew up in Austria and joined the Austrian Nazi Party in 1932, as part of the SS Division. After Hitler took power in 1933 Eichmann returned to Germany and joined the German SS. In November that year he was appointed to the administrative staff at Dachau Concentration Camp before he joined the SD in 1934. Within a few years he had acquired a reputation as a Jewish specialist due to his detailed knowledge of Jewish culture.

Immediately following the *Anschluss* with Austria, Eichmann returned to the country and established the Central Office for Jewish Emigration in Vienna, the purpose of which was to assist in the deportation of Austria's Jewish population. Under Eichmann's guidance, Austrian Jews were stripped of their property, cash and rights in return for securing safe passage out of the country. This ruthless acquisition of assets from the wealthy helped to finance the emigration of poorer Jews. Within six months, Eichmann's Office had forced out 50 000 Jewish citizens. The scheme was considered so successful that it was referred to as the Vienna Model and was used to set up similar offices in Berlin and Prague.

By late 1939, Eichmann's work covered the whole of German-occupied Europe. He transferred to the Gestapo and became director of the Clearing Activities section, then in March 1941 he became director of the Jewish Affairs section. Now one of the most powerful and influential men in the Nazi state, Eichmann and his deputies were responsible for the implementation of Nazi policy toward the Jews in Germany and all occupied territories. Later that same year, his department was called upon to investigate ways to dispose of 'unwanted' Jews. Throughout World War II, Eichmann would go on to be known as the mastermind behind the Holocaust and 'Chief Executioner of the Third Reich'.

Eichmann was arrested following Germany's surrender in 1945 but managed to escape US custody. The SS underground assisted him to gain passage to Argentina soon after the end of the war, where he remained until tracked down by Israeli agents in 1960. He stood trial in Israel, charged with crimes against the Jewish people, crimes

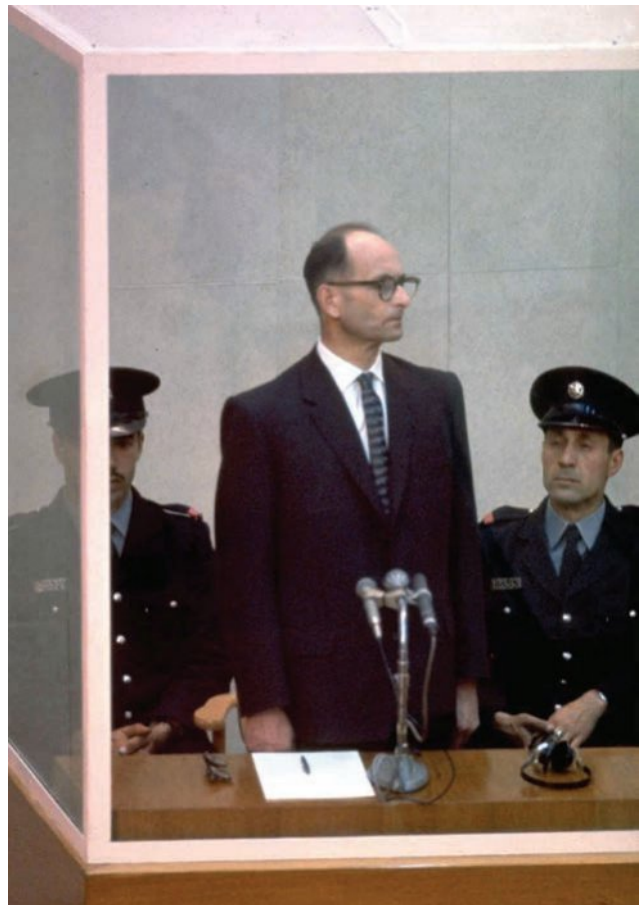


Figure 6.6 Adolf Eichmann during his trial 21 April 1961 in Jerusalem

against humanity, and war crimes. He was found guilty, sentenced to death and hanged in May 1962. At his trial, Eichmann referred to his role in the Final Solution in the following way:

My job was to catch these enemies and transport them to their destination ... I thought it over, and I realised the necessity for it, I carried it through with all the fanaticism that an old Nazi would expect of himself and that my superiors undoubtedly expected of me. They found me, according to their experience, to be the right man in the right place.

Adolf Eichmann, cited in Gideon Hausner, *Justice in Jerusalem*, New York, 1966, p. 10–11

Rudolf Hess Born in 1894 in Alexandria, Egypt. Rudolf Hess served in the German Army in World War I and joined the Nazi Party as its 16th member in July 1920, serving as Hitler's private secretary. He took part in the failed Beer Hall Putsch of 1923 and was eventually arrested for his role. While in prison, he took dictation of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

One of Hitler's closest friends, confidants and most fanatically devoted followers, Hess became deputy leader of the Nazi Party in 1933, which was primarily a ceremonial position. A mark of Hess' close relationship with Hitler was his appointment as second in the line of succession after Göring to become Head of State if something was to happen to Hitler.

In May 1941, Hess made the bizarre decision to fly himself to Scotland with the aim of negotiating a peace settlement between the British Government and Germany. Landing in a farmer's field, Hess was arrested and imprisoned for the duration of the war. What is viewed as an attempt to regain favour with Hitler backfired; an embarrassed Hitler stripped Hess of his Party membership and all ranks and titles. Hess was returned to



Figure 6.7 Rudolf Hess

Germany after the war where he faced trial at Nuremberg. He died in Spandau Prison in 1987 of an apparent suicide at the age of 93.

Hess never had any major influence in matters of government despite being granted titles such as Reich Minister without Portfolio in 1933, and being a member of the Secret Cabinet Council and the Ministerial Council for Reich Defence. His main role was to act as a mediator between Hitler and his competitive and scheming deputies. Hess was eventually overtaken and replaced by his own personal secretary, Martin Bormann.

Born in 1893 in Wesel, Germany, von Ribbentrop served in World War I and earned the Iron Cross. Wounded in 1917, he was a member of the German delegation at the Paris Peace Conference. He joined the Nazi Party in 1932 and the following year he became Hitler's foreign affairs adviser. In this capacity he represented Germany at the 1934 Geneva Disarmament Conference, negotiated the 1935 Anglo-German Naval Agreement and the 1936 Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan. In 1936 he was appointed ambassador to Great Britain, helping to persuade the British Government to remain neutral in response to German territorial expansion. He replaced Constantin von Neurath as Foreign Minister in February 1938 and negotiated the Pact of Steel with Italy in 1939, and perhaps most significantly, the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact in August 1939. This Pact provided Hitler with the green light he required to invade Poland without fear of Soviet intervention. Von Ribbentrop was captured in Hamburg in June 1945. He was tried at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial, and despite denying knowledge of the Final Solution, was found guilty and hanged in October 1946.

Joachim von Ribbentrop



Figure 6.8 Nazi Foreign Minister Joachim Von Ribbentrop (L), German Under State Secretary Friedrich Gaus, Soviet head of state Joseph Stalin (3rd) and his Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov (R) pose 23 August 1939 in Kremlin in Moscow after signing the Treaty of Non-Aggression between Germany and the USSR (AKA Nazi-Soviet Pact), making the outbreak of a European war virtually inevitable. After the ceremony, Stalin proposed a toast: 'I know how much the German people love their Führer', he said. 'I should therefore like to drink to his health'.

Ernst Röhm Born in 1887 in Munich, Germany, Ernst Röhm was one of Hitler's oldest friends and a decorated veteran of World War I. A career soldier and intelligence officer, Röhm first met Hitler in 1919 and played a leading role in the failed 1923 Beer Hall Putsch. Convicted of treason, he spent five months in prison. After his release, Röhm began to build up the Nazis' private army, the SA. In 1931, Hitler appointed Röhm Chief of Staff of the SA, helping to bring some much-needed discipline to the group which was tasked with carrying out attacks on the Nazis' political opponents during Reichstag elections. Once Hitler assumed the Chancellorship in 1933, the two disagreed over how best to proceed next; Hitler wanted to work with



Figure 6.9 Ernst Röhm

the German military to achieve his political aim of merging the offices of Chancellor and President and understood the importance of their support. Röhm, on the other hand, believed the SA was still required to consolidate the Nazi seizure of power. He also wished to merge the army with the SA and SS, a prospect which horrified President Paul von Hindenburg and the army's generals. Röhm became increasingly critical of Hitler as he felt that he did not support his view that the SA should become the new army of Germany. Röhm was arrested during the Night of the Long Knives, 30 June 1934, when Hitler and other leading Nazis, namely Himmler and Göring, decided that he and the rest of the SA leadership posed a threat to Hitler's power. After refusing to commit suicide, Röhm was shot dead the next day in his cell in Stadelheim Prison.

Albert Speer Born in 1905 in Mannheim, Germany, Albert Speer was born into a wealthy family and followed his father into architecture. In 1930 while working as an academic at the Institute of Technology in Berlin, Speer attended a Nazi Party rally, and was immediately impressed with the oratory skills of Hitler and his vision for Germany, subsequently joining the Party



Figure 6.10 Hitler and Speer inspect Speer's model for a huge stadium to be built at Nuremberg

the next year. Impressed with his renovations of the Nazi Headquarters in Berlin and Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda building, Hitler appointed Speer as First Architect of the Reich. He was responsible for creating the 'cathedral of light' to maximise the God-like image of Hitler at the Nuremberg Rally; over 100 anti-aircraft searchlights were pointed vertically into the night sky to achieve the desired effect. Speer went on to partly design the Berlin Olympic Stadium and was also responsible for the design of all Nazi buildings, ensuring they met with the specifications and vision of Hitler. One of the greatest responsibilities Speer was given by Hitler was to design the new Reich Chancellery in Berlin.

Hitler designed plans for a new and grandiose capital in Berlin. This was to be called Germania. Hitler wanted a capital city that would look impressive, even in ruins, like the cities of the classical world. Speer as Inspector General of Construction for the Third Reich was solely responsible for the design of Germania and the logistics of building Hitler's grand capital. Speer's designs for Germania never eventuated due to the war.

Speer was arrested by American forces just over a fortnight after the surrender of Germany. Convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, Speer expressed remorse but denied having any knowledge or responsibility for the Final Solution. He was sentenced to 20 years in Spandau Prison. Five years after his release, Speer admitted to having knowledge of the Nazis' plan to exterminate Europe's Jews but this information was not released until 2007, 26 years after he passed away in 1981 at the age of 76.

Summary

- Hitler was the leader of the Nazi Party and Führer of Germany.
- There is some debate amongst historians concerning the exact extent of Hitler's role in the Nazi State.
- Within the Nazi State there existed a system of government in which the main individuals were competing against each other to build their own power bases.
- The most influential and powerful Nazis included Joseph Goebbels, Heinrich Himmler, Herman Göring, Reinhard Heydrich, Adolf Eichmann and Rudolf Hess.

Key personalities, groups and terms

Groups

Einsatzgruppen: SS death squads or mobile killing units which followed the advancing Wehrmacht in the East, targeting Polish intellectuals, partisan groups and Jewish people

Freikorps: right-wing and anti-Semitic organisation; consisted of ex-soldiers; involved in violent clashes with communists in public

Gestapo: Nazi secret police, originally established by Hermann Göring in Prussia in 1933

SA (Sturmabteilung, Storm Troopers, brownshirts): the Nazi private army established in 1921. Used to intimidate political opponents

SD (Sicherheitsdienst): the internal police force of the Nazi Party created by Heinrich Himmler in 1932. Intelligence service of the SS

SS (Schutzstaffel): originally Hitler's personal protection squad. Grew to become the Nazi police force

Terms

Anschluss: term used to define the union between Germany and Austria carried out by Hitler in 1938. Forbidden under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles

Anti-Semitic: prejudice against people of Jewish heritage

Aryanisation: the policy implemented by Hermann Göring to expel 'non-Aryans' from German economic life

Führer (German for leader): the idea that there should be a single leader with complete power rather than a democracy

Kristallnacht (Night of the Broken Glass): state-endorsed violence against Jewish businesses and synagogues throughout Germany, 9–10 November 1938

Luftwaffe: the German Air Force

Mein Kampf (My Struggle): written by Hitler whilst in prison after the failed Munich Beer Hall Putsch. It outlined his vision for a restored Germany, as well as his racial ideology

propaganda: organised promotion of information to benefit a government or cause

Reich: German term for Empire. In German history, the period 1933–45 is known as the Third Reich

Reichstag: the German Parliament

synagogue: a Jewish place of worship

Wehrmacht: the German Army during World War II

Activities

Thinking historically 6.1

1. Describe the two opposing views of Adolf Hitler's role in the Nazi State. Which view do you agree with and why?
2. Explain why a system of government consisting of competing power bases existed in the Nazi State.
3. Evaluate Heinrich Himmler's role in the Nazi State.
4. Evaluate the view that Rudolf Hess was as powerful, if not more so, than Heinrich Himmler or Joseph Goebbels.
5. Explain why Ernst Röhm was purged in 1934, despite his close friendship with Hitler. What effect did the purge have on Hitler's rule?
6. Describe the controversy surrounding Albert Speer's role in the Nazi State.
7. Assess the significance of Joachim von Ribbentrop's contribution to the Nazi State.

Source analysis 6.1

Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions which follow.

W. Willikens, State Secretary in the Reich Ministry of Agriculture, 1934 Source 6A

... the Führer can hardly dictate from above everything which he intends to realise sooner or later ... It is the duty of everybody to try work towards the Führer along the lines he would wish. Anyone who makes mistakes will notice it soon enough. But anyone who really works towards the Führer along his lines and towards his goal will certainly both now and in the future one day have the finest reward in the form of the sudden legal confirmation of his work.

Source 6B **Memoirs of Otto Dietrich, Hitler's Press Chief, 1955**

In the twelve years of his rule in Germany Hitler produced the biggest confusion in government that has ever existed in a civilised state. During his period of government, he removed from the organisation of the state all clarity of leadership and produced a completely opaque network of competencies. It was not laziness or an excessive degree of tolerance which led the otherwise energetic and forceful Hitler to tolerate this real witch's cauldron of struggles for position and conflicts over competence. It was intentional. With this technique he systematically disorganised the upper echelons of the Reich leadership in order to develop and further the authority of his own will until he became a despotic tyrant.

Source 6C **Hjalmar Schacht, Minister for Economics before effectively being replaced by Hermann Göring**

As long as I remained in office, whether at the *Reichsbank* or the Ministry of Economics, Hitler never interfered with my work. He never attempted to give me any instructions, but let me carry out my own ideas in my own way and without criticism ... However, when he realised that the moderation of my financial policy was a stumbling block in his reckless plans, he began, with Göring's connivance, to go behind my back and counter my arrangements.

Source 6D **Historian Ian Kershaw discussing the role of Hitler. Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretations*, Bloomsbury, 2015**

In the present case, this focuses upon the question of whether the terrible events of the Third Reich are chiefly to be explained through the personality, ideology, and will of Hitler, or whether the Dictator himself was not at least in part a (willing) 'prisoner' of forces, of which he was the instrument rather than the creator, and whose dynamic swept him too along in its momentum.

Source 6E **J. Goebbels speech, March 1933**

We are living now in an age when the masses must support policies ... It is the task of State Propaganda to simplify complicated ways of thinking that even the smallest man in the street may understand.

**The alleged words of Heinrich Himmler at a gathering of generals,
26 January 1944**

Source 6F

When the Führer gave me the order to carry out the total solution of the Jewish question, I at first hesitated, uncertain whether I could demand of my worthy SS men the execution of such a horrid assignment ... But this was ultimately a matter of a Führer order, and therefore I could give no misgivings.

Martin Broszat, *The Hitler State*, Routledge, 2013, p. 351

Source 6G

The coexistence and conflict of uncoordinated authorities very often undermined solidarity and uniformity in the exercise of power, but it also led to conflicting personalities, organs and controversial ideas keeping each other in check. Moreover this rivalry produced compromises and mutual arrangements which stabilised the system of government as a whole and the absolute control of the Führer at the top.

**Satirical cartoon published in a Swiss newspaper in early July 1934.
The English translation of the caption reads; 'And the Führer said: Only death can drive us apart'. (Edmund Heines was a Nazi Party leader and Ernst Röhm's deputy in the SA).**

Source 6H



Questions

1. How does Source 6A support the view that Hitler was a lazy ruler?
2. As mentioned in Source 6A, what do you think 'working towards the Führer' means?
3. How useful is Source 6B to a historian studying the political structure of Hitler's Germany?
4. How reliable is Source 6B?
5. Explain how Source 6C supports the view that Hitler was uninterested in the trivial matters of day-to-day government.
6. Using Source 6C and your own knowledge, explain why you think Hitler replaced Schacht with Göring.
7. Analyse Source 6D. What is Ian Kershaw trying to say? Which of the two views he discusses do you agree with and why?
8. According to Source 6E, how did Goebbels view the role of propaganda in the Nazi State?
9. What insight does Source 6F provide into the degree of loyalty shown to Hitler by Himmler?
10. Analyse Source 6G. Explain Martin Broszat's view of the Government under Hitler.
11. How does Source 6G differ from 6B? Which view do you agree with and why?
12. Identify the event Source 6H refers to.
13. Explain the key message the cartoon is meant to communicate to the audience about the events of the time in Germany.
14. Evaluate the significance of the Swiss perspective on this international event.



7

Methods of control used by the Nazi regime

At the end of this topic you should attempt to answer the following question:

How effective were the methods used by the Nazi regime to control the population of Germany?

Key syllabus features

The key features are:

- The range of techniques used by the Nazi regime to exert control, including laws, censorship, repression, terror, propaganda, cult of personality.

The key features provide the basis for HSC examination questions.

Upon his appointment to the position of chancellor on 30 January 1933, Hitler and the Nazi Party's grip on power was tenuous at best, given that they only held a third of the seats in the Reichstag. Thus, they set out to firstly consolidate their grip on power, and secondly, to begin the process of *Gleichschaltung*, which is best understood as the process of 'bringing into line' all aspects of society so that it would conform to the will of the Nazi Party. This required control of mass media in the form of censorship and propaganda, both to prevent criticism of the regime and to make the German people believe in the achievements of the new government and the merits of its leader. Legal changes were also introduced, which helped to eliminate political opposition and legalise the use of terror, the purpose of which was to deter even the smallest expression of dissent by ensuring that those found guilty faced arrest, imprisonment, and even execution. At the same time, a cult of personality arose surrounding Adolf Hitler, which fostered loyalty and respect for his position as Führer.

Overview

7.1 Laws

What laws were introduced by the Nazi regime and how effective were they in keeping the population under control?

FOCUS QUESTION

CHRONOLOGY OF GENERAL LAWS UNDER THE NAZIS

Date	Act
17 February 1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hermann Göring authorised members of the SA to act as auxiliary police in order to deal with the perceived threat of left-wing violence
28 February 1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Reichstag Fire Decree</i>, the emergency decree also known by its full name, <i>Decree of the Reich President for the Protection of People and State</i> (see text for more information)
21 March 1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Decree for the Defence Against Malicious Attacks Against the Government</i> targeted individuals and organisations who made hostile remarks about Hitler, the Nazi Party, or the state. The accused faced trial in special courts which were established to try them for making anti-government statements. These claims were untrue or grossly exaggerated but, if found guilty, defendants faced imprisonment.
23 March 1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Enabling Act</i>, also known as the <i>Act for the Removal of Distress from People and Reich</i> (see text for more information)
31 March and 7 April 1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Law for the Coordination of the States of the Reich</i> effectively rendered control over all aspects of society, subject to the rule of the Nazi Party.
2 May 1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All trade unions were abolished, their headquarters searched and their leaders taken into custody. In May, unions were replaced by the German Labour Front, which was controlled by the Reich Labour Ministry.
7 July 1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Apart from the Nazi Party, all other political parties were banned
14 July 1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Law Against the Establishment of Parties</i> which legalised the actions of 7 July. Anyone attempting to establish a political party other than the Nazi Party potentially faced imprisonment. This law represented the end of formal, constitutional opposition to the Nazi regime.
1 December 1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Law to Safeguard the Unity of Party And State</i> secured the Nazi Party's grip on power on a legislative basis. In addition, Nazi ideology was considered inseparable from the German state.
20 January 1934	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Work Order Act</i> introduced to organise national labour. Workers' rights were subordinate to those of management and business owners.

- 30 January 1934**
 - *Law for the Reconstruction of the Reich* meant that with the exception of Prussia, all state governments were abolished, to be replaced by **Reichsstatthalter** (Nazi governors).
- 24 April 1934**
 - Revised laws of treason. Almost all the activities of opposition groups were now punishable by death, including preparation of treason, acts of sabotage, printing or circulation of forbidden literature, and the betrayal of state secrets.
- 3 July 1934**
 - *Law Regarding Measures of State Self-Defence* retroactively legalised the measures taken to punish acts of high treason, 30 June to 2 July 1934. These measures are more commonly referred to as the Night of the Long Knives, so this act legalised the dozens of murders which took place during this purge.
- 20 December 1934**
 - *Law Against Malicious Attacks on State and Party* replaced the decree from 21 March 1933. The new law now included private comments and even statements that were not of a factual nature.
- 26 June 1935**
 - *Reich Labour Law* made labour service compulsory
- 10 February 1936**
 - New Gestapo law. The organisation was now above the law and there could be no legal appeal regarding its actions. An individual could be arrested, questioned and imprisoned or executed without any outside legal recourse.
- 1 December 1936**
 - The Hitler Youth Law made it almost impossible to avoid joining the organisation. Also banned all non-Nazi youth movements.
- 25 March 1939**
 - The Second Hitler Youth Law made membership compulsory for German children aged 10-18. All members had to swear an oath of loyalty to Hitler.

The *Reichstag Fire Decree*, also known as the emergency decree, which was passed following the Reichstag fire of 27 February 1933, played a pivotal role in Hitler's consolidation of power. Despite there being no evidence of a communist plot, Hitler managed to convince the Reichstag that it was under threat from the **German Communist Party**. The **decree** placed restrictions on freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of association, and the power of state authorities. It also provided for imprisonment without trial, phone tapping, searches of homes and businesses, and confiscation of property. This gave the Nazis enormous power to identify and eliminate political opponents; members of the SA sought out communists and socialists across the country, destroying their headquarters, outlawing their

The Reichstag Fire Decree

meetings and arresting their members before sending them to concentration camps under protective custody. The *Reichstag Fire Decree* successfully legalised the Nazis' use of terror to consolidate their rule. Additionally, it led to the banning of the German Communist Party on 5 March, and the German Socialist Party on 22 June 1933.

The Enabling Act Just as important was the *Enabling Act* of 24 March 1933. In order to pass the act, a change to the German constitution was required. The Nazis already had a majority with the **Nationalists**, but needed two-thirds of the Reichstag to support the act. To get the two-thirds required, Hitler made a deal with the Catholic Centre Party, promising to respect the rights of the Church in return for their support. In the end, the act passed with 444 votes to 94; the Socialist Party was the only party to vote against it, while the Communist Party had already been outlawed and their deputies arrested. The *Enabling Act* effectively replaced Germany's parliamentary democracy with a dictatorship, giving Hitler the power to make laws without the Reichstag, which now only served a ceremonial role. Historian Roland Stromberg summarised the effect of the *Enabling Act* as follows:

In a whirlwind of propaganda and ideology, he [Hitler] used his powers to mesmerise the German people into believing in his vision of a single, united racial community – 'one people, one state, one leader.'

R. Stromberg, *Europe in the Twentieth Century 4th Ed.*
Prentice Hall, 1997, p. 192

With the *Enabling Act*, the Nazis began to put an end to any last remaining sources of political opposition in a process they labelled *Gleichschaltung*. With increasing effectiveness, all of these laws enabled Hitler and the Nazi Party to slowly abolish the civil liberties of the German people, to suppress dissent, and to empower Nazi officials and supporters to eliminate political opposition using whatever means necessary, without fear of reprimand. Importantly, these laws also served to secure Hitler's position as dictator of Germany by the end of 1933. Surprisingly, these measures were accepted by the majority of Germany's population because Hitler's strong leadership and vision were what Germany had been sorely missing for quite some time.

Laws pertaining to Nazi racial policy and their impact on the Jewish population of Germany will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8. On page 87 is a brief list of Nazi racial laws which were part of the regime's initial plan to force Germany's Jews to emigrate; these evolved to focus on restricting Jewish economic freedom and power and, eventually, led to the Final Solution.

CHRONOLOGY OF RACIAL LAWS UNDER THE NAZIS

Date	Act
7 April 1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Law for the Restoration of a Professional Civil Service</i> permitted the dismissal of non-Aryans from government employment. On 30 June, it was extended to include individuals married to Jews.
7 April 1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Law Concerning Admission to the Legal Profession</i> forbade non-Aryans from practising law
22 April 1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Law Concerning Admission to the Medical Profession</i> prohibited non-Aryan doctors from working in hospitals
25 April 1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Law Against the Overcrowding of German Schools</i> restricted Jewish enrolment in high schools, technical institutes and universities
14 July 1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Law for the Prevention of Diseased Progeny</i> meant the involuntary sterilisation of more than 300 000 Germans with physical or mental disabilities
4 October 1933	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Editors' Law</i> prohibited Jews from working as journalists
21 May 1935	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Military Service Law</i> forbade Jews from joining the German army
15 September 1935	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuremberg Laws. <i>Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour</i> prohibited marriage between Jews and non-Jews and branded any extramarital sexual relations between the two groups as a criminal and punishable offence. • <i>Reich Citizenship Law</i> meant Jews, gypsies and black Germans were no longer considered German citizens and were not afforded the right to vote. These two laws laid the foundation for future persecution.
22 April 1938	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Decree Against the Camouflage of Jewish Firms</i> banned Jewish businesses from changing their names
17 July 1938	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Jews required to formally add Israel or Sarah to their names
12 September 1938	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jews banned from all German cultural and entertainment activities
3 October 1938	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforced closure and sale of all Jewish businesses to Germans as part of the process of Aryanisation
5 October 1938	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Jewish passports to be stamped with a J
12 November 1938	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regulation for the Elimination of Jews from Economic Life in Germany</i> transferred all Jewish businesses to Aryans
15 November 1938	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Jewish students excluded from German schools and universities and all Jews prohibited entry to theatres and sports facilities
1 September 1941	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jews forced to wear the Star of David in public



Figure 7.1 A member of the SA in front of a Jewish shop in Berlin during the boycott of 1 April 1933. The sign reads 'Germans! Defend yourselves! Don't buy from Jews!'

Summary

- Both the *Reichstag Fire Decree* and the *Enabling Act* were essential in consolidating Nazi rule, and resulted in a dictatorship.
- Laws passed by the Nazis restricted the civil liberties of German citizens.
- The Nazis were able to legally eliminate their opposition and place political opponents in 'protective custody' using laws such as the *Enabling Act*.
- These acts and laws legalised the Nazis' use of terror to suppress dissent.
- Nazi racial policy was enforced using laws such as 1935's Nuremberg Laws.

Key personalities, groups and terms

Personalities

Hermann Göring: Hitler's official deputy and nominated successor; initially Minister of the Interior for Prussia, he played a key role in the Nazis' consolidation of power by enlisting over 50 000 SA and SS men as auxiliary policemen, thus legitimising their violence against political opponents, especially socialists, communists, and trade union organisations. He also established the Gestapo in 1933, urged Hitler to carry out the purge

of the SA, began the process of Aryanisation in 1937 and he essentially took control of the Ministry of Economics. (He was never appointed Minister of Economics, but did supersede the responsibilities of the actual Minister.)

Groups

Catholic Centre Party (ZP): formed in 1870 to defend Catholic interests, became more right-wing during the Depression, banned in June 1933

German Communist Party (KPD): founded in the aftermath of World War I by socialists opposed to the war, led by Rosa Luxemburg. After her death the party became gradually ever more committed to Leninism and later Stalinism. During the Weimar Republic period, the KPD usually polled between 10 and 15 per cent of the vote and was represented in the Reichstag and in state parliaments. The party was dissolved in March 1933.

Gestapo: Nazi secret police. Originally established by Hermann Göring in Prussia in 1933

Hitler Youth (Hitler Jugend): a youth movement for young boys aged 14 and up; used by the Nazis to influence young people and recruit them to their cause

Nationalists (DNVP): a right-wing political party formed in 1918; co-operated with the Nazi Party towards the end of the Weimar Republic

SA (Sturmabteilung, Storm Troopers, brownshirts): the Nazi private army established in 1921. Used to intimidate political opponents

Social Democratic Party (SPD): a moderate political party formed in 1875; banned by the Nazi regime in 1933

Terms

Aryan: non-Jewish individuals, considered to be northern European in appearance. Hitler subscribed to the view that a 'typical' Aryan had blonde hair, blue eyes and was tall and athletic.

Aryanisation: the policy implemented by Hermann Göring to expel 'non-Aryans' from German economic life

decree: law

Final Solution: the systematic extermination of Europe's Jews during World War II

Gleichschaltung: a process which attempted to Nazify Germany by forcing into line all aspects of society

Reichstag: German parliament

Reichsstatthalter: Nazi governor

Star of David: a symbol of the Jewish religion made up of two overlaid triangles

Activities

Thinking historically 7.1

- Explain how the Nazi regime was able to legally eliminate their political opponents.
- To what extent were the *Reichstag Fire Decree* and the *Enabling Act* essential in Hitler's consolidation of power?
- Evaluate the view that constitutional opposition to the Nazi regime ended in July 1933.
- Explain the purpose of the *Decree for the Defence Against Malicious Attacks Against the Government*.
- Assess the view that Hitler's seizure of power was a 'legal revolution.'
- Describe the early anti-Jewish laws. What were the Nazis hoping to achieve with these laws?
- Assess the significance of 1935's Nuremberg Laws.

Source analysis 7.1

Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions which follow.

Source 7A A reporter's description of the actions of the SA

In truckloads they thundered through cities and villages, broke into houses, arrested their enemies at dawn, dragged them out of bed into SA barracks where the victims were frequently beaten to death and their bodies concealed in the woods or thrown into rivers and ponds.

Source 7B Undated painting of an SA gang



Martin Broszat, *The Hitler State*, Routledge, 2013, p. 281

Source 7C

[After the *Enabling Act* was passed] ... now the Chancellor in person had the right to make laws, to accept political responsibility and the right to execute the laws. By definition of his authority he had the decisive influence on law making, now solely the prerogative of the Reich government. And he alone decided on the execution of national laws.

Hans Frank, Commissioner for Justice, addressing judges, 1936

Source 7D

There is no independence of law against National Socialism. Say to yourselves at every decision which you make: 'How would the Führer decide in my place?'

Völkischer Beobachter (Nazi newspaper), 21 March 1933

Source 7E

On Wednesday, the first concentration camp will be opened to accommodate 5000 prisoners. Here, all Communists, and where necessary 'Reichsbanner' and Social Democrat functionaries who endanger state security, will be interned together as their continued stay in state prisons has proved too great a burden. Experience has shown that these people cannot be granted their freedom as they continue to agitate and create unrest when released. In order to ensure state security, we must adopt these measures regardless of any petty considerations.

Völkischer Beobachter (Nazi newspaper), 30 March 1933

Source 7F

Boycott Committees against the Jews throughout the whole Reich. On 1 April, at the stroke of ten, the boycott of all Jewish businesses, doctors, lawyers begins – ten thousand mass gatherings. The Jews have declared war on 65 million, now they are to be hit where it hurts them most.

Questions

- a Which act or decree gave the SA the legal power to act as described in Source 7A?
- b Using Sources 7A and 7B, describe the role of the SA in the consolidation of power.
- c How useful are these two sources for a historian studying the Nazis' so-called 'legal revolution'?
- d Using Source 7C and your own knowledge, explain the significance of the *Enabling Act*.
- e How is Source 7C reflective of the provisions included in the *Enabling Act*?

- f According to Source 7E, what reasons were given for the arrests of communists, members of the *Reichsbanner*, and Social Democrats?
- g Using Source 7F and your own knowledge, explain the purpose of the anti-Jewish laws up to 1935.

7.2 Censorship and propaganda

FOCUS QUESTION

How did the Nazi regime use censorship and propaganda to control the people of Germany?

In terms of Nazi Germany, censorship involved the prevention or eradication of anything critical being spoken or written about Hitler, the Nazi Party, or the state. It also involved covering up any faults or transgressions of government. The Nazis achieved this by taking control of the media and the arts as part of the process of *Gleichschaltung*; this control played a pivotal role in the elimination of opposition to the regime.

Essential to this control of the media and the arts was Joseph Goebbels, appointed Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda 13 March 1933. Goebbels has been quoted as saying that his primary objective was to persuade the German people that the ‘political course

we have embarked on is the correct one’. To this end, he created the Reich Chamber of Culture in September 1933, which regulated the press, radio, theatre, film, literature and the visual arts. Individuals had to apply for membership in the relevant associations to continue working, provided they passed political and racial assessments. Individuals virtually censored their own work to ensure it reflected the beliefs and values of Nazism, otherwise they risked losing their membership, and thus, their livelihood. Jews were eventually denied membership altogether.

In terms of literature, the Nazis carried out preventive censorship. On 10 May 1933, Goebbels organised the ceremonial burning of 20 000 books in a bonfire outside the University of Berlin. Hitler and Goebbels vehemently believed that books which praised democracy or pacifism, were written by Jewish intellectuals, or extolled the virtues of communism were ‘un-German’ and therefore should not be read. Goebbels organised the systematic looting of libraries to remove literature that was counterproductive to their values and ordered



Figure 7.2 An artist's impression of the Nazis burning un-German books

their destruction by fire, lest they survive to incite insubordinate thoughts and actions. As a result, more than 2500 writers, playwrights and poets emigrated from Germany between the years 1933–45.

In 1933, Germany had 4700 daily newspapers in publication. In order to control the dissemination of information, it was vital that the Nazis take over, ban or purchase by coercion the majority of these papers. Max Amann, head of the Nazis' publishing company *Eher Verlag*, took control of the Reich Press Chamber in November 1933, a position which gave him the authority to ban newspapers that the Nazis deemed inappropriate or which were critical of them. By 1936, he had banned or taken control of approximately two-thirds of the newspapers, including banning 35 communist and 200 socialist publications. Furthermore, the *Editors' Law* of 4 October 1933 placed the responsibility for what was covered in the papers directly on the owner or editor, thus effectively censoring what they could put into print. Editors could be stood down and their papers closed if they did not follow Goebbels' daily directives. All journalists were required to become members of the Reich Association of the German Press, which was headed by the Nazi press chief Otto Dietrich. Eventually, over 1300 Jewish and communist journalists were either fired from their positions or fled Germany altogether. Goebbels' Ministry held daily briefings where journalists were instructed what to include in their articles, the size of the articles and their headlines, and what photos could be included.

Additionally, all news agencies were merged into one source, the state-owned **German News Agency**, which strictly controlled news content. As far as Goebbels' was concerned, the aim of the press was to assist the German people to 'think uniformly, react uniformly, and place themselves body and soul at the disposal of the government'. The result of this strict censorship and control was a dull form of journalism and a decline in readership.

Along with censorship, propaganda played a pivotal role in controlling the hearts and minds of the German people and eliminating opposition as the Nazi regime relied heavily on propaganda to spread their philosophy and persuade the people how wonderful their Führer was. Under Goebbels' expert manipulation and guidance, Nazi propaganda was both professional and reasonably successful, especially when it came to the 'Führer myth'; Hitler remained popular until near the end of the Nazi regime. He was presented as the leader Germany needed, an international statesman who could restore Germany to greatness and who was committed to the needs of the German people. Goebbels' was able to skilfully twist events and situations to maximum advantage; the Nazis were presented as winning an alleged war on crime. Even the murders carried out during the Night of the Long Knives were presented as evidence to prove Hitler's dedication to upholding law and order. Economic and foreign policy successes were emphasised, as were the virtues of hard work and service to the nation. Nazi propaganda also served to indoctrinate the majority of the German people into supporting

the Nazi regime without question. It encouraged them to feel as though they were one *Volk* or *Volksgemeinschaft*.

Aware of the efficacy of radio as a propaganda tool due to its potential to reach the masses directly, Goebbels used his control of the media to ensure that only Nazi political programs were broadcast; the programs that were permitted promoted Nazi values and beliefs, emphasised the successes of the government, or perpetuated the Führer myth. Factories were established to mass produce cheap radios, also known as the People's Receiver 301 (*Volksempfänger*), so that by 1939, over 70 per cent of households owned one, the highest percentage of any country in the world at the time. Over 6000 loudspeakers were also located in public places so everyone could listen to the broadcasts of important rallies, and radio wardens ensured compliance in offices: workers could not return to work until the broadcast was finished.

Although not quite as successful as radio, Goebbels also took advantage of the film industry due to the large audiences it drew. Scripts required his approval before filming could begin, and all films were to fit in with Nazi ideology. Knowing that unashamedly propagandist films would not be popular with the audiences, Goebbels eventually mastered the art of subliminal propaganda. *I Accuse* and *Triumph of the Will* are two examples

of propaganda documentaries. Anti-Semitic films were also produced and added to the constant stream of hostile propaganda which helped to reinforce the Nazis racial ideology, conditioning the German people to unquestioningly support the anti-Jewish policies implemented by the regime. Film examples include *Jew Süss*, *The Rothschilds*, and *The Eternal Jew*.

Another form of propaganda popular with the Nazi regime was the regular calendar of rallies and demonstrations, the biggest and most important being the annual Nuremberg rallies, held in the spiritual home of Nazism. They were artfully designed to magnify and construct Hitler as a messiah-like figure, whose speech was always the climax of the evening. The audience was captivated by the uniforms, military music, flags, banners, parades, and passionate speeches from prominent Nazis. There was a general atmosphere of excitement and a sense of community, or *Volksgemeinschaft*. Goebbels ensured these events were given maximum



Figure 7.3 Adolf Hitler during the 1934 Nuremberg Rally

publicity so that those who were not in attendance could still share in the experience, either via radio broadcast, newsreel or documentary.

Summary

- Censorship and propaganda played a key role in the Nazis process of *Gleichschaltung*.
- Censorship served to eliminate opposition by preventing criticism of Hitler and the government from being spoken or written.
- Joseph Goebbels controlled the media and the arts in his position as Minister for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda.
- The press, radio, theatre, film, literature and the visual arts were all strictly regulated. Individuals had to apply for membership in associations in order to work in these industries.
- Jews and communists were excluded from membership.
- Propaganda was important in promoting the concept of *Volksgemeinschaft*.
- Radio was an effective propaganda tool. Radio ownership increased dramatically under the Nazi regime.
- Anti-Semitic propaganda was also produced by Goebbels' Ministry.

Key personalities, groups and terms

Personalities

Max Amann: 1891–1957. Served with Hitler in World War I. Joined the Nazi Party and became Business Manager in 1921 and head of *Eher Verlag*, the Nazi Party's publishing house; Amann was also publisher of the Nazi newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter*, giving him enormous input into the direction the newspaper should take. Under the Nazi regime, Amann became Reich Leader of the entire Nazi Party press organisation and head of the Reich Press Chamber. In this capacity he was able to close down opposition newspapers and then purchase them himself.



Figure 7.4 Max Amann

Otto Dietrich: 1897–1952. Dietrich worked as the business manager of the German national evening paper *Augsburger Zeitung* and joined the Nazi Party in 1929, eventually joining the SS. In 1931, Dietrich was appointed the Nazis' Press Chief. Under Hitler's Government, Dietrich was tasked with controlling the content of German newspapers. In 1938 Hitler appointed him Press Chief of the Reich and State Secretary to the Propaganda Ministry, which meant he worked closely with Joseph Goebbels in his Ministry. It was Dietrich's responsibility to convey a sense of confidence in Nazi foreign policy, even when the reality looked disastrous.



Figure 7.5 Otto Dietrich

Joseph Goebbels: 1897–1945. The Nazi propaganda chief; Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. Goebbels played a key role in creating the 'Führer myth' and exercised considerable control over all areas of German culture. Publicly encouraged violence against Germany's Jews during *Kristallnacht*.

Terms

Eber Verlag: Nazi publishing company

German News Agency (DNB): part of the Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda

Nuremberg: the symbolic home of the Nazi Party

Volksgemeinschaft: the concept of a 'people's community'; reinforced the view that the German people were racially pure and united against the common enemy, Jews and communists

Activities

Thinking historically 7.2

- Explain the purpose of censorship.
- Evaluate the significance of Joseph Goebbels' role as Propaganda Minister.
- Describe the measures implemented by the Nazis to control Germany's newspapers.
- Explain how the Reich Chamber of Culture led to individuals censoring their own work.
- Describe the purpose of propaganda.
- To what extent was radio more effective as a propaganda tool than film?

Source analysis 7.2

Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions which follow.

Source 7G **Goebbels providing instructions to the Controllers of German Radio, 25 March 1933**

We make no bones about the fact that the radio belongs to us and to no one else. And we will place the radio in the service of our ideology and no other ideology will find expression here ... The radio must subordinate itself to the goals which the government of the national revolution has set itself. The Government will give the necessary instructions ...

Source 7H **A crowd of 40 000 people watch 'un-German' books being burned in Berlin, 10 May 1933**



Clause 20 of the *Editors' Law*, 3 October 1933

Source 7I

Editors of a newspaper bear the professional responsibility and the responsibility before the criminal and civil law for its intellectual content in so far as they have composed it themselves or have accepted it for publication.

Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*, Pan Books, 2000, p. 209

Source 7J

The Nazis' own Party press found it difficult to make the transition from attacking to defending the government. If the scurrility and viciousness of the 'time of struggle' came naturally to them, the Party's hacks did not adjust easily to a regime of obligatory superlatives.

Official instructions from the Propaganda Ministry, issued at one of the daily press conferences

Source 7K

Photos showing members of the Reich Government at dining tables in front of rows of bottles must not be published in future ... Recently, because of a great number of photos, the utterly absurd impression has been created among the public that members of the Government are living it up. News pictures must therefore change in this respect.

The opening of the Autobahn to Munich, 1936

Source 7L



Roland Stromberg, *Europe in the Twentieth Century 4th Ed*, Prentice Hall, 1997, p. 198

Source 7M

Once in power, Hitler was able to expand and intensify his pageantry. The organisation of parades, spectacles, and rituals dazzled Germany and
continued ...

continued...

astonished the entire world. It was a good show ... these quasi-religious rites were tuned to the theme not only of Hitler as the supreme leader but of a new national unity. There was a surge of community feeling reminiscent of August 1914.

Questions

- a How useful is Source 7G to a historian studying the importance of radio to the Nazi regime?
- b Using Source 7H, explain the significance of the events of 10 May 1933.
- c Using Source 7I, explain how Clause 20 of the *Editors' Law* helped to eliminate opposition to the Nazi regime.
- d Analyse Source 7J. What is Michael Burleigh's opinion of the effectiveness of the Nazis' press?
- e To what extent do BOTH Source 7I and 7K show the ease with which the Nazi regime was able to control the German press?
- f Analyse Source 7L. Describe what is happening. How effective do you think the image is as an example of 'positive' propaganda?
- g Using Source 7M and your own knowledge, explain the significance of propaganda to the Nazi regime.

7.3 Repression and terror

FOCUS QUESTION

How did the Nazi regime use repression and terror to control the people of Germany?

Silencing enemies

To achieve their goal of *Gleichschaltung*, any and all opponents of the Nazi regime had to be silenced. We have already seen how censorship, propaganda and new laws were introduced to achieve this. Additionally, the Nazis used the tools of repression and terror to eliminate any potential political opponents and to ensure the complete conformity of German society.

The chief organs of repression under the Nazi regime were the SA, the SS, and, later, the Gestapo.

The SA

The SA was formed in 1921 to act as the Nazi Party's private army, and from the moment Hitler became chancellor in January 1933, the organisation's principal purpose was to intimidate political opponents and to enforce Party policy. They achieved this using violence – bashing and torturing communists, socialists and other groups who posed a threat. The *Emergency Decree*, passed 28 February 1933, legalised their tactics and assisted the Nazi regime to arrest and place in 'protective custody' opponents without trial, who were imprisoned or sent to concentration camps. Hitler was quoted as saying that the 'struggle against the KPD [German Communist Party] must not be dependent on legal considerations'. The first of these camps

was established in Dachau by the SA in March 1933 to house communists; they would eventually also hold socialists, trade unionists, churchmen and women, ordinary criminals, and undesirables – namely Jews, Gypsies and homosexuals. Located in heavily populated areas, these camps were intended to send a message to potential opponents. Of those who were interned, most were never seen again.

By the end of 1933, over 100 000 political prisoners were incarcerated and the Nazi Party had strengthened its political position. Their main target, the German Communist Party, ceased to be a threat by 1935, their deputies having either been arrested or voluntarily fled the country.

However, the SA's unchecked and oppressive tactics presented a public relations nightmare for Hitler, who needed the support of the army if he was to combine the offices of chancellor and president. The solution? The purge of the organisation during the Night of the Long Knives. Not only were members of the SA targeted, but the Nazis used the opportunity to settle old scores and eliminate other rivals. This action proved popular with the German people and Hitler was presented as the restorer of law and order. It also demonstrated that the Nazi regime was willing to step outside the law and resort to murder to deal with opposition, which served as a clear warning to other potential opponents.

After the Night of the Long Knives, the SA was superseded by the SS, an organisation formed in 1925 as Hitler's private bodyguard. Heinrich Himmler took control of the SS in 1929 and quickly expanded its size and scope; in 1933 the SS numbered 52 000 but by 1939 it was over 250 000 strong. It even had its own security service, the SD, set up by Reinhard Heydrich in 1931. Enormously powerful and independent of the Nazi Party, the SS came under the banner of Himmler's **Reichssicherheitshauptamt** (RSHA), and was an elite and ruthless organisation that was largely responsible for state security, intelligence and surveillance, and the secret police.

The SS also took over control of the camp system from the SA. In July 1934, Theodor Eicke was appointed Inspector of Concentration Camps, and set about establishing the Death's Head Units, specially trained SS camp guards renowned for their brutality and ruthlessness. The SS was also responsible for enforcing Nazi racial policy and the Final Solution.

The SS



Figure 7.6 Hitler and the head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, walking past a guard of honour of the SS 'Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler' (Hitler's personal bodyguard regiment), September 1935

The Gestapo While the SS played a decisive role in the elimination of political opposition, its secret police, the Gestapo, carried out the majority of the terror and repression of the German people. The Gestapo spied on potential political opponents and anti-Nazi Germans by reading mail, tapping telephones and placing agents throughout the country. Hundreds of thousands of these alleged ‘enemies of the state’ were arrested by the Gestapo, who often made no attempt at discretion, and the accused were sent to concentration camps without trial. This effectively acted as a deterrent, frightening the German people into conformity. Although quite a small organisation in proportion to the population, the Gestapo was so effective because it relied on public denunciations, which it actively encouraged; German citizens willingly denounced each other for opposing any aspect of Nazi philosophy. Neighbours, friends, and even family members were encouraged to spy on each other and report any criticism of Hitler or the Nazi Party.

The atmosphere of fear and suspicion that prevailed, the brutality of the concentration camps, as well as the effectiveness of the SS and Gestapo in identifying and eliminating enemies of the state had a couple of consequences. For one, it assisted the Nazis in creating their vision of a *Volksgemeinschaft*, by eliminating those individuals deemed as unworthy according to Nazi ideology. As a result, the majority of the German population conformed to Nazi rule, even if it was out of fear. It also became dangerous to openly oppose the Nazi regime, leading many political groups to flee the country, move underground, or disband altogether. Overall, the Nazi regime’s campaign of terror had the effect of deterring most criticism of Hitler and his government. As you shall read in Chapter 8, opposition to the regime was not eliminated completely. It was however incredibly difficult to organise under the ever watchful gaze of the Nazis’ instruments of terror: the SA, SS, SD and Gestapo.

Summary

- The chief organs of repression under the Nazi regime were the SA, the SS and the Gestapo.
- The SA played an important role in the initial consolidation of power by targeting communists and other left-wing opponents.
- The *Emergency Decree* legalised the Nazi’s use of violence to attack political opponents.
- Socialists, trade unionists, churchmen and women, ordinary criminals, Jews, Gypsies and homosexuals were also targets.
- Opponents were arrested and imprisoned, often without trial, in concentration camps.
- The SA was replaced by the SS, which was responsible for state security, intelligence, and the secret police.
- The Gestapo relied on spies as well as on German citizens willingly denouncing each other.
- Terror and repression resulted in conformity and the prevention of open criticism of the Nazi regime.

Personalities

Theodor Eicke: 1892–1943. Joined the Nazi Party in 1928 and commanded an SS regiment. Appointed commandant of Dachau concentration camp in 1933; became Inspector of Concentration Camps in July 1934 and changed the way the camps were overseen and the types of punishments meted out to prisoners. Camp guards were discouraged from showing compassion or empathy for prisoners; mercy was not to be tolerated amongst SS guards. Eicke also had the responsibility of executing Ernst Röhm during the Night of the Long Knives. During the war, Eicke was replaced and placed in command of a *Waffen* SS division.



Figure 7.7 Theodor Eicke



Figure 7.8 Reinhard Heydrich

Reinhard Heydrich: 1904–1942. Heinrich Himmler's deputy; head of the Reich Main Security Office which gave him control of the SD, criminal police and the Gestapo. Heydrich expanded the SD's intelligence gathering capabilities and used the Gestapo to hunt down political enemies. His control of the Central Immigration Office played a key role in the deportation of Jews and non-German populations to the East, and he was also given the responsibility of arranging a total 'solution' to the 'Jewish question'. Chaired

the Wannsee Conference in January 1942, where the 'Final Solution' was devised.

Heinrich Himmler: 1900–1945. *Reichsführer* SS and Chief of German Police; had sole authority over all security organisations directly responsible for hunting down political opponents and implementing the Nazi Party's programme of terror, including concentration camps.



Figure 7.9 Heinrich Himmler

Groups

SD (Sicherheitsdienst): the internal police force of the Nazi Party created by Heinrich Himmler in 1932. Intelligence service of the SS

SS (Schutzstaffel): originally Hitler's personal protection squad. Grew to become the Nazis' police force

Terms

Reichssicherheitshauptamt: the Reich Central Bureau for Security (RSHA); set up under Himmler's direction, it exercised tight control of all security organisations.

Activities

Thinking historically 7.3

- Who did the Nazis consider were their enemies inside Germany? What methods did they employ to deal with them?
- Explain the purpose of the SA and the tactics it employed.
- Evaluate the impact of the Night of the Long Knives.
- How accurate is the view that the Gestapo, with 7000-15 000 officers, could not possibly have controlled a population of 69 million people on its own?
- Analyse the effectiveness of the Nazi regime's campaign of terror.

Source analysis 7.3

Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions which follow.

Source 7N Werner Best, deputy chief of the Gestapo

To discover the enemies of the state, to watch them and render them harmless at the right moment ... In order to fulfil this duty, the political police must be free to use every means ...

Source 7O Hitler's orders after the Reichstag fire

Every Communist official must be shot. All Communist deputies must be hanged this very night. All friends of the Communists must be locked up.

Source 7P British cartoon depicting the events of the Night of the Long Knives



Instructions given to police regarding immorality and hostility towards the state

Source 7Q

For example those who, on festive occasions, deliberately decline from observing the Hitler salute whilst singing The Horst Wessel Song [killed in a fight with Communists in 1930] manifest hostility towards the State. If the refusal to observe the usual German greeting [*Heil Hitler*] towards civil servants or the administrative authority, is deliberate and manifests disrespect, it must be regarded as a danger to public security.

Heinrich Himmler, describing the conditions in concentration camps, 1939

Source 7R

Like every deprivation of liberty, the concentration camp is certainly a harsh and tough measure. Hard productive labour, a regular way of life, exceptional cleanliness in living conditions and personal hygiene, a faultless diet, firm but fair treatment, instruction in learning how to work again, and opportunities to acquire a trade, are the training methods.

Martin Broszat, *The Hitler State*, Routledge, 2013, p. 277

Source 7S

Each sought in his own way to serve 'his Reich leader' and the Hitler state with 'toughness', 'resolution' and 'energy' in the pursuit of enemies and long-term utopian aims. Himmler repeatedly encouraged such initiative by allowing considerable independence and these men were proud and 'expert' enough to carry out unquestioningly tasks which were felt to be difficult if not impossible. Moreover as the ruling organ of the Third Reich the SS remained largely outside the law and habitually behaved as an extraordinary 'task force' with the knowledge of being a special elite.

Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*, Pan Books, 2000, p. 157

Source 7T

One aspect of dictatorship seems in need of more emphasis than it nowadays tends to receive – the supersession of the rule of law by arbitrary police terror. This was not some prosaic B-movie, before the lurid A-movie of the regime's wartime racial rampage, but the crucial breach with the most fundamental characteristic of free societies ... It was not a side issue ... but the most important departure from civilised values engineered by the Nazi government.

Questions

- a What insight does Source 7N provide into the Nazi regime's willingness to step outside the law when dealing with political opponents?
- b Using Source 7O and your own knowledge, explain how the German Communist Party was eliminated as a political threat.
- c What is the cartoonist's message in Source 7P? Is this an accurate representation of the effect of the Night of the Long Knives? Why/why not?
- d How useful is Source 7Q to a historian studying the popularity of the Nazi regime?
- e How reliable is Source 7R?
- f What insight does Source 7S provide into the role and effectiveness of the SS in the Nazi state?
- g Analyse Source 7T. What does historian Michael Burleigh consider to be the Nazis' most important departure from civilised values?
- h What do you think he means by 'this was not some prosaic B-movie'?

7.4 Cult of personality

FOCUS QUESTION

How was the 'Führer myth' created and what role did it play in the Nazi State?

The Führer myth

Like other dictators throughout modern history, a cult of personality, or leadership cult, emerged following Adolf Hitler's rise to become *der Führer* in 1934. Manufactured by his skilled Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels and aided by both censorship and propaganda, the 'Führer myth' created a carefully constructed image of Hitler that stressed his positive qualities and emphasised the achievements of his rule, for which he took full credit. Any errors and mistakes were viewed as being the fault of minor Party officials. The Führer myth attributes the following characteristics to Hitler:

- Hitler was presented as heroic and charismatic; a God-fearing man.
- He was a leader who was single-mindedly committed to rebuilding Germany and restoring national pride. He was the man to help eliminate perceived enemies of the state.
- He offered a popular change from the leaders of the Weimar period. He was actually able to deliver results, especially with the revision of the Treaty of Versailles.
- He was a sincere and caring leader who was working to improve the lives of ordinary Germans of every class.
- He was also viewed as standing above, and separate from, the corruption, greed and machinations of his subordinates, and the Nazi Party itself. He was seen as being unaware of such negatives, a moderate who could bring the more radical elements of the Nazi Party under control, as witnessed with the actions of the Night of the Long Knives.
- He was also presented as both a man of peace, at least until 1939, and a brilliant military tactician.

Goebbels' control of the media and the arts played a crucial role in the proliferation of this myth or cult; censorship prevented anything critical of Hitler from being written or spoken and propaganda assisted in the indoctrination of the masses. Leni Riefenstahl's documentary film of the 1934 Nuremberg Rally, *Triumph of the Will*, is dominated by a heroic Hitler speaking in front of enthusiastic crowds. Shot from a low angle, Hitler addressed the roaring crowd and appeared powerful and almost God-like. Another scene reinforced Hitler's position as the spiritual leader of Nazism, a self-proclaimed ordinary man who would be the saviour of the German people. The film played a crucial role in encouraging the idea that Hitler was a humanitarian leader who would bring stability to the country again.

Crowds shouted themselves hoarse when he spoke, the army swore a personal oath of allegiance to Hitler, his portraits hung in school classrooms, annual radio broadcasts celebrated his birthday, 30 January (the date in 1933 when Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany) was commemorated annually, and his most devoted followers were more than willing to obey his every command. Villages wished to dedicate trees in his honour or change their names to incorporate his. Parents rushed to christen their children with a version of his name, while delegations of children flocked to him with flowers, a scene that suited his image of the compassionate Führer. 'Heil Hitler' even replaced 'good morning'.

Army oath of allegiance

I swear before God to give my unconditional obedience to Adolf Hitler, Führer of the Reich and of the German People, Supreme Commander.



Figure 7.10 A portrait of Hitler, 1933

In addition to loyalty to Hitler himself, the Führer myth also encouraged national unity and resulted in Hitler's extraordinary popularity with the German people, which peaked during the 1940 invasion of France. The 1933 plebiscite to leave the League of Nations and the 1938 plebiscite on the *Anschluss* with Austria received a 'yes' vote of 95.1% and 99.08% respectively.

A culture of fear

Why was the Führer myth so successful? Hitler's position as Führer was secured by the end of 1934 through the use of terror and legislation. No other political parties were permitted, and criticism of Hitler or his government was not tolerated. To speak out against Hitler from this point onward warranted being labelled disloyal or treasonous, a crime that could

result in individuals being arrested and sent to concentration camps. The fear of such punishment was enough to deter the majority of the German population from speaking out against *der Führer*. Additionally, it helped that much of what he did, especially the steps taken to revise the Treaty of Versailles, were undeniably popular. He was also held responsible for Germany's economic miracle which had ended unemployment and brought prosperity to the nation. As a result of the myth, the German people remained respectful and loyal to Hitler long after they had lost faith in the Nazi government.

Summary

- The cult of personality, or Führer myth, was manufactured by Joseph Goebbels and benefitted greatly from censorship and propaganda.
- A range of positive characteristics were attributed to Hitler. For example, he was presented as compassionate, heroic and charismatic.
- He was viewed as being above the greed and corruption of the Nazi Party, whose officials were blamed for any mistakes that were made.
- His speeches and appearances at rallies were emphasized, as evident in the documentary film *Triumph of the Will*.
- The Führer myth encouraged loyalty and devotion to Hitler and also served to unite Germany.
- The elimination of opposition and the use of terror contributed to the success of the myth, as did Hitler's strong rule and the economic recovery of Germany.
- As a result of the myth, Hitler remained popular with the German people until towards the end of the war.

Key terms

Terms

Anschluss: term used to define the union between Germany and Austria carried out by Hitler in 1938. Forbidden under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles

der Führer: German for 'the leader'

League of Nations: a precursor to the United Nations; an international organisation which aimed to settle disputes between countries and prevent war; member nations were meant to be protected by the concept of 'collective security'.

Treaty of Versailles: the peace treaty which formally ended World War I; signed 28 June 1919; the terms imposed on Germany were detested by the German people; before coming to power, Hitler promised to revise it.

Activities

Thinking historically 7.4

- Outline the positive characteristics attributed to Hitler by the Führer myth.
- To what extent did the Führer myth depend on censorship and propaganda for its success?
- Explain the importance of propaganda films like *Triumph of the Will* to the Führer myth.
- Explain how the Führer myth helped the Nazi regime maintain control over the German people.
- Analyse the significance of the Führer myth.

Source analysis 7.4

Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions which follow.

Children's Grace, recited before meals, 1936

Source 7U

Führer, my Führer, sent to me by God,
Protect and preserve me all my life
You have rescued Germany in its hour of need
I thank you for my daily bread
Stay with me, never leave me,
Führer, my Führer, my faith and my light.

David Lloyd George, *Daily Express*, 17 November 1936

Source 7V

... It is true that public criticism of the Government is forbidden in every form. That does not mean that criticism is absent ... But not a word of criticism or of disapproval have I heard of Hitler. He is immune from criticism as a king in a monarchical country.

Directions provided for the making of a documentary to celebrate Hitler's 50th birthday, 1939

Source 7W

It must create an historic document for the future ... Under a bright, shining sky the birthday itself begins ... Surrounded by some of his co-workers, among whom Himmler stands out, Hitler receives homage. The camera lingers lovingly on the Goebbels children, all clothed in white ... next to Hitler, thus strengthening his reputation as a true lover of children – a special shot for the women in the audience.

Hitler ... climbs the steps to the canopied platform and takes his place on a 'throne' ... this Hitler is not only a statesman but also clearly a field-commander-to-be, who intends to review his armed forces. This is the way the film has it.



Baldur von Schirach speaking to Hitler Youth, 1936

Source 7Y

He who serves our Führer, Adolf Hitler, serves Germany and he who serves Germany, serves God.

Speech by a prominent member of the Christian Democratic Party, Philip Jenninger, 1988

Source 7Z

Instead of desperation and hopelessness, optimism and self-confidence reigned. Didn't Hitler just make reality what was just a promise under Wilhelm II, that is to bring wonderful times for the Germans?

Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*, Pan Books, 2000, p. 214

Source 7AA

... on his 1937 birthday Hitler acceded to the request of a small girl presenting him with flowers ... For children were a crucial component of the Führer cult, pint-sized extras used to promote a warm glow of benignity coupled with vague hopes for the future. Although we have filtered them out of memory, they were as omnipresent as the statuesque SS men.

Roland Stromberg, *Europe in the Twentieth Century 4th Ed*, Prentice Hall, 1997, p. 194

Source 7AB

We are left with the Hitler charisma, which undoubtedly existed. Many who came to laugh stayed to succumb to the hypnotic spell that emanated from this erstwhile clown. On paper his ideas seemed a weird amalgamation of enthusiasm, but he could cast a spell when he addressed an audience... He spoke of the party as an analogue to the Catholic Church, with himself as the infallible pope. He refused to manufacture a party program because, he solemnly assured Germans, they should trust his genius to improvise the right policies at the right time. This strange image of a superman hero-leader was built up with the aid of parades and banners, searchlights playing on the swastika symbol, howling crowds shrieking 'Heil' to the uniformed figure with his right hand rigid in a raised salute. The spectacle reached deeply into the unconscious minds of simple people and touched chords of unreason.

Questions

- a** Explain how Source 7U can be seen as a product of the Führer myth.
- b** How useful are Sources 7U and 7V for a historian studying the effect of the Führer myth?
- c** What is the perspective of Source 7W? How reliable is this source?
- d** How does Source 7W support the view that the Führer myth was manufactured?
- e** What is the message of Source 7X?
- f** How does Sources 7Y promote obedience to Hitler?
- g** Explain how Source 7Z seems to support the view that Hitler was seen as a positive force for change in Germany.
- h** Research Jenninger's speech. Explain why this speech caused controversy in Germany after he presented it at a special memorial session of the West German Parliament in November 1988.
- i** What insight do the reactions to Jenninger's speech provide into the way the German people wish to view and interpret their Nazi past?
- j** Using Source 7AA and your own knowledge, explain the role of children in perpetuating the Führer myth.
- k** How useful is Source 7AB for a historian studying the Führer myth? Refer to perspective and reliability in your answer.



8

Impact of the Nazi regime on life in Germany

At the end of this topic you should attempt to answer the following question:

What impact did the Nazi regime have on life in Germany?

Key syllabus features

The key features are:

- The effect of the Nazi regime on life in Germany, in terms of cultural expression, religion, workers, youth, women, minorities including Jews.

The key features provide the basis for HSC examination questions.

8.1 Cultural expression

Was there a ‘cultural revolution’ under the Nazi regime?

FOCUS QUESTION

Overview

As discussed in Chapter 7, the Nazi regime used censorship of the arts as part of their process of *Gleichschaltung*, and the control the Nazis exercised over cultural expression played a pivotal role in indoctrinating the German people and eliminating opposition to the regime. Also mentioned was the role played by Joseph Goebbels, Hitler’s Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. He created the *Reichskulturkammer* (Reich Chamber of Culture) in September 1933, an organisation which regulated the press, radio, theatre, film, literature and the visual arts. Membership was compulsory for individuals wishing to continue working in these fields; from 1935 a ‘certificate of Aryan heritage’, and from April 1938, a ‘certificate of political good conduct’ were required for membership.

The main purpose of the *Reichskulturkammer* was to promote the **Aryanisation** of German culture, to purify it of any Jewish influence. Point 23 of the 25-point program of the Nazi Party, released 24 February 1920, demanded ‘legal action against those tendencies in art and literature which corrupt our national life, and the suppression of cultural events which violate this demand’.

The Nazis used culture to promote the following Nazi ideas:

- **Anti-Semitism** and the superiority of the Aryan race
- German nationalism and the glory of war



Figure 8.1 Sculptural relief by Arno Breker

- The importance of family and the *Volk*
- ‘German’ virtues, such as loyalty, self-sacrifice and discipline
- The fertility of German *Heimat* (homeland) and rural ideals.

It was Goebbels’ responsibility to ensure that culture conformed to these Nazi ideals. Hitler’s hatred of Jews and communists was to play a key role in influencing the cultural expression of Nazi Germany. To Hitler, the Jews were to blame for the perceived degeneration of German culture, which was now considered a decadent product of ‘**cultural Bolshevism**’. Any form of cultural expression that was considered non-Aryan, or communist or pacifist in nature was prohibited under the Nazi regime. The League of German Culture, established in 1929, organised demonstrations and riots in protest against such things as modern art, and even the anti-war film *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Many thousands of talented artists and intellectuals left Germany as a result of the impact of Nazism on their craft, but there were many others who were more than willing to conform to the restrictions placed on them by Hitler, Goebbels, and Nazi ideology. Although Nazism impacted almost every facet of German culture during the period 1933 to 1945, fortunately the regime did not have a lasting impact on German culture.

Art It is a well-known fact that Hitler was an artist, albeit a frustrated and unsuccessful one. He had a firm opinion of the role the visual arts should play in society, and what style of art should be favoured. In his view, modern art was evidence of culture’s demoralisation, and abstract art was ‘rubbish’. Referring to abstract art, Hitler remarked, ‘Anyone who sees and paints a sky green and pastures blue ought to be sterilised.’ At the 1937 exhibition of degenerate art, *Entartete Kunst*, Hitler’s favourite artist and president of the Reich Chamber of Arts, Adolf Ziegler, commented that ‘you see around us monstrosities of madness, of impudence, of inability and degeneration’. All such artworks were to be ‘cleansed’ from German art galleries and either destroyed or sold. Even world-renowned artists Pablo Picasso and Edvard Munch were identified as degenerate artists and banned.



Figure 8.2 Adolf Hitler and other leading Nazis attending the Great German Art Exhibition in 1937

Instead, German art was to be styled after classical Greek and Roman art, which Hitler believed to be ‘uncontaminated’ by Jewish influence. Art should be romantic and realistic, so that ordinary Germans would be able to understand it. Female figures, scenes of domestic tranquility, women and men in traditional gender roles and scenes of war were common. For sculptors, whose works featured heavily in architectural settings, muscular nudes reminiscent of classical examples featured regularly and helped to reinforce the physical appearance, strength and determination attributed to the Aryan race. Some of the best examples of this emphasis on neoclassical works were those produced by Hitler’s favourite sculptor, Arno Breker, who was the official state sculptor from 1937–42. Under the Nazi regime, all art had to reinforce the Nazi values, which to many critics resulted in art that was mediocre, bland, and lacking in any apparent skill.

The German film industry was particularly targeted by the Nazi regime due to the propaganda value attached to cinema, as mentioned in Chapter 7. Goebbels realised that blatantly propagandist movies would drive away audiences, so these were kept to a minimum, or the propaganda message was delivered in a more discreet fashion. Goebbels controlled the industry by secretly purchasing the film companies, or by allowing companies which were owned by Nazi sympathisers to continue making films. For example, Germany’s largest film company Universal Film Company, which was owned by Alfred Hugenberg, was permitted to produce films as long as they conformed to Nazi ideals. The *Reich Cinema Law* of 16 February 1934 assisted in this process. All scripts had to be submitted to Goebbels’ Ministry for approval prior to filming, film sets were inspected, and the finished product was checked again before being released to the public. Directors and actors were subjected to racial background checks, and any

Film



Figure 8.3 The new Reich Chancellery building designed by Albert Speer

who were anti-Nazi or Jewish were not permitted to work in the industry. Most fled the country, contributing to the decreasing quality of film in Nazi Germany.

Despite the quality being poor, cinema attendance rates under the regime suggest the film industry under the Nazis was quite successful. Most movies were love stories, comedies or dramas, light-hearted fare that helped to distract the German people from the war. Documentaries also proved popular, including Leni Riefenstahl's films, which are still admired today for their technical brilliance. Examples include *Triumph des Willens* (Triumph of the Will) and *Der Sieg des Glaubens* (The Victory of Faith), both of which glorified the Nazi Party. *Hitlerjunge Quex* (Our Flag Leads Us Forward) glorified the Hitler Youth. Anti-Semitic films were also produced by Goebbels' Ministry and helped to rouse anti-Jewish sentiment amongst the German people to support the racial policies being implemented by the Nazi regime. Examples include *Jew Süss*, *The Rothschilds*, and *The Eternal Jew*, which compared crowds of Jews to masses of rats.

Literature German literature was a victim of Goebbels' censorship, as mentioned in Chapter 7. On 10 May 1933, Goebbels organised the ceremonial burning of 20 000 books in a bonfire outside the University of Berlin. Any book that was considered 'un-German', pacifist in nature, anti-Nazi or Jewish by the Nazi regime was prohibited. Works by Thomas Mann, Bertholt Brecht, Heinrich Heine and Erich Maria Remarque, author of the anti-war novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*, were among those burned by the Nazis. In their place, Germans were encouraged to read novels that were historical in nature, promoted the importance of the *Volk* or centred on peasant culture. War novels were also promoted as a means to prepare the German people for future conflict. If it did not conform to Nazi ideology, it was discouraged. According to historian Karl-Heinz Schoeps:

The literature within Nazi Germany does not adequately reflect the reality of the Third Reich ... entire segments are blanked out, such as life and death in the concentration camps.

K Schoeps, *Literature and Film in the Third Reich*,
Camden House, 2003, p. 6

Under the Nazi regime, music fared considerably better in terms of quality than visual art, mostly because it was not as affected by Nazi ideology. According to Piero Weiss, 'The National Socialist government under Hitler ... had a simpler criterion of musical worthiness than the Soviets. It was racial, pure and simple' (P Weiss, R Taruskin, *Music in the Western World*, Thomson, 2008, p. 429). Performances by Jewish composers such as Gustav Mahler and Felix Mendelssohn were banned, works by Schoenberg and Berg were considered 'un-German', and jazz and swing music were criticised as African-American in origin, and therefore inferior and decadent. The Nazis promoted music that was patriotic, including the works of Johann Sebastian Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven, Anton Bruckner and Richard Wagner. Popular nationalist songs that encouraged **indoctrination** were also promoted, such as *Deutschland Erwache* (Germany, Awake) and *Das Horst-Wessel-Lied* (The Horst Wessel Song).

Music

With theatre, as with music, the Nazi regime succeeded when they stuck to the classics. According to Gerwin Strobl, 'theatre in the Third Reich was an uneasy compromise between the Nazi authorities and the cultural elites' (G Strobl, *The Swastika and the Stage: German Theatre and Society, 1933–1945*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 174). Only plays by acceptable playwrights were permitted, including those by Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and William Shakespeare. Like other forms of culture, the theatre was not exempt from the Nazis' racial policies; 'Jewish actors such as Fritz Kortner, Alexander Moissi and Elizabeth Bergner were forced into exile or premature retirement', notes John London (J London, *Theatre Under the Nazis*, Manchester University Press, 2000, p. 1). Attempts were made to utilise plays for propaganda purposes, but audiences generally reacted negatively and refuted such attempts. According to Strobl, 'theatre-goers had still not warmed to Nazi fare six years later [1939]' (G Strobl, *The Swastika and the Stage: German Theatre and Society, 1933–1945*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 188).

Theatre

As with film, architecture was highly valued by the Nazi regime due to its propaganda value. Like ancient Roman triumphal arches, the Nazis built giant, neoclassical structures to showcase their greatness and the power and strength of the Third Reich. Albert Speer, the First Reich architect, was responsible for the construction of these monumental structures, the most striking examples including the new Reich Chancellery building, and the Zeppelinfeld Stadium which housed the Nuremberg rallies. Speer used

Architecture



Figure 8.4 Albert Speer's Cathedral of Light

dozens of searchlights to create the 'cathedral of light' which helped to maximize the God-like image of Hitler at the Nuremberg Rally.

Summary

- The Nazis' *Reichskulturkammer* controlled all aspects of German culture. Membership in one of its seven branches was compulsory for anyone who wished to work in these fields. Membership was subject to racial and political checks.
- Hitler criticised modern German culture as 'degenerate'.
- Culture was used to promote Nazi beliefs and values.
- All aspects of culture had to be cleansed of 'non-German', Jewish and pacifist elements.
- The content of visual art and literature was restricted under the regime.
- The changes implemented under the Nazi regime did not have a lasting impact on German culture.

Key personalities, groups and terms

Personalities

Bertholt Brecht: twentieth century German playwright whose works include *Drums in the Night*. Brecht became a Marxist and his books were burned by the Nazis and his citizenship cancelled

Arno Breker: born in 1900, Breker was Hitler's favourite sculptor and official state sculptor from 1937–42. Breker worked in the neoclassical style, and his most famous works were *The Party*, *The Warrior*, and *The Guard*

Joseph Goebbels: the Nazi propaganda chief; Minister for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda. Goebbels played a key role in creating the Führer myth and exercised considerable control over all areas of German culture. Publicly encouraged violence against Germany's Jews during *Kristallnacht*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: 18th-century German poet, playwright and novelist considered one of the most renowned German literary figures

Heinrich Heine: 19th-century Jewish born poet whose works include *The Book of Songs* and *Pictures of Travel*

Alfred Hugenberg: owner of Germany's largest film company UFA; held right-wing views; co-founded the German Nationalist Party; funded Hitler and the Nazi Party; also served as a member of the Reichstag from 1920 onwards

Thomas Mann: 19th/20th-century German novelist whose works include *The Magic Mountain*

Erich Maria Remarque: twentieth century German novelist whose most famous work is the anti-war novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Leni Riefenstahl: German filmmaker. Riefenstahl was employed by Hitler to film the 1933 and 1934 Nuremberg Rallies which depicted him as a saviour of the German people. The two films were *Victory of Faith* and *Triumph of the Will*. She was also commissioned to film the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Her filmmaking skills are still admired today

Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller: 18th-century German playwright and poet whose works include *The Robbers* and *Wilhelm Tell*

William Shakespeare: 17th-century English playwright, poet and actor whose works include *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Macbeth*

Albert Speer: German academic and First Architect of the Reich. Designed the Zeppelinfeld Stadium which housed the Nuremberg rallies. Speer was tasked with designing Hitler's new capital Germania. He also served as Armaments Minister from 1942–45

Adolf Ziegler: member of the Nazi Party since the 1920s; became head of the Nazi campaign against degenerate art and was also President of the Reich Chamber of Art. Hitler's favourite painter. Well-known for his penchant for painting female figures

Groups

Reichskulturkammer: Reich Chamber of Culture established and controlled by Joseph Goebbels in September 1933. The Chamber regulated the press, radio, theatre, film, literature and the visual arts.

Terms

Anti-Semitism: discrimination against people of the Jewish faith

Aryan: non-Jewish individuals; considered to be northern European in appearance

Aryanisation: the process of cleansing German culture of non-Aryan influences

Cultural Bolshevism: a term used by the Nazi regime to criticise modern art

Entartete Kunst: the exhibition of ‘degenerate art’ that was held at the same time as the Great German Art Exhibition in Munich, 1937

Gleichschaltung: a process which attempted to Nazify Germany by forcing into line all aspects of society

Heimat: German concept which represents a ‘sense of belonging’ to the German homeland

Volk: German concept referring to the German people or community

Activities

Thinking historically 8.1

1. Outline the main forms of culture altered by the Nazi regime.
2. Describe the role of the Reich Chamber of Culture.
3. Explain why the Nazis wanted to regulate all forms of German culture.
4. Describe the style of art favoured by Hitler.
5. Assess the impact of the Nazi regime on German culture.
6. Evaluate the view that music and theatre fared better than visual art under the Nazi regime.

Source analysis 8.1

Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions which follow.

Source 8A *The Führer Speaks*, Paul Matthias Padua, 1939.
A farmer and his family listen to Hitler on their *Volksempfänger*



Extract from Adolf Hitler's speech delivered at the opening of the Great German Art Exhibition, 1937. B. Sax and D. Kuntz, eds, *Inside Hitler's Germany: A Documentary History of Life in the Third Reich, 1st Ed*, Heath & Company, 1992, pp. 224–32

Source 8B

'Works of art' which cannot be comprehended and are validated only through bombastic instructions for use ... from now on will no longer be foisted upon the German people ...

This house, in any case, was not planned or built for works of art, incompetents or for maltreaters of art ... for an art that cannot count on the ready inner agreement of the broad, healthy mass of the people, but which must instead rely on the support of small, partially, indifferent cliques, is intolerable ...

The Eternal Jew poster

Source 8C

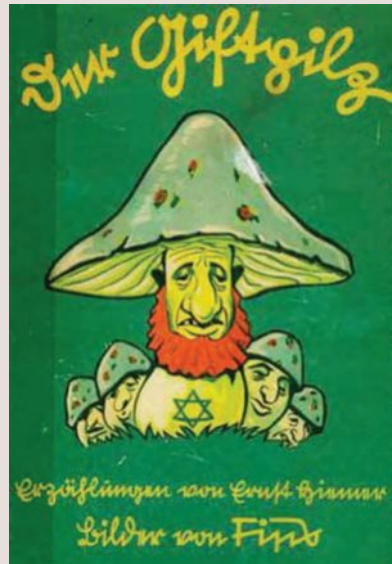


Approx. audience numbers for German cinema

Source 8D

Year	Approx. audience numbers
1933	238 000 000
1935	317 000 000
1939	623 000 000
1943	1 129 000 000

Source 8E Ernst Heimer, *Der Giftpilz (The Poisonous Mushroom)*, Stürmeverlag, Nuremberg, 1938. Anti-Semitic children's book



Questions

- What Nazi ideas are being conveyed in Source 8A?
- Does this artwork conform to Hitler's vision of German art? Provide reasons for your answer.
- Assess the usefulness of Source 8B for a historian studying art under the Nazi regime.
- Explain how Source 8C reinforces anti-Semitic stereotypes.
- What political message is being conveyed by this poster?
- Using Source 8D and your own knowledge, explain why you think cinema audiences increased under the Nazi regime.
- What insights do Sources 8C and 8E provide into the Nazi willingness to use culture to support their racial policies?

8.2 Religion

FOCUS QUESTION

Why did the Nazi regime target the Christian churches and how?

Overview

When the Nazis came to power in 1933, approximately one-third of the German population identified themselves as Catholic and approximately two-thirds Protestant. Despite the fact that Nazi ideology was the antithesis of Christian values, church leaders from both factions were content to cooperate with the Nazi regime rather than criticise it because it served the self-preservation of their churches and beliefs. Some rural communities and a few brave individuals did remonstrate against such things as the removal of crucifixes from local Catholic schools, which had been replaced by portraits of *der Führer*, or protested the Nazi euthanasia program.

However, there were no official protests against some of the Nazis' ethically questionable policies, particularly the escalating discriminatory policies directed at the Jewish population. No action was taken in response to the 1935 Nuremberg Laws or the destruction inflicted on the Jewish community during *Kristallnacht* in 1938.

While Hitler himself was born a Catholic, he is said to have detested Christian beliefs and values, as did most Nazis. In their view, Christianity was a Jewish product, which therefore meant that it could not fit in with Hitler's vision of a racially pure *Volksgemeinschaft*. As historian Michael Burleigh puts it:

The Nazis despised Christianity for its Judaic roots, effeminacy, otherworldliness and universality ... Forgiveness was not for resentful haters, nor compassion of much use to people who wanted to stamp the weak into the ground.

M. Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*,
Pan Books, 2000, p. 255

However, Hitler had no intention of alienating such a major conservative force that had the potential to launch an effective opposition campaign.

Wary of their potential to oppose his regime, and desperately needing their vote to pass the *Enabling Act* in March 1933, Hitler seduced the Catholic Church by promising that his government would 'respect the agreements concluded between them and the states; their rights will not be touched'. They took him at his word and voted for the act. Then in July 1933, Hitler and Pope Pius XI negotiated a concordat, whereby the German Catholic Church promised to stay out of German politics. In return Hitler promised to respect the religious freedom of the Church and its schools and youth institutions. He later reneged on this promise by closing down their youth clubs, including the Catholic Youth League. Furthermore, Catholic priests were harassed and arrested, and Catholic schools were directly affected, with changes made to their curriculum and the removal of crucifixes from classrooms.

Catholicism



Figure 8.5 4500 Catholics pledging allegiance to the Church, the People, and the State at a ceremony in Grunwald, 1933. This was in response to a threat by Hitler to take action against the Catholic Centre Party.

Protestantism There had been a long-standing tradition of cooperation between the Protestant Church and authoritarian governments. Unlike the Catholic Church, which was highly centralised and had the support of an international organisation, the Protestant Church was deeply fractured and therefore vulnerable to Nazi influence. The Protestants had three main sects – Lutheran, Reformed and United. In September 1933, pro-Nazi Protestants, called **German Christians (Deutsche Christens)**, elected a Nazi sympathiser, Ludwig Müller, as Reich Bishop of a united Protestant Church. The German Christians represented the Nazis' attempt to assimilate Protestants into the Nazi State. They insisted on drastic changes, including the removal of the Jewish Old Testament from the Bible and the exclusion of individuals with Jewish ancestry from the congregation. In protest, 2000 Lutheran pastors defected and a separate anti-Nazi *Pfarrernotbund* (Emergency League) was formed in 1934. In October of that year, Martin Niemöller and Dietrich Bonhoeffer established the *Bekennende Kirche (Confessing Church)*, which would be banned in December 1935. They criticised the Nazi regime and emphasised that Christian values should take precedence over Nazi policy. One of the Church's Six Articles of Faith included the following:

We reject the false doctrine that the state, over and above its special charge, should become the single and totalitarian order of human life, thus fulfilling the church's mission as well.

H. Graml, M. Mommsen *et al*, *The German Resistance to Hitler*, University of California Press, 1970, p. 214

Thousands of pastors who joined the Confessing church were beaten, tortured or arrested by the regime.



Figure 8.6 Reich Bishop Ludwig Müller giving the Nazi salute outside the Town Hall of Wittenberg, 28 September 1933

In 1935, Müller's **Reich Church** was superseded when Hitler established a Reich Ministry of Church Affairs to be headed by Hans Kerrl. His Ministry closed down church schools by 1939 and attempted to corral Germany's young people into Nazi youth clubs rather than church ones. Churches and shrines were also targeted for vandalism and crucifixes were removed from schools, much to the annoyance of local Christians. (After the war with France began in 1940, the persecution of Germany's churches escalated; church property was confiscated and monasteries closed down.)

In addition to such persecution, the Nazis attempted to replace Christianity with their own quasi-religious faith. One example of this was the German Faith Movement, which promoted Hitler as a God-like figure and featured modern pagan ceremonies. In addition, Nazi rites of passage were conceived to replace Christian ones for birth, death and marriage. Also, the calendar of religious holidays was altered, so that traditional holidays were either abolished or imbued with Nazi ideals, or all new Nazi ones were added, such as the 'Day of the Seizure of Power' and the 'Commemoration of the Movement's Fallen'. However, the Nazis never succeeded in destroying either of the churches or providing a popular substitute – the majority of Germans remained Catholic or Protestant, and church attendance actually increased during the war. Significantly though, the restrictions they placed on religious institutions made it extremely difficult for both the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church to openly oppose the regime. Their opposition to the Nazi regime will be discussed in the next chapter.

Summary

- Germany was a Christian nation when the Nazis came to power, and continued to be so.
- For the most part, both the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church cooperated with the Nazi regime out of concern for their self-preservation.
- Both churches protested certain features of the Nazi regime, but were quiet when it came to anti-Semitic policies.
- Most Nazis detested Christianity and wished to destroy the churches. However, Hitler realised that this could not be achieved immediately because of the churches' potential to oppose the regime.
- The Nazis and the Catholic Church negotiated a **concordat** in 1933, which Hitler broke soon after signing.
- The Nazis established a Reich Church to unite all Protestants. This was rejected by thousands of Protestant pastors who, like their Catholic counterparts, were subjected to harassment and intimidation by the regime.
- The Nazis failed to destroy Christianity in Germany but the restrictions they placed on both churches made it difficult for either organisation to organise an effective resistance campaign.

Personalities

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: a pastor and theologian, spy, anti-Nazi dissident and key founding member of the Confessing Church. He was executed for his actions in 1945.

Hans Kerrl: born in 1887, Kerrl was a Nazi Party member from 1923. He served as Reich Minister for Church Affairs from July 1935 where he acted as a mediator between the Party leadership and the Catholic and Protestant churches.

Ludwig Müller: Nazi sympathiser and leader of the German Christians; believed anyone with Jewish ancestry should be removed from the congregation; in 1933 he was given title of Reich Bishop. Criticised by Martin Niemöller and other Protestant pastors.

Martin Niemöller: German nationalist and prominent Protestant pastor; outspoken critic of the regime; led the defection from the Reich Church and founded the Confessing Church. Encouraged the precedence of Christian values over Nazi policy.

Pope Pius XI: leader of the Catholic Church from 1922 to 1939. Negotiated the concordat with Hitler in July 1933. In 1937 he issued a statement to be read aloud in all Churches. '*Mit brennender Sorge*' (With deep concern) condemned Hitler's violation of the concordat, and urged German Catholics to stay true to their beliefs and oppose any actions that contravened them.

Groups

Catholic Centre Party (ZP): formed in 1870 to defend Catholic interests; became more right-wing during the Depression; banned in June 1933

German Christians (Deutsche Christens): considered the SA of the Protestant Church; a group of Hitler's dedicated supporters within the Lutheran Church

Confessing Church: an alternative organisation to the Reich Church; established by Niemöller and Bonhoeffer. Continually criticised the Reich Church and the German Christians. Its pastors were targeted by the Gestapo in retribution.

Reich Church: a national Protestant Church envisioned by the German Christians. Supported a Nazified version of Christianity. Failed to unite all German Protestants

Terms

concordat: a pact or treaty

Enabling Act: effectively replaced Germany's parliamentary democracy with a dictatorship, giving Hitler the power to make laws without the Reichstag. Helped the Nazis put an end to any last remaining sources of political opposition

Kristallnacht (Night of the Broken Glass): state-endorsed violence against Jewish businesses and synagogues throughout Germany, 9–10 November 1938

Activities

Thinking historically 8.2

1. Describe how the Nazi regime viewed Christianity.
2. Explain why Hitler did not want to treat the churches too harshly.
3. Outline how the Nazis tried to control and use the Christian churches.
4. Assess the view that Germany's churches cooperated with the Nazi regime because they shared similar racial and political views.
5. Explain why the Nazi regime failed to destroy Christianity in Germany.

Source analysis 8.2

Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions which follow.

M. Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*, Pan Books, 2000, p. 256

Source 8F

Whatever Christianity's ambivalences and antagonisms towards the Jews, its core concerns with compassion and humility were anathema to a politics of racial egotism, and worship of brutality and strength. These aspects of Christianity would have to be expunged. In Nazi eyes, Christianity was 'foreign' and 'unnatural', or what has been described as the Jews' 'posthumous poison'.

A Hitler Youth song sung at the 1934 Nuremberg Rally

Source 8G

No evil priest can stop us feeling that we are the children of Hitler. We follow not Christ, but Horst Wessel. Away with incense and holy water. The Church can go hang for all we care. The swastika brings salvation on Earth ...

Proposed changes to Lutheran Churches, prescribed by the Nazis

Source 8H

On the altars there must be nothing but *Mein Kampf* and to the left of the altar a sword ... The Christian cross must be ... replaced by the only unconquerable symbol, the swastika.

Source 8I Amidst the items found in a Nazi air-raid shelter in Munich is a Catholic cross which has been desecrated by a Nazi swastika



Questions

- a** What insight does Source 8F provide into the treatment of the Christian churches by the Nazi regime?
- b** How useful is Source 8G for a historian studying the impact of the Nazi regime on religious expression in Germany?
- c** How reliable is this source?
- d** Using Source 8H and your own knowledge, outline how the Nazis attempted to change Christianity in Germany.
- e** How do you think the churches would have reacted to the proposed changes? Explain your answer.
- f** How useful would Sources 8H and 8I be for a historian studying the Nazi regime's impact on Christianity in Germany?

8.3 Workers

Were Germany's workers better off under the Nazi regime?

FOCUS QUESTION

Economic goals

Given his foreign policy goals included rearming Germany, achieving self-sufficiency, and territorial expansion, Hitler's main economic priority was to prepare the nation for war. Hitler was convinced that Germany did not lose World War I on the battlefield, but rather that the real cause was the collapse of the German homefront, instigated by left-wing encouragement of workers' strikes. Eager to avoid history repeating itself, Hitler knew he had to improve the economy in order to achieve his ambitions. He also had to fulfil his promise of reducing unemployment, so he appointed Hjalmar Schacht as President of the Reichsbank. Schacht set about alleviating unemployment, which was achieved by commissioning state-funded public works, the most famous being the **Autobahn** (federal motorway). A reduction in unemployment was also achieved by increasing funding for rearmament projects; by 1939 a quarter of Germany's workforce was employed on these projects. The regime also expanded the National Labour Service; the *Reich Labour Law* of 26 June 1935 made labour service compulsory for all young Germans. By October 1934, the number of Germans listed as unemployed had fallen to below 2.7 million (down from 6 million at the end of the Weimar Republic) and by 1939 there was a shortage of workers.

Hitler argued that 'we wish to build up a State which values work for its own sake and holds the worker in high regard because he is fulfilling a duty to the nation ...' However, the reality for Germany's workers was slightly different. There were no trade unions to advocate for workers' rights and conditions, which also made it difficult for workers to form a united front against the regime. Traditional trade unions had been replaced by the Deutsche Arbeitsfront (DAF or **German Labour Front**) in November 1933, which was led by Robert Ley. The DAF attempted to win support for the Nazi regime by uniting Germany's workers. Two of the organisation's schemes were *Kraft durch Freude* (KDF or Strength through Joy) and *Schönheit der Arbeit* (Beauty of Labour). The former aimed at making luxury consumer goods available to all Germans and providing workers with leisure activities, and the latter worked towards improved working conditions. KDF encouraged workers to increase productivity by providing them with subsidised holidays, theatre tickets and sports courses, which were certainly popular.



Figure 8.7 A KDF bus transporting German workers to a Bavarian Inn, 1935



Figure 8.8 Advertisement poster for the Volkswagen (People's Car). The caption reads 'The KDF Wagon'.

The purpose of these diversions, according to historian Michael Burleigh, was that:

Subsidised vacations, the majority consisting of bathing or hiking holidays, would maintain minds and bodies drained by the relentless tempo of routinised work, and afford workers a sense of Germany as a whole.

M. Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*, Pan Books, 2000, p. 250

Workers were also given the opportunity to join a savings scheme to purchase a Volkswagen (The People's Car). Unfortunately, the Volkswagen factory was converted for war production in 1940 and no cars were built until 1946.

However, while these diversions were certainly popular with the German people, there were some negative impacts of the Nazi regime as well. Wages for some workers remained below pre-1929 levels, working hours increased, living standards were low and there was a shortage of consumer goods. In addition, from 1935 all workers were required to have a workbook which was kept by their employer, and this made it difficult to change jobs. Furthermore, the unemployed who refused to work on the Autobahn had their benefits withdrawn and risked being sent to concentration camps. Jews, communists and socialists were forced out of government jobs, and women were encouraged to leave the workforce and remain in the home.

While the working class did not wish to overthrow Hitler, workers' grievances brought about by poor wages and a lack of consumer goods did manifest itself in strikes (which were illegal), absenteeism and covert acts of sabotage in the workplace. However, such actions were not widespread as they were likely to gain the attention of the Gestapo. Despite the negatives, the overwhelming majority of German workers continued to remain loyal to Hitler because he had fulfilled his promise to reduce unemployment and strengthen the economy.

Summary

- Hitler needed to improve the economy in order to prepare the nation for war and to achieve his foreign policy goals. He had also promised to reduce unemployment.
- Hjalmar Schacht, President of the Reichsbank and later Minister for Economics, increased funding for rearmament projects and public works, like the Autobahns.
- The Nazi regime replaced workers' trade unions with the German Labour Front (DAF), which sought to win over the workers of Germany and create a sense of community.
- DAF schemes like the 'Strength through Joy' and 'Beauty of Labour' aimed to improve working conditions and distract workers by offering subsidised holidays and entertainment.
- The Nazis did succeed in reducing unemployment, but wages remained fairly low, working hours increased, and living standards fell.
- While the workers of Germany did have some genuine grievances, they generally remained loyal to Hitler.

Key personalities, groups and terms

Personalities

Robert Ley: 1890–1945; joined the Nazi Party in the mid-1920s; placed in charge of the German Labour Front (DAF) and its 'Strength through Joy' scheme but struggled in the role. Hitler's support kept him in the role; during the war he was superseded by Fritz Todt, who was the Armaments Minister, then Albert Speer. Arrested by the Americans and charged with crimes against humanity at the end of the war.

Hjalmar Schacht: 1877–1970; an economist and banker; a supporter of Hitler; appointed President of the Reichsbank for the second time in 1933; Minister of Economics from 1934–1937. Worked to reduce unemployment and increase funding for rearmaments projects.

Groups

German Labour Front (Deutsche Arbeitsfront, DAF): the Nazi trade union which sought to win the support of the workers and also to introduce them to Nazi socialism, led by Robert Ley

Gestapo: Nazi secret police. Originally established by Hermann Göring in Prussia in 1933

Terms

Autobahn: a state-funded construction project. Over 2000 miles of motorways were constructed between 1933 and 1938

Voluntary Labour Service: established during the Weimar Republic; provided cheap labour, which was mostly used in agriculture. From 1935 onwards, German youth were required to work in the service for six months

Activities

Thinking historically 8.3

1. Explain Hitler's economic priority.
2. Outline how the Nazi regime attempted to regulate the German labour force.
3. Explain how Hitler reduced unemployment. What was the impact of this?
4. Describe the purpose of 'Strength through Joy' and 'Beauty of Labour'.
5. Assess the view that German workers were better off under the Nazi regime than they were in 1932.
6. Explain why Hitler was popular with Germany's workers.

Source analysis 8.3

Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions which follow.

Source 8J Extract from Robert Ley's *Germany Speaks*.

Almost all national comrades rate 'Strength through Joy' as one of National Socialism's really creditable achievements ... It is pretty generally the case now that you can't avoid Strength through Joy if you want to travel or take part in sport ... There is simply no other choice.

Source 8K Extract from Robert Ley's *Germany Speaks*.

Special mention should be made here of a part of the German Labour Front – called 'Strength through Joy' ... The section for travelling and hiking is perhaps the most popular one ... Its pleasure cruises to foreign countries have attracted great attention. Equally valuable have been the tours within Germany ... In 1934 some 2 million Germans had taken part, by 1936 – 6 million. The cost is low ... Entertainment is provided ... and another section tries to provide better conditions at work, e.g. baths, pools, canteens, open green spaces.

Source 8L Unemployment figures

Year	Unemployed
1933	6 014 000
1934	2 604 000
1935	2 508 000
1936	1 479 000
1937	995 000
1938	456 000
1939	104 000

Index of wages compared to 1936 levels (1936 = 100) for selected years Source 8M

Year	Wages
1928	102
1933	88
1934	94
1936	100
1938	106

‘The First Worker of the State.’ Adolf Hitler shovels dirt while a crowd of Nazi officials look on

Source 8N



Questions

- a** What is the perspective of Sources 8J and 8K?
- b** Assess the reliability of these sources.
- c** Analyse Source 8L. Which year experienced the greatest fall in unemployment numbers? Can you provide reasons for this?
- d** Analyse Source 8M. How long did it take for wages to surpass 1928 levels?
- e** How useful would Sources 8L and 8M be for a historian wishing to study the impact of the regime on workers?
- f** Explain how Source 8N could be used by the Nazi regime for propaganda purposes.

8.4 Youth

Why did the Nazi regime wish to indoctrinate Germany's youth and how did they attempt to achieve this?

FOCUS QUESTION

Having assumed the position of Führer in August 1934, Hitler declared that the Nazi revolution was complete and that there would not be another revolution in Germany for a thousand years, a concept that

is now referred to as the ‘Thousand Year Reich’. For Hitler to achieve his ambitions of establishing the Thousand Year Reich, it was crucial that Germany’s youth be raised to become Nazis. As historian George Mosse summarised it, ‘Young people were the key to the future of the movement’. (G. Mosse, *Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life in the Third Reich*, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003, p.xxxiv). Indoctrination through education and Nazi youth groups were key to raising these future Nazis who would be fervently committed to the ideals of duty, strength, courage, honour and obedience. As Robert Ley, a Nazi politician, explained it: ‘We start our work when the child is three. As soon as it begins to think, a little flag is put into its hand. Then comes school, the Hitler Youth Movement, the Storm Troop. We never let a single soul go.’

Hitler Youth Youth movements had existed in Germany since the beginning of the twentieth century, including the Boy Scouts. Following World War I, a number of groups sprang up in the 1920s: these groups had right-wing views, endorsed a military-style uniform and outlook, and were antagonistic towards the Weimar Government. The Hitler Jugend (Hitler Youth) was one such group. Originally formed in 1922 as the Nazi Youth League, the Hitler Youth changed its name in 1926, and by 1933 had over 100 000 voluntary members. Most members were from the working class, but the percentage of middle and upper-class members gradually increased.

Once the Nazis gained power in 1933, all other youth groups were eventually shut down. Baldur von Schirach, a 25-year-old student, was appointed Head of the Hitler Youth in July 1933. He was tasked with helping the Nazi regime gain control over Germany’s young people by consolidating them into the Hitler Youth as part of the process of *Gleichschaltung*. He advocated for the Law Governing Hitler Youth of 1 December 1936 which stated: ‘All German young people, apart from being educated at home and at school, will be educated in the Hitler Youth physically, intellectually and morally in the spirit of National Socialism to serve the nation and the community.’ This made it virtually impossible to avoid joining. Membership became compulsory with the passing of the Second Hitler Youth Law on 25 March 1939 which stated that ‘all adolescents from age 10 to 18 are obliged to put in service in the Hitler Youth’. As a result, 82 per cent of Germany’s youth became members.

Even before it became compulsory, young boys were eager to join because membership provided them with a sense of belonging, purpose and unity. Others joined because they wanted to wear a uniform and embrace a feeling of collective power. According to historian Lisa Pine, some joined to ‘escape parental control and boredom’ (L. Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany*, Berg, 2010, p. 98).

Members had to swear an oath of loyalty to Hitler and their motto was: ‘Führer, command – we follow.’ Under von Schirach’s leadership, the Hitler

Youth was subdivided into two groups – the **Deutsches Jungvolk** (German Young People or DJ) for boys aged 10 to 14, and the Hitler Youth (HJ), for boys aged 14 to 18. Apart from raising the next generation of Nazis, the purpose of the Hitler Youth was to provide the regime with the disciplined and committed troops it needed to fight its future wars. As historian Michael Burleigh described the organisation:

Viewed superficially, the Hitler Youth and their female analogue seem akin to a militarised version of the prohibited Boy Scouts, with a similar emphasis upon clean living, competition, drill, team work, sport and so forth.

M. Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*, Pan Books, 2000, p. 235

To prepare these future soldiers, Hitler Youth members were engaged in military-style activities, such as war-games, map reading, camping, shooting, boxing, and marching. For Hitler, ‘The German youth of the future must be slim and slender, swift as the greyhound, tough as leather, and hard as Krupp steel. We must educate a new type of manhood so that our people does not go to ruin.’ In addition to these physical activities, boys were also given lectures on Nazi ideology as well as the superiority of the Aryan race and the need to protect the Fatherland from inferior races, such as Slavs and Jews. They were routinely taught the ...

... legends of German heroes ... They were taught about the need to preserve ‘the purity of German blood’, the menace to Germany presented by the Jews and the importance of gaining ‘living space in the East.’

L. Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany*, Berg, 2010, p. 104

Despite Hitler’s intentions, many boys became bored with the regimentation of the organisation, while the relentless drills, marches and political lectures were suffocating. Many left to join other groups, despite membership being compulsory. Even parents became disillusioned with the organisation, complaining that they no longer had control over their children, who had no time left for other activities, were always challenging authority, rejected traditional values, and were becoming cruder and less intelligent.



Figure 8.9 Members of the Hitler Youth learning how to fire guns as part of their training

League of German Maidens

The female equivalent of the Hitler Youth was the League of German Maidens, which was established in 1930, and consisted of the **Jungmädel** (Young Maidens League or JM) for girls aged 10 to 14, and the **Bund deutscher Mädchen** (League of German Maidens or BDM) for girls aged 14 to 18. The Nazis considered both these groups subservient to their male counterparts, with one of the BDM's mottos, 'Führer, let's have your orders, we are following you!', actually helping to reinforce the submissive role women were to play in the Nazi state. While the boys were engaged in competitive physical activity and military-style drills, the BDM girls were focused on household activities which would prepare them for what Hitler considered to be their most important role. As Hitler put it in 1936, 'motherhood is woman's supreme function, and a woman can make no greater contribution to the nation than the birth of several children'. Cooking, gardening, and instruction in Nazi beliefs were crucial. The female leagues did engage in some physical activity, notably softball and gymnastics, as their other motto was 'You have the duty to be healthy'. Initially young girls were enthusiastic about joining the League. As Pine explains:

Entry into the BDM gave girls the chance to be independent from their parents and to play a role in an organised, hierarchical institution ... some also joined as a sign of their rebellion against the authority of their parents.

L. Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany*, Berg, 2010, p. 120

However, Pine also suggests that when membership became compulsory, this enthusiasm was replaced by 'apathy and disinterest' (L. Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany*, Berg, 2010, p. 120).



Figure 8.10 (Left) Members of the League of German Maidens engaging in physical exercise. (Right) A propaganda poster for the BDM, with the text suggesting donations will be collected by members to help 'build hostels and homes'.

Indoctrination by the Nazi youth groups was reinforced through education. When the Nazi Party came to power in 1933, 97 per cent of Germany's teachers rushed to join the Nazi Teachers Association, and many teachers joined the Party itself. Teachers who refused to join up, or who were racially or ideologically undesirable, were removed from the profession.

Initially, the Nazi regime did not have to implement too many changes to the education system. Bernhard Rust, the Reich Minister of Science, Education and Culture, considered 'the whole function of education is to create Nazis'. He eventually established a centralised control of all schools and universities, and issued amendments to school curriculums and textbooks. Physical education and the history of Germany and the Jews, including the belief that Germany was 'stabbed in the back' after World War I, were considered the most important subjects to be taught in schools. Like other aspects of German society, the education system was also Nazified; all lessons began and finished with a *Heil Hitler*, students sung Nazi songs, and schools were decorated with Nazi flags. To the Nazi regime, education was seen as the means to Nazify Germany's youth and to prepare future generations for military service.

Education was also used by the Nazis to reinforce their racial views. Students were taught in biology that the Aryan race was superior to all others, and Nazi officials inspected schools to ensure this was happening. Teachers could also be spied on by their students, particularly by eager members of the Hitler Youth who had been encouraged to challenge authority and denounce their teachers, and even their parents, for any criticism of the regime or its policies. Many teachers became disillusioned as a result of Nazi interference and record numbers left the profession.

Rust also established 23 special schools called *Napolas*, which were designed for top-performing athletic students and were run by former SS members. These institutes were designed to provide the elite Nazi leaders of the future. However, as with other areas of Hitler's government, there was an overlap and a struggle for control. Baldur von Schirach attempted to extend the influence of the Hitler Youth and undermine Rust by establishing 10 elite 'Adolf Hitler Schools' to rival the *Napolas*. Overall, most historians agree that under the Nazi regime there was a steady decline in academic standards in Germany.

Please see Chapter 9 for information about youth groups opposed to Nazi indoctrination, such as the Edelweiss Pirates.

Summary

- Hitler knew that the key to the future of the Nazi movement was Germany's youth, so he set about indoctrinating them through the Hitler Youth and education.
- The Hitler Youth aimed to develop the soldiers of the future. To achieve this, they constantly engaged in physical activities, competitions and military drills.

- Membership was compulsory from 1939 and members had to swear an oath to Hitler.
- The female equivalent took the form of the Young Maidens League and the League of German Maidens. Their purpose was to prepare young girls and women for what the Nazis considered to be a female's greatest role: motherhood.
- Both boys' and girls' groups were also indoctrinated to adhere to the regime's racial views.
- Not everyone joined the Hitler Youth. Some youths rejected the organisation and joined oppositional groups such as the Edelweiss Pirates, or refused to join altogether, despite it being compulsory from 1939.
- Bernhard Rust was appointed the Reich Minister of Science, Education and Culture. It was his job to Nazify the education system.
- Physical activity, German nationalism, racial theory and militarism were given priority in education under the Nazi regime.

Key personalities, groups and terms



Figure 8.11 Bernhard Rust

Personalities

Bernhard Rust: 1883–1945; A WWI veteran, Rust joined the Nazi Party in 1922. A qualified teacher, he was appointed Minister of Science, Education and Cultural Affairs under the regime. Rust removed teachers who were racially or ideologically 'undesirable' and altered the curriculum to be taught in schools. He continued in this position throughout the war, committing suicide when Germany surrendered to the Allies in 1945.

Baldur von Schirach: 1907–1974; joined the Nazi Party at the age of 18. He was appointed Head of the National Socialists Students' Union in 1929 and was tasked with bringing German universities under Nazi control. He was also appointed Head of the Hitler Youth in June 1933, and set about bringing all youths aged 10–18 into the organisation. Schirach served in the German Army during World War II and was captured, surrendering to the Allies. He was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment at the Nuremberg Trials.



Figure 8.12 Baldur von Schirach

Groups

Bund deutscher Mädchen (The League of German Maidens or BDM): part of the Hitler Youth; an organisation for young girls aged 14–18

Deutsches Jungvol (German Young People or DJ): part of the Hitler Youth; an organisation for boys aged 10–14

Hitler Jugend (Hitler Youth): a term used to represent the Nazis' youth movement, but also the organisation which catered for boys aged 14–18

Jungmädel (Young Maidens League or JM): part of the Hitler Youth; an organisation for young girls aged 10–14

SA (Sturmabteilung, Storm Troopers, brownshirts): the Nazi private army established in 1921. Used to intimidate political opponents

SS (Schutzstaffel): originally Hitler's personal protection squad. Grew to become the Nazis' police force

Terms

Gleichschaltung: a process which attempted to Nazify Germany by forcing into line all aspects of society

indoctrination: to force an individual or group to accept a doctrine without reservation

Napolas: National Political Educational Institutions designed to educate the future Nazi elite and guided by members of the SA and SS. Military and physical training were a major focus. Students were selected based on their athletic prowess rather than their academic abilities

Wehrmacht: the German Army during World War II

Activities

Thinking historically 8.4

1. Explain why Hitler targeted Germany's youth for indoctrination.
2. Compare and contrast the purpose and activities of the Hitler Youth and the League of German Maidens.
3. Explain the connection between indoctrination and propaganda.
4. Assess the effectiveness of the Hitler Youth in achieving its purpose.
5. Describe the Nazi view of education.
6. Evaluate the success of the Nazi attempts to Nazify Germany's youth.

Source analysis 8.4

Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions which follow.

'Youth Serves the Führer. All 10 year olds in the Hitler Youth.'
Hitler Youth recruitment poster, circa 1936



Source 80

Source 8P Hitler Youth recruitment poster, circa 1936



Source 8Q Motto of the BDM

Don't talk, don't debate, live a National Socialist life in discipline, composure and comradeship.

Source 8R Extract from a German newspaper, 1939

All subjects – German language, history, geography, chemistry and mathematics – must concentrate on military subjects. They must glory in military service, German heroes and leaders and the strength of the new Germany ...

Source 8S Ernst Heimer, *Der Giftpilz (The Poisonous Mushroom)*, Stürmerv Verlag, Nuremberg, 1938. An illustration showing German students being taught how to recognise a Jew (Yad Vashem Photo Archive, Jerusalem 1495/9)



Questions

- a Analyse Source 8O and 8P. What message is being conveyed in each poster?
- b Explain how these sources provide evidence that membership in the Hitler Youth inspired loyalty to Hitler and encouraged young boys to adopt a militaristic outlook.
- c Re-write Source 8Q in your own words. What do you think it means?
- d Explain how this source is evidence that the Nazi regime wanted women to play a subservient role.
- e Analyse Source 8R. Why do you think a military focus had to be adopted in each subject? Explain the purpose of this.
- f Use your own knowledge and Source 8S. Do you think this was an accurate interpretation of what was taught in German schools?
- g How useful would Sources 8R and 8S be for a historian wishing to study the impact of the regime on education?

8.5 Women

How did the Nazi regime impact the lives of women in Germany?

FOCUS QUESTION

The Nazis had very clear ideas about the roles men and women should play. Men were to become soldiers of the Reich and women were to become mothers. This was a very traditional view and one which believed that women best served the Reich in the domestic sphere. The Nazi slogan *Kinder, Kuche, Kirche* (Children, Kitchen, Church) is indicative of this belief. And when it came to party politics, the minority of women who were involved could only serve a secondary role; all power had been monopolised by men and women were banned from senior positions in the Nazi leadership.

Women did have the opportunity, however, to engage with National Socialism through the Party's women's movement. The **Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft** (Nazi Women's Group or NS-F) was an organisation led by Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, and was responsible for the education of German women. This reinforced loyalty to the regime and the message that a woman's rightful place was in the home. The **Deutsches Frauenwerk** (DFW) was a sub-group of the Nazi Women's Group and aimed to prepare women for their domestic role by organising courses on motherhood and household duties. While the DFW had a membership of 1.7 million, a good percentage of women refrained from joining, choosing instead to remain at home or continue with their church groups.



Figure 8.13 Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, Reich Women's leader

Work Under the Nazi regime, German women were encouraged to leave the workforce and focus on their ‘greatest role’ – motherhood. Between 1933 and 1936, married women were forced out of the medical, legal, and public service professions. In addition, men were given preferential treatment when applying for jobs. Not all women readily accepted this, and many were understandably resentful. German women, like their British counterparts, had stepped in to fill in the gaps in the workforce left by men fighting in World War I. They had enjoyed the wages, lifestyle and sense of purpose and independence that came with working and were frustrated that they were now being made redundant by the regime. This forced exodus of women from the workforce played into the hands of the Nazi propaganda machine because more jobs became available to men, thus Hitler was seen to be fulfilling his promise to reduce unemployment.

On the other hand, some historians believe that women actually had more opportunities under the regime than they did during the Weimar period. As the 1930s progressed and Hitler began rearming, labour shortages in agriculture and administration saw an increase in female workers who were cheaper and often more reliable; in 1939 almost 90 per cent of unmarried women and 36 per cent of married women were employed in the workforce. This only increased during the war as women were required to keep the economy running.

Motherhood To fulfil Hitler’s vision of a Thousand Year Reich, women were encouraged to have as many children as possible lest the birth rate continue to fall, which would leave Germany at risk of being swamped by Slavic peoples from the East. To achieve this, the regime discouraged divorce – unless the cause was ‘childlessness’ – made abortions illegal, and made it more difficult for women to obtain contraceptives. As well as these changes, welfare payments and tax concessions were given to couples who had children. From June 1933, Aryan couples getting married were offered interest-free state loans as part of the Marriage Loan Scheme, which were worth 600 *Reichsmarks*, the equivalent of four months’ wages. To qualify, the wife had to give up work. For every child born to the marriage the loan was reduced by a quarter.

The Nazis’ promotion of motherhood was also evident in the 1939 introduction of **The Mother’s Cross**, an award which was bestowed on women who were ‘rich in children’, meaning they had four or more. These were handed out on the anniversary of Hitler’s mother’s birthday, 12 August. However, Jews, Gypsies, ‘dysfunctional’ mothers, those with criminal convictions, and mothers of illegitimate children were excluded.

Nazi propaganda constantly reinforced the importance of motherhood, and pregnant women were often referred to as ‘bearing a child for the Führer’. Joseph Goebbels once stated that ‘woman has the task of being beautiful and bringing children into the world, and this is by no means as old-fashioned as one might think. The female bird preens herself for her mate and hatches her eggs for him’.

Historian Michael Burleigh argued that the Nazis had a ‘coldly instrumental view of women as bearers of the racially fit ... [and] that everything about the Nazis’ manipulation of motherhood was false’, including the allegedly ancient **teutonic** origins of their ‘Day of the German Mother’, which had actually originated as an American public holiday in 1914 (M. Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*, Pan Books, 2000, pp. 229–30).

Irrespective of how flawed their promotion of motherhood was, there was an increase in the number of marriages and births under the regime. However, historians question whether this increase was due to Nazi policies and propaganda or purely a by-product of a stronger economy.



Figure 8.14 The Nazis’ ideal German mother with her children. Her son is a member of the Hitler Youth.

Summary

- The Nazis had a traditional view of women, who were encouraged to remain in the domestic sphere and focus on being mothers.
- The Nazi women’s movement consisted of two organisations, the NS-F and the DFW, both of which aimed to promote loyalty to the regime and the importance of motherhood.
- Women were discouraged from working under the regime because the Nazi regime needed them to focus on increasing the German birth rate. However, this changed towards the end of the 1930s (and during the war when women were required to step in and replace the men who were away fighting).
- To increase the birth rate, special allowances and benefits were provided to couples who had children. The ‘Mother’s Cross’ was awarded to women who were ‘rich in children’.
- Nazi propaganda constantly reinforced the importance of motherhood.
- Under the Nazi regime there was an increase in marriages and births.

Key personalities, groups and terms

Personalities

Gertrud Scholtz-Klink: 1902–99; joined the Nazi Party in the mid-1920s and consistently argued against women becoming involved in politics; in 1933 she was appointed Reich Women’s leader and head of the Nazi Party’s two main women’s movements, the Deutsches Frauenwerk and the Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft. Her tasks were to promote the importance of motherhood and loyalty to the regime.

Groups

Deutsches Frauenwerk (DFW): a sub-group of the NS-F formed in October 1933. Organised courses to educate women in the domestic arts

Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft (Nazi Women's Group or NS-F): a women's organisation led by Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, which aimed to conduct the cultural, spiritual and political education of German women. The NS-F had 2.3 million members by 1938.

Terms

Reichsmark: German currency from 1924 to 1948

The Mother's Cross: awards of bronze, silver and gold medals given to women who had four, six or eight children. Handed out on the anniversary of Hitler's mother's birthday, 12 August, the awards were meant to encourage women to have more children

teutonic: a term used to describe ancient German culture

Activities

Thinking historically 8.5

1. Explain the role of women in Nazi Germany.
2. Describe the purpose of the Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft and the Deutsches Frauenwerk.
3. Outline the impact of the Nazi regime on the lives of German women.
4. Explain why such importance was placed on motherhood and childbearing.
5. Describe the incentives provided to German couples to have more children.
6. Assess the view that German women had cause to be resentful as a result of their treatment by the regime.

Source analysis 8.5

Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions which follow.

Source 8T Hitler speaking at the 1934 Nuremberg Rally

If one says that a man's world is the State ... one might be tempted to say that the world of woman is a smaller world. For her world is her husband, her family, her children and her house. But where would the greater world be if there were no one to care for the smaller world?

Nicola Garcia, 'Women in Nazi Germany' in *Hindsight*, September 2004, p. 15

Source 8U

Women were a cheap source of labour. Their wage rates tended to be up to 60% less than those of their male counterparts. The discriminatory attitude of the Nazi regime led to the expectation that women would only fill the lower ranks in the workplace or participate in the menial work.

Marriages and births in Nazi Germany. 1938 figures include Austria and the Sudetenland. T. Kirk, *The Longman Companion to Nazi Germany*, 1995

Source 8V

Year	Marriages	Births
1932	516793	971174
1934	740165	1198350
1936	607770	1278853
1938	645062	1348534

A Nazi Party recruitment poster depicting a loving Aryan mother and her family

Source 8W



M. Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*, Pan Books, 2000, p. 232

Source 8X

Motherhood joined the rest of the Nazi idyll in supplying restorative comfort – the equivalent of a warm bath in cheap, lurid, viscous substances – for people whose personalities were often not up to the messy realities of the racial mission they had set themselves.

Questions

- a Explain the purpose of Source 8T. How has Hitler used flattery to convey his message?
- b What is the perspective of Source 8U? How reliable is this source?
- c Use Source 8U and your own knowledge to explain how female workers were treated by the Nazi regime.
- d Use Source 8V and your own knowledge to assess the effectiveness of the Nazi regime's attempts to increase the German birth rate.
- e Analyse Source 8W. How does this poster reinforce the Nazis' view that a woman's primary role was to have a family?
- f Analyse Source 8X. What do you think Burleigh means?

8.6 Minorities

FOCUS QUESTION

How did Nazi ideology impact the treatment of minorities in Germany?

Untermenschen

Nazi ideology was heavily influenced by the belief in the superiority of the Aryan race and the wickedness of the impure **Untermenschen** races which included Jews, Slavic peoples and Latin races. Hitler subscribed to the theory of Social Darwinism, which applied Charles Darwin's theory of 'survival of the fittest' to nationalities and races. According to Hitler, the Aryan race was the strongest and would dominate the world. This belief in Aryan racial supremacy was used by the Nazis to construct a new form of social unity to replace traditional class divisions. Hitler's **Volkgemeinschaft** required the elimination of racial impurities, a contradiction in itself because according to historian David Schoenbaum, 'Nazi social theory denied equality while at the same time asserting it' (D. Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution*, New York, 1980, p. 55). In Hitler's quest for **Herrenvolk** (a master race) and the preservation of pure German blood, anti-Semitism, racism and **eugenics** became main features of Nazi Germany from 1933 onwards.

The Jewish community

During the 1930s the Jewish population in Germany amounted to less than 1 per cent (500 000) of the total population, and the majority of Jewish people had assimilated into German culture (R. Stromberg, *Europe in the Twentieth Century*, p. 196). Despite them only being a tiny percentage of the country, Hitler used the Jewish population as a scapegoat for all that was evil in the world; Jews were linked to communism and the Jewish influence could be blamed for all of Germany's problems. In Hitler's view, Jews were the **Volksfeind** (public enemy) who wanted to undermine and destroy traditional German culture and values.

It is important to acknowledge that anti-Semitism was not restricted to Nazi Germany nor was it a recent development. Europe's Jewish population had experienced persecution and discrimination for centuries, and there were many in Europe's political circles who shared Hitler's hostility towards the Jews.



Figure 8.15 A page from the Nazi tabloid newspaper *Der Stürmer* showing Jews engulfed in flames. Images like this were intended to stir up German resentment against the Jews.

Between 1933 and 1939, Nazi anti-Semitism evolved from discrimination that aimed to encourage Jews to emigrate to more sinister measures. Chapter 7 provides a detailed timeline relating to these measures. Intent on marginalising Germany's Jews, on 1 April 1933 the Nazis organised a national boycott of Jewish businesses and Jews were gradually excluded from the civil service, medicine, law, arts, culture and the armed forces. According to historian Doris Bergen:

The civil service ban and the boycott were less successful for Hitler's new regime than Nazi activists had hoped. For one thing, there was no concrete definition of who exactly counted as a Jew. So it was not always clear to whom the ban applied ... Moreover, German Jews had not yet been isolated from the rest of the population

D. Bergen, *The Holocaust: A Concise History*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2009, p. 58

In May, Joseph Goebbels declared war on Jewish intellectualism and included Jewish works amongst the books burned on 10 May 1933. This discrimination was further perpetuated by the 1935 *Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour*, commonly referred to as the Nuremberg Laws. These laws defined exactly who was Jewish, deprived them of citizenship and banned sexual relations – *Rassenschande* (race defilement) – and marriages between Jews and Germans. To the Nazis, a Jew was someone

who had at least three Jewish grandparents, and those with mixed ancestry were derogatively termed *Mischlinge* (mixed blood, with the connotations of a mongrel or hybrid). These laws affected everyone because they highlighted the importance of being able to prove one's Aryan ancestry. These laws were also significant in that they laid the foundation for further persecution.

Activities

Source analysis 8.6

Source 8Y Cited in Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *A Holocaust Reader* (New York), 1976, p. 45

Document study – Reich Citizenship Law 15 September 1935

1. A subject is anyone who enjoys the protection of the German Reich and for this reason is specifically obligated to it.
2. Nationality is acquired according to the provisions of the Reich and state nationality law.
3. A Reich citizen is only that subject of German or kindred blood who proves by his conduct that he is willing and suited loyally to serve the German people and the Reich.
4. Reich citizenship is acquired through the conferment of a certificate of Reich citizenship.
5. The Reich citizen is the sole bearer of full political rights as provided by the laws.

Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour 15 September 1935

Imbued with the insight that the purity of German blood is a prerequisite for the continued existence of the German people and inspired by the inflexible will to ensure the existence of the German nation for all times, the Reichstag has unanimously adopted the following law, which is hereby promulgated:

1. (1) Marriages between Jews and subjects of German or kindred blood are forbidden. Marriages nevertheless concluded are invalid, even if concluded abroad to circumvent this law.
(2) Only the State Attorney may initiate the annulment suit.
2. Extramarital intercourse between Jews and subjects of German or kindred blood is forbidden.
3. Jews must not employ in their households' female subjects of German or kindred blood who are under 45 years old.
4. (1) Jews are forbidden to fly the Reich or national flag and to display the Reich colours.
(2) They are, on the other hand, allowed to display the Jewish colours.
The exercise of this right enjoys the protection of the state.

Questions

1. According to these laws, who qualified to be a German citizen?
2. What do you think is meant by 'political rights'?
3. Explain the purpose of the *Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour*.
4. Why do you think Jews were forbidden from employing young German females in their households?
5. Explain why they were permitted to fly Jewish colours but not Reich flags or colours.

In response to such discrimination, many German Jews fled the country if they could afford to, but many also chose to remain, believing that they could wait it out and that the persecution would eventually die down. The level of anti-Semitism and discrimination did decrease during the 1936 Berlin Olympics, but this was only because Hitler wanted to avoid negative international publicity for his regime. Anti-Jewish signs disappeared from shops and public places, and Jewish athletes were invited to compete. However, once the Olympics concluded, the harassment ramped up again.

Escalating tensions culminated in *Kristallnacht*, the Night of Broken Glass, 9–10 November 1938. In response to the murder of Ernst von Rath – a German embassy official in Paris – by a young Polish Jew, Goebbels organised a state-sponsored **pogrom** carried out by the SA in which Jewish property was destroyed and most synagogues burned. In addition, 100 Jews were killed and about 20 000 arrested and placed in concentration camps. To make matters worse, the Jewish community was fined 1 billion *Reichsmarks* for the destruction that had been inflicted upon them. However, Hitler and Goebbels were keen to make it appear that the incident had been a spontaneous outburst of anti-Jewish activity by the German people rather than the work of the regime.

Kristallnacht was followed by the exclusion of Jewish school children from ordinary schools and the closure or forced sale of the majority of Jewish businesses. Having bled Germany's Jews of their wealth, Hermann Göring handed the responsibility of organising the deportation of the remaining 240 000 German Jews to the East over to Himmler and his SS. An ominous sign of things to come, in a speech to the Reichstag in



Figure 8.16 A tailor's shop in the Jewish quarter of Vienna, Austria, defaced with anti-Jewish slogans by Nazi hooligans. The graffiti carries a warning that the owner will be sent to a concentration camp if the obscenities are removed. This kind of vandalism occurred throughout the Third Reich.



Figure 8.17 (Left) A Jewish synagogue burns after being set on fire by German mobs during *Kristallnacht*. (Right) Pedestrians glance at the broken windows of a Jewish-owned shop in Berlin after the attacks of *Kristallnacht*.



Figure 8.18 SS troops order a large number of Jewish men in Berlin into concentration camps, 1938

early 1939, Hitler warned that if war came it would bring ‘the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe’.

The Holocaust

The following section has been included to provide historical context. Please note that it goes beyond the scope of the syllabus, and the Holocaust is not examinable as part of the core topic.

The persecution continued with the invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939. A curfew was imposed, radios were confiscated, and clothing and food rations were reduced. Up to 2 million Polish Jews were rounded up and forced into overcrowded ghettos, the largest being the Warsaw **Ghetto** which housed 500 000 people. Thousands of Jews perished as a result of starvation, disease and a lack of medical assistance whilst living in these ghettos. In 1940, plans were begun to deport Jews from all German-occupied territories to Poland, where they were forced to wear the Yellow Star of David as a form of identification. It was also around this

time that the first labour camps were built and the Nazis began experimenting with euthanasia, targeting psychiatric patients, the disabled, the old and the sick. As a result of the deliberate Germanisation of annexed Poland, Polish intellectuals, not Jews, were the first victims of the Nazis' tactic of mass shootings.

As the German **Wehrmacht** advanced into Russia in June 1941, special SS units known as Einsatzgruppen (deployment groups who worked as death squads) followed, killing thousands of Bolsheviks and Jews. Mass shootings and pogroms were then committed in Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, Romania and other parts of Nazi-occupied Europe. In 1942, mass shootings were replaced by the more efficient method of gassing vans, and by the end of the year, over two million Russians were dead. The Nazis now wanted to come up with a quick and permanent solution for the vast numbers of Jews in their occupied territories.

At the Wannsee Conference on 20 January 1942, plans were made for the systematic extermination of Europe's Jewry, or as Heinrich Himmler called it, 'the **Final Solution**' to the Nazis' Jewish problem. Göring might have signed the order, but it seems more likely that the idea came from Himmler, with approval from Hitler. Under the supervision of the SS, Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe were deported to industrialised death camps and concentration camps in the East. Belsen, Dachau and Buchenwald served as work camps, while the major death camps were Treblinka, Sobibor, Majdanek, Belzec, and Auschwitz. The Jewish occupants of Poland's ghettos were also shipped out to these camps; those deemed unfit to work were killed immediately while the others were forced in to labour, often to the death. These camps were liberated as the Allies and Soviets advanced into German-occupied territory in 1945. It is believed that at least one million of the estimated six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust were killed in the gas chambers at Auschwitz. However, it is difficult to know the exact number of deaths due to the fact that camp records were destroyed by the Nazis in the dying stages of the war.



Figure 8.19 A famous image from World War II: Polish Jews are harassed by Nazi troops in the Warsaw ghetto, 1943



Figure 8.20 The entrance gate at Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp. The gate reads *Arbeit Macht Frei*, meaning 'work sets you free'.



Figure 8.21 In 1945 German citizens are forced by Allied troops to view the bodies of Jewish victims of the Holocaust at Auschwitz, so that the truth of the Nazis' crimes would be known

Despite numerous eye-witness testimonies, the governments of the Allies failed to believe the accuracy of stories which told of the mass murder of Europe's Jews. It could be because it was beyond comprehension. However, it could be because anti-Semitism had a long history in Europe – for example, the French police fully cooperated in rounding up and transporting Jews to the East, the Hungarians handed over all foreign Jews to the Nazis, and the Pope did not protest what was happening. However, in Denmark the

government refused to cooperate in this manner and the entire population assisted in concealing the Danish Jews.

Controversially, the German people did not prevent nor protest against the persecution of their fellow citizens. Historians attribute this apparent apathy to a number of causes: the widespread and popular belief that Germany had been 'stabbed in the back' by Jews at the end of World War I, the effectiveness of Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda, the inability of German citizens to effectively oppose the Nazi regime, and the claim that some German citizens did not know what was going on.

Table showing total Jewish losses in the Holocaust:

Country	Losses
Polish-Soviet area (approx.)	4 565 000
Germany	125 000
Austria	65 000
Czechoslovakia	277 000
Hungary	402 000*
France	83 000
Belgium and Luxembourg	24 700
Holland	106 000
Italy	7 500*
Norway	760*
Romania	271 000–287 000
Yugoslavia	60 000–67 000*
Greece	60 000–67 000
Total	5 700 000–5 860 000

*number may be underestimated

Yehuda Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust*, Franklin Watts, 2001, p. 368

Gypsies The Nazis viewed Gypsies as a burden on society due to their nomadic nature and lack of traditional employment. They also associated them with criminality and degeneracy (D. Bergen, *The Holocaust: A Concise*

History, Rowman & Littlefield, 2009, p. 13). Due to their non-German blood, Gypsies were subjected to Nazi racial laws. As part of his attempt to separate Gypsies from German citizens, in 1938 Himmler issued the *Decree for the Struggle against the Gypsy Nuisance*, which demanded a register of all Gypsies living in Germany and confined them to selected regions. (After the September 1939 invasion of Poland, Germany's Gypsies joined the Jews in being deported to the East, where they were eventually sent to concentration camps.) By the end of the war, it is estimated that the Nazi regime had killed a quarter of all the Gypsies in Europe (over 600 000 were murdered).

Illegal in Germany since 1871, homosexuals were prime targets of a regime which was insistent on increasing the German population. In 1935, the Nazis included 'acts likely to offend public morality' in their definition of criminal behaviour. As a result, approximately 15 000 homosexuals were sent to concentration camps during the period 1933 to 1945.

Homosexuals

As mentioned previously, the Nazis firmly believed in the practice of eugenics in their quest to preserve the Aryan race. On 14 July 1933 the Reichstag passed the *Law for the Prevention of Diseased Progeny* which resulted in the involuntary sterilisation of more than 300 000 Germans with hereditary diseases or mental disabilities, all in the name of eradicating inferior blood. These conditions could include alcoholism, 'social feeble-mindedness', deafness and blindness. Homosexuals, the homeless and Gypsies were also involuntarily sterilised by the regime.

Other undesirables

(The Nazis also planned and carried out a secret euthanasia program from 9 October 1939, which aimed to eliminate the weakest individuals in order to increase the collective strength of the nation. The Nazis originally targeted children with birth abnormalities and the chronically ill, but extended the program after war broke out to include psychiatric patients, the elderly, the homeless, the chronically unemployed and those suffering depression. The program was only officially suspended in August 1941 after the Catholic Bishop Clemens August Graf von Galen protested the policy, causing a public uproar. Before it was cancelled, approximately 140 000 individuals were killed by **T4** personnel working on this programme of involuntary euthanasia. The chosen method was gas, making these killings the forerunner to the gas chambers of the Final Solution.)

Also targeted for persecution, incarceration and potential sterilisation were career criminals, vagrants, beggars and anyone identified as being 'anti-social'. Himmler defined this group as 'persons who demonstrate through behaviour towards the community ... that they will not adapt themselves to the community'. The Freemasons and Jehovah's Witnesses were also targets of Nazi harassment and persecution.

Summary

- Nazi ideology was heavily influenced by the belief in Aryan racial supremacy and the need to protect Germany from inferior races and those with supposedly weak morals or minds.
- Anti-Semitism was a key feature of Nazi ideology. Hitler blamed the Jewish community for everything that was wrong in Germany. Propaganda portrayed them as the enemy.
- Persecution of the Jews evolved from simple measures designed to marginalise the Jewish community and encourage them to emigrate, to more strident measures designed to strip them of their wealth and civil liberties.
- The 1935 Nuremberg Laws stripped German Jews of their citizenship and laid the foundation for further persecution. Those who could afford to fled the country, including leading academics and scientists such as Albert Einstein.
- This harassment led to the events of *Kristallnacht*, 1938. Following this, the SS began deporting the remaining 240 000 Jews to the East, where they were rounded up and placed into ghettos.
- Gypsies, homosexuals and other 'undesirables' were also targeted for persecution, harassment and in some cases, sterilisation.
- The Nazis would ultimately carry out the Holocaust, throughout World War II, murdering six million Jewish people. They also carried out a euthanasia programme which resulted in the deaths of 140 000 individuals who were considered 'weak' by the regime.

Key personalities, groups and terms

Personalities



Figure 8.22 Joseph Goebbels

Joseph Goebbels: The Nazi propaganda chief; Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. Goebbels played a key role in creating the Führer myth and exercised considerable control over all areas of German culture. Publicly encouraged violence against Germany's Jews during *Kristallnacht*.

Hermann Göring: Hitler's official deputy and nominated successor; initially Minister for the Interior for Prussia, he played a key role in the Nazis' consolidation of power by enlisting over 50 000 SA and SS men as auxiliary policemen, thus legitimising their violence against political opponents, especially socialists, communists, and trade union organisations. He also established the Gestapo in 1933, urged Hitler to carry out the purge of the SA, began the process of Aryanisation in 1937 and essentially took control of Germany's economics.



Figure 8.23 Hermann Göring

Heinrich Himmler: *Reichsführer* SS and Chief of German Police; had sole authority over all security organisations directly responsible for hunting down political opponents and implementing the Nazi Party's program of

terror, including concentration camps. Played a key role in the deportation of Jews and other 'undesirables' to the East. Is often credited with coming up with the idea for the 'Final Solution' to the Jewish problem.

Groups

Bolsheviks: a Russian socialist political party which split from the Mensheviks at the Second Congress of the Social Democratic Party in 1903. The Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, seized power in Russia during the November Revolution in 1917 and set about establishing a communist state, renaming themselves the Communist Party in 1918.

SA (Sturmabteilung, Storm Troopers, brownshirts): the Nazi private army established in 1921. Used to intimidate political opponents

SD (Sicherheitsdienst): the internal police force of the Nazi Party created by Heinrich Himmler in 1932. Intelligence service of the SS

Terms

Aryan: non-Jewish individuals; considered to be northern European in appearance

Der Stürmer: a Nazi sensationalist newspaper which contained crude propaganda against the Jews

eugenics: a pseudo-science which aims to achieve the purity of the human race through selective breeding

ghetto: a cordoned-off area in a city inhabited by a deprived minority

Herrenvolk: German term meaning 'master race'

Kristallnacht (Night of the Broken Glass): state-endorsed violence against Jewish businesses and synagogues throughout Germany, 9–10 November 1938

pogrom: organised persecution and violence directed at the Jewish community

Reichstag: the German Parliament

Social Darwinism: a theory that argued the human race was subject to the same laws of natural selection as animals. Based on Charles Darwin's work and used to justify racist views, since discredited

T4: refers to the location 4 Tiergartenstrasse, Berlin, where the Nazi regime carried out its euthanasia programme

Untermenschen: German term which referred to inferior races

Volksgemeinschaft: the concept of a ‘people’s community’; reinforced the view that the German people were racially pure and united against the common enemy, Jews and Communists

Volksfeind: German term meaning ‘enemy of the people’

Wehrmacht: the German Army during World War II

Activities

Thinking historically 8.6

1. Using the information in the text, create a timeline that shows the key dates in the Nazis’ persecution of Germany’s Jewish population.
2. Describe Nazi racial theory. What was the connection between race and *Volksgemeinschaft*?
3. Explain how the Jews were discriminated against. What was the purpose of this discrimination in the first half of the 1930s?
4. Assess the significance of *Kristallnacht*.
5. Evaluate the view that Hitler intended to carry out the extermination of Europe’s Jews from the beginning of his political career.
6. Outline the treatment of other minorities under the regime. Explain the regime’s objective in targeting these individuals and groups.

Source analysis 8.7

Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions which follow.

Source 8Z Hitler’s description of Jews, Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 1925

Culturally he contaminates art, literature and the theatre, makes a mockery of national feeling, overthrows all concepts of beauty, and instead drags men down into the sphere of his own base nature.

Source 8AA Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*, Pan Books, 2000, p. 286

Jewish responses to this assault were mixed. They reflected age, gender, marital status, wealth and, indeed, whether an individual was temperamentally disposed to see a glass half empty or half full. Given the difficulties people in liberal democracies had in comprehending that no one could single out and persecute a group of people simply by virtue of membership of that group, it is unsurprising that Jewish people could not grasp the enormity of what was happening. Many Jews no doubt felt that they had seen this all before.

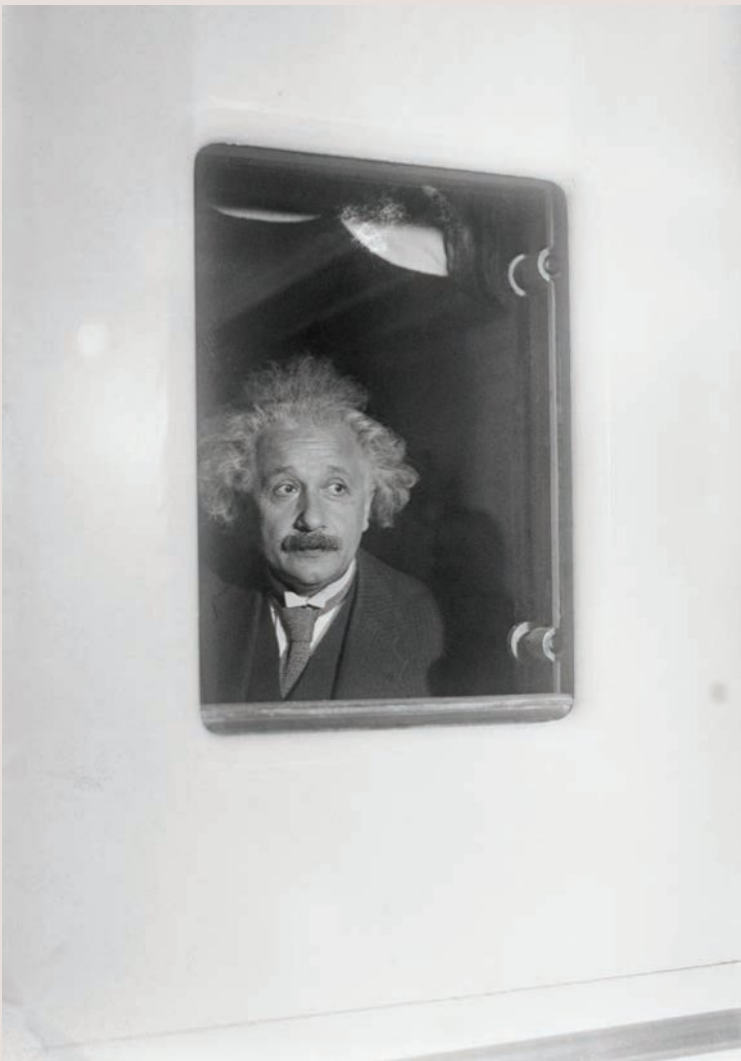
D. Bergen, *The Holocaust: A Concise History*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2009, p. 60

Source 8AB

Nazi leaders learned some lessons from [the] early anti-Jewish experiments. First, they realised that it was easiest to attack people who were already marginalised. Second, they learned that members of the general public were more likely to participate in or at least tolerate attacks on minorities if they stood to gain rather than lose from such initiatives. In any case, leading Nazis found out that unanimous approval was not required. Indifference of the majority was all that was needed to carry out many plans.

Famous physicist Albert Einstein en route to New York by ship in the early 1930s. When Hitler came to power in 1933, Einstein and his family (who were Jewish) chose to stay permanently in the US.

Source 8AC



Questions

- a** Use Source 8Z and your own knowledge to explain Hitler's racial theory.
- b** What insight does Source 8AA provide into the reasons many Jews chose to remain in Germany?
- c** Analyse Source 8AB. Use this source and your own knowledge to explain why the German people did not act to stop the persecution of their fellow citizens.
- d** Does this source support the view that the German people shared Hitler's anti-Semitic worldview?
- e** Analyse Source 8AC. Propose what you imagine it must be like to have to flee your country due to racial persecution.
- f** Using online research, identify some other prominent Jewish people who fled Germany after the rise of Hitler. Who were they and what were they famous for?

Opposition to the Nazi regime

9

At the end of this topic you should attempt to answer the following question:

Which groups openly opposed the Nazi regime and how effective was their resistance?

Key syllabus features

The key features are:

- Opposition to the Nazi regime.

The key features provide the basis for HSC examination questions.

9.1 Resistance groups in Nazi Germany

Who opposed the Nazi regime and why?

According to historian Peter Hoffman, ‘all resistance groups aimed at the overthrow of Hitler’s dictatorship. All those involved in the Resistance also wished to avoid a restoration of pre-1933 conditions that had produced the Nazi regime’ (P. Hoffman, *German Resistance to Hitler*, Harvard University Press, 2005, p. 61). However, not all opposition to the Nazi regime subscribed to this goal. Opposition against the Nazi regime took a variety of forms ranging from general discontent and widespread grumbling over fairly small matters like wages and consumer goods, to political activism, open resistance and attempted **coups**. There were at least a dozen assassination attempts on Hitler’s life between 1933 and 1944.

However, very little of this opposition posed a serious threat to the power of Hitler and his regime because it was incredibly difficult for people to oppose Hitler. One reason for this was the effectiveness of the regime’s methods of control, which made it difficult for opposition groups to organise themselves. Additionally, any potential opponents struggled to know who they could trust in a society where people were encouraged to denounce each other for even the smallest of offences, such as failing to use the *Heil Hitler* greeting. Labelled traitors if caught, these individuals and groups also risked not only their own lives but also the lives of their friends and families, which deterred many from acting. Another reason was the incredible support Hitler enjoyed, a result of the Führer myth, the

FOCUS QUESTION

Overview

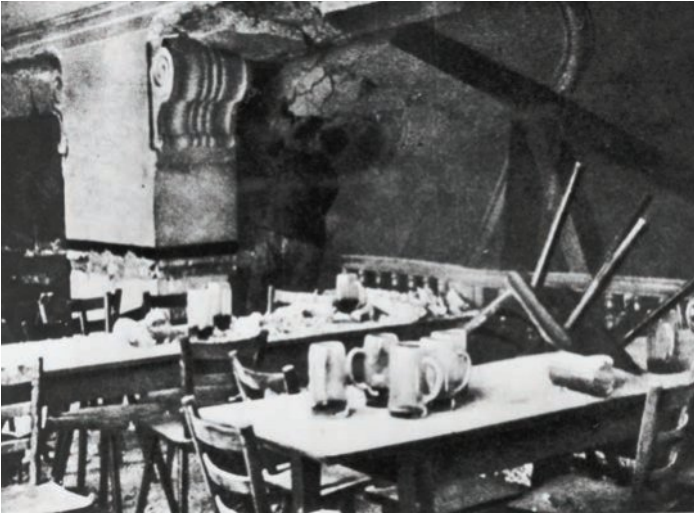


Figure 9.1 The scene at the Bürgerbräukeller beer hall in Munich after a bomb exploded in an assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler by Georg Elser, 8 November 1939

popularity of some of his policies and the fact that he was preferred over any leader of the Weimar Republic. Another reason for the ineffectiveness of opposition to the Nazi regime was that each group that plotted the Nazis' downfall had a different vision for the post-Hitler form of government. These different views resulted in the various groups failing to work together, thus decreasing their chances of success.

Below are some of the main groups who opposed the Nazi regime.

Left-wing groups

Despite the loss of their democratic freedom and with no trade unions to represent them, Hitler's regime was popular with the working classes mostly due to the success of his policies. The working class benefitted from the fall in unemployment and most shared his vision of a restored Germany. As a result, most were incredibly loyal to him, with swastikas flying in almost every home window. However, not everyone was satisfied with the regime and the path Hitler was leading them on. Heinrich Fraenkel, writing in 1940, stated that there were many German workers who endeavoured 'deliberately to slow work down and to do as much sabotaging as he possibly can without instant detection' (H. Fraenkel, *The German People Versus Hitler: Responding to Fascism*, Vol. 9, Routledge, 2000, p. 88).

The two political parties who traditionally found support amongst the working classes were quickly eliminated following the Nazis seizure of power. According to historian Michael Burleigh, 'the Social Democrat leadership joined Communists and Conservatives in an initial underestimation of the exceptionality of the Nazi "seizure of power"' (M. Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*, Pan Books, 2000, p. 671). The Social Democratic Party fled the country but maintained a loose network of inconspicuous groups that gathered information on the regime and attempted to rouse resistance among workers by distributing leaflets and newspapers. They also published reports abroad to inform the world of the situation in Germany. Burleigh describes the Socialists in this way: 'They were like mammals hibernating during winter, discussing the current situation over a beer in a pub or with family and friends in their homes, activities whose subversive nature was difficult to determine' (M. Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*, Pan Books, 2000, p. 672).

Unlike the Socialists who did little to draw the attention of the Gestapo to their activities, the German Communist Party resisted the regime more overtly. They formed underground organisations who worked to print and distribute anti-Nazi leaflets and newspapers and attempted to sway workers by infiltrating the German Labour Front in the hopes of secretly sabotaging war production across the country. These groups had links with America and the



Figure 9.2 Edelweiss Pirates youth group, 1938

Soviet Union, passing on sensitive information on the regime through spy rings like *Rote Kapelle* (Red Orchestra). In the end, their efforts proved to be unsuccessful. The Communist Party bore the brunt of the terror campaign early on, greatly diminishing their impact. As Burleigh put it, they went on to establish ‘informal localised networks of activists too fearful to do anything’. The efficiency of the secret police in locating and destroying left-wing organisations made it extremely difficult for the two groups to present a united front, thus undermining the effectiveness of their resistance campaign.

There were several youth groups who opposed the Nazi regime for various reasons and by different means. Most of the individuals who joined these groups, which were often just working class gangs, did so because they rejected the pressure to join the increasingly authoritative and bureaucratic Hitler Youth. These groups included the *Meuten*, the *Swing Movement*, and the *Blasen*. The most well-known group were the *Edelweiss Pirates*, a collection of smaller gangs who had rejected the militarism of the Hitler Youth and would engage in physical confrontations with Hitler Youth patrols. One of their slogans actually read ‘eternal war on the Hitler Youth!’ They disobeyed restrictions on movement by going on hiking and camping trips during the weekends (and some even assisted the Allies during the war). These groups were more of a nuisance and an embarrassment rather than a major threat to the regime, which viewed their deviant behaviour as representing the ‘criminal, moral and political subversion of youth’. As historian Catherine Epstein wrote, ‘For the Nazis, youth disaffection was frustrating. Young people represented the future of the Third Reich. They had gone through Nazified schools. Most were long-time members of the Hitler Youth. Now they were needed to work in industry and soldier in

Youth groups

war ... Despite their best efforts, the Nazis had not won over a significant minority of youth' (C. Epstein, *Nazi Germany: Confronting the Myths*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2015, p. 193).

The churches Germany's churches never faced the same degree of repression as the Communists or Socialists. Despite Martin Bormann's insistence that 'National Socialism and Christianity are irreconcilable', Hitler had no intention of alienating such a major conservative force that had the potential to launch an effective opposition campaign. He also needed the initial support of the Catholic Centre Party to pass the *Enabling Act*. A **concordat** was negotiated between the two groups in July 1933, and in return for the loss of their political influence, Hitler promised freedom of worship and the independence of their institutions to the church. This promise was soon broken when the Nazis closed down the Catholic Youth League. Many priests and laypeople were attacked and arrested when they dared to complain. On 10 March 1937, Pope Pius XI issued a statement to be read aloud in all Churches. '*Mit brennender Sorge*' (With deep concern) condemned Hitler's violation of the concordat, and urged German Catholics to stay true to their beliefs and oppose any actions that contravened them.

In some regions, Catholics were also able to force the reversal of Nazi bans on the display of religious symbols in public buildings and schools, or they openly disobeyed the regime by reinstalling crucifixes, placed next to the portraits of Hitler.

Unlike the Catholic Church with its centralised structure and powerful international backing, Germany's Protestant Churches were invariably divided due to its split into three main sects – Lutheran, Reformed and United – and this made it difficult to launch an effective and united opposition campaign. However, there are still some examples of resistance. After the **Reich Church** was established with Nazi sympathiser Ludwig Müller as its bishop, approximately 2000 Lutheran pastors defected and a separate Emergency League was formed in 1934. That same year, Martin Niemöller established the **Confessing Church**, which quickly caught the attention of the Gestapo with its criticism of Müller and emphasis that Christian values take precedence over Nazi policy. Thousands of pastors who joined the Confessing



Figure 9.3 Pope Pius XI, who urged Catholics to stay true to their beliefs in Nazi Germany

Church were beaten, tortured or arrested. Niemöller himself was sent to a concentration camp and held there from 1938 to 1945. Given that Hitler was sensitive to the popularity of his regime, many of the pastors were reinstated following public outrage.

Overall, religious opposition to the Nazi regime was at best mixed. While a few brave individuals stood up against the regime, most Catholics and Protestants were conflicted as they agreed with some of the Nazis' policies, including their anti-communist stance. Unless it directly affected their interests or Christian teachings, both churches, as institutions, did not protest. Referring to the evangelical Church of Germany, historian Victoria Barnett points out that 'many church leaders believed that the determination of the church to continue as a Christian church within a totalitarian system hell-bent on destroying Christian values constituted a form of resistance' (V. Barnett, *For the Soul of the People: Protestant Protest against Hitler*, Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 198). However, most historians agree that they could have done a lot more to oppose the regime if they were not so worried about their own survival. Disappointingly, when it comes to analysing their response to anti-Semitic policies, both churches were quiet.

9.2 Further opposition to the Nazis – the military and other notable individuals

The one organisation with the power to potentially overthrow *der Führer* and his Nazi regime was the army. However, the personal oath of loyalty to Hitler sworn by all members of the army made this an extremely difficult task for individuals whose profession revolved around loyalty and obedience. For historian Peter Hoffman, 'a decision to break the oath, to subvert and to act against the supreme military and political leadership, would throw an individual into solitude and isolation from his comrades. Such a decision could not be expected from large numbers of soldiers, only a few' (P. Hoffman, *German Resistance to Hitler*, Harvard University Press, 2005, p. 74). In addition, their involvement in the purge of the SA in 1934 strengthened their subservience to Hitler's regime. According to Burleigh, members of the army leadership 'tried to criticise the system from within; when this failed, some drew the obvious conclusion. Senior members of the elites gradually realised that they were no longer privileged advisers-by-right on major issues of policy, but functional professionals there to do Hitler's bidding, an insufferable position for men who identified themselves with the nation's higher interests' (M. Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*, Pan Books, 2000, p. 683).

Opposition from within the army didn't really appear until it was clear that Hitler was steering Germany towards war. Concerned generals who attempted to express their misgivings were invariably replaced.

The army



Figure 9.4 (L) Reich Minister of Defence Werner von Blomberg, the commander-in-chief of the army high command Baron Werner von Fritsch, and Admiral Erich Raeder, pictured in 1936. By November 1937, von Fritsch and von Blomberg were expressing concerns over Hitler's leadership.

Case in point: after a top level meeting in November 1937, Foreign Minister von Neurath, Army Commander von Fritsch and Defence Minister von Blomberg verbally expressed their concerns that Hitler would prematurely involve them in a war before preparations were complete. A resistance group involving former Army Leader General Ludwig Beck and Carl Goerdeler was established in an attempt to prevent the oncoming war which they knew would be disastrous for Germany. Informal trips were made to Paris and London seeking support for their cause but they were rebuffed. Once the war began, these right-wing nationalists saw it as their duty to end the war as quickly as possible.

Ultimately, the army failed in its opposition to the regime, despite the courage of those who tried knowing full well the fate that awaited them as traitors. In A.J.P Taylor's view, the army did not act, 'they waited for power to be thrust into their hands' (A.J.P Taylor, *The Second World War*, Penguin Books, 1976, p. 201).

Individuals Apart from small grumblings about the scarcity of food, low wages and long working hours, individuals who openly opposed the regime risked being labelled as traitors and endangering themselves and their families. Additionally, since they had no legal recourse and no formal way to protest, individuals had to express their dissatisfaction in a more low-key manner, such as being uncooperative, through absenteeism, discreet sabotage, strikes,



Figure 9.5 In 1936 at the launch of the boat *Horst Wessel*, amidst hundreds of people giving the Nazi salute a lone man refuses and crosses his arms in an act of defiance

refusing to send their children to Nazi youth groups, graffiti-writing, as well as printing and circulating anti-Nazi leaflets, which was infinitely dangerous.

The history books list the names of many brave individuals who risked everything in their opposition to the regime. Two of these are Josef Römer and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Römer, a member of the left-wing resistance movement, organised small groups in Berlin and Munich, worked with other opposition groups within the civil service and military, and encouraged workers to sabotage the war effort by targeting fuel. Unfortunately, he was executed for his efforts in September 1944.

Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his family resisted the Nazis by distributing anti-Nazi leaflets, putting up resistance posters and slogans throughout German cities and assisting Jews to escape the country. Dietrich himself also travelled throughout Germany, Europe and America criticising the Nazi regime and attempting to establish contacts with the governments of Western Europe on behalf of the *Abwehr*. More than once he was arrested by the Gestapo, then freed again. His anti-Nazi activities eventually caught up with him and he was executed in 1945.



Figure 9.6 German theologian and anti-Nazi dissident Dietrich Bonoegger

Georg Elser An example of a brave individual who tried to save his nation from the impending war was a 36-year-old carpenter from a small town in Southern Germany named Georg Elser. In 1938, Elser made a plan to kill the leading members of the Nazi leadership – Hitler, Göring, and Goebbels. Elser knew that Hitler regularly gave a speech in the Munich Bürgerbräukeller on November 8 to mark the anniversary of his attempted putsch in 1923. Elser gained access to the venue and found that the hall was never guarded. In the summer of 1939, he systematically prepared his assassination attempt, learning how to construct a bomb and preparing a supporting pillar behind the speaker's platform in the event hall to conceal his explosive device.

On 8 November 1939, Hitler and several other high-ranking officials left the assembly room unexpectedly just 12 minutes after Hitler's speech, and just before Elser's bomb exploded. The ceiling collapsed just over where Hitler had given his speech – as shown in Figure 9.1. Hitler had evaded the assassination attempt, but seven other people were killed, and 63

injured. The next day, the Nazi Party's official paper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, squarely placed the blame on British secret agents, and tried to use the event as propaganda to stir up desire to go to war. However, leading Nazis knew that this was untrue. Customs officers in the town of Constance arrested Georg Elser at around the same time, as he was attempting to escape to Switzerland. He was handed over to the police because he was carrying suspicious items.

After several days of interrogations in Munich, Elser confessed and emphasised his intention to open up a path for peace in Europe by killing Hitler and the other leading Nazis. Hitler and his men initially thought Elser was an instrument of the British secret service. Many others shared this assessment at the time, including military resistance circles. Now, however, there is no doubt that Elser was acting entirely of his own accord. After years in solitary confinement, Georg Elser was murdered in Dachau concentration camp on 9 April 1945, only weeks before the end of World War II.



Figure 9.7 Georg Elser, photographed after his failed bombing attempt on Adolf Hitler's life in Munich, 1939



Figure 9.8 Hitler speaking to participants of the 1923 Beer Hall Putsch at the Bürgerbräukeller beer hall in Munich, just before the failed bombing attempt on his life by Georg Elser, 8 November 1939

Summary

- The effectiveness of the Nazis' terror campaign drove left-wing groups like the German Communist Party and the German Socialist Party either to flee the country or form underground networks. Both groups tried to politicise Germany's workers but repression under the Gestapo undermined the effectiveness of any opposition.
- Youth groups such as the Edelweiss Pirates, the *Blasen*, the *Meuten*, and the Swing Movement engaged in localised violence and general social deviance, which proved to be more of an annoyance than a threat to the regime.
- Both the Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches spoke out against Nazi policies that affected them or their core teachings directly, but were silent in the face of the regime's anti-Semitic actions.
- The High Command of the German Army had the potential to overthrow Hitler. However, they did not attempt to do this until after the war had begun, or, more accurately, after the war began to turn against Germany.
- Many brave individuals stood up and opposed the Nazi regime, often losing their lives for their efforts. Examples include Josef Römer, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Georg Elser.

Personalities

General Ludwig Beck: chief of the army general staff; organised other nationalists in the army to form a resistance group; during the war, would be a central figure in the July Plot of 1944



Figure 9.9 General Beck

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: a pastor and theologian, spy, anti-Nazi dissident and key founding member of the Confessing Church. He was executed for his actions in 1945

Georg Elser: a carpenter who tried to assassinate Hitler, Göring and Goebbels in November 1939 in a Munich beer hall so as to avoid the impending war. Elser claimed to be a nationalist who didn't want millions to die in another world war, while the Nazis claimed publicly that he was working on the orders of foreign agents. Elser was executed by the Gestapo shortly before the end of World War II in 1945.



Figure 9.10 Georg Elser

Clemens August Graf von Galen: Catholic Bishop of Munster; Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church; risked his life to oppose the Nazis' euthanasia policy. His sermon aroused public opinion and resulted in the public cancellation of the policy

Carl Goerdeler: a liberal conservative monarchist; mayor of Leipzig; one of the main instigators of conservative opposition to Hitler; worked with General Ludwig Beck to help organise the July Plot of 1944



Figure 9.11 Carl Goerdeler

Ludwig Müller: Nazi sympathiser and leader of the German Christians; believed anyone with Jewish ancestry should be removed from the congregation; in 1933 he was given the title of Reich Bishop. Criticised by Martin Niemöller and other Protestant pastors



Figure 9.12 Ludwig Müller

Martin Niemöller: German nationalist and prominent Protestant pastor; outspoken critic of the regime, known as 'Hitler's personal prisoner'; led the defection from the Reich Church and founded the Confessing Church. Encouraged the precedence of Christian values over Nazi policy



Figure 9.13 Martin Niemöller

Josef Römer: left-leaning political activist; imprisoned from 1934-39. On release he gathered opponents of the regime and actively resisted the Nazis by organising small groups, working with other opposition groups within the civil service and military, and encouraging workers to sabotage the war effort by targeting fuel



Figure 9.14 Josef Römer

Groups

Abwehr: the military intelligence and information section of the German Army

Blasen: anti-authority working class groups of German youth that existed prior to the Nazis rise to power; involved in minor criminal activities and often involved in violent confrontations with members of the Hitler Youth

Edelweiss Pirates: a collection of smaller gangs who rejected the militarism of the Hitler Youth and would engage in physical confrontations with Hitler Youth patrols.

German Communist Party (KPD): formed in 1918; strong links with Russian communists; dissolved in March 1933. Founded by socialists opposed to war, led by Rosa Luxemburg. After her death the party became gradually ever more committed to Leninism and later Stalinism. During the Weimar Republic period, the KPD usually polled between 10 and 15 per cent of the vote and was represented in the Reichstag and in state parliaments

Gestapo: Nazi secret police. Originally established by Hermann Göring in Prussia in 1933

Hitler Youth (Hitler Jugend): a youth movement for young boys aged 14 and up; used by the Nazis to influence young people and recruit them to their cause

Meuten: youth gangs from working-class backgrounds; left-leaning; often attacked members of the Hitler Youth

Rote Kapelle (Red Orchestra): a Communist spy ring that provided information to contacts in the Soviet Union. Smashed by the Gestapo in 1943; had little impact

Social Democratic Party (SPD): a moderate political party formed in 1875; banned by the Nazi regime in 1933

Swing Movement: groups of upper-class youth who embraced cultural influences from Britain and America, most notably jazz music

Terms

concordat: a pact or treaty

coup: a sudden overthrow of a government

Activities

Thinking historically 9.1

1. Describe the impact of the Nazi secret police on the German Communist Party.
2. How much genuine opposition was there in Germany to the Nazi regime?
3. Outline the various motives for opposing the Nazi regime.
4. Assess the reasons why so little was achieved by the resistance movement.
5. Explain why left-wing groups were unable to mount an effective opposition campaign.
6. What role did youth groups play in the opposition movement?
7. Outline the reasons for religious opposition to the regime.

Source analysis 9.1

Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions which follow.

Source 9A **Hitler's speech to the Reichstag, 1939**

The National Socialist State will ruthlessly make clear to those clergy who instead of being God's ministers regard it as their mission to speak insultingly of our Reich ... Tens of thousands of clergy fulfil their duties ... without ever coming into conflict with the laws of the State. The State considers their protection its task. The destruction of the enemies of the State is its duty.

Source 9B **Confessional Church leader, Martin Niemöller**

First they came for the Jews. I was silent. I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Communists. I was silent. I was not a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists. I was silent. I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me. There was no one left to speak for me.

Source 9C **Peter Hoffman, *German Resistance to Hitler*, Harvard University Press, 2005, p. 74**

There were military men, including some who supported the Resistance, who considered their oath invalid since the leader to whom it had been sworn had broken his oath of office many times over, and still they insisted that they could not act against the regime before the dictator had been killed ... The remarkable fact is not that a majority of military men felt inhibited about taking action against their Supreme Commander, but that so many in the Armed Forces were willing to do so.

Elsa Härten, Georg Elser's former girlfriend, 1950

Source 9D

... His face was swollen and beaten black and blue. His eyes were bulging out of their sockets, and I was horrified by his appearance ... An officer placed himself behind Elser and, to make him talk, he kept striking him on the back or on the back of his head ... What he said was something like this: He had taken black powder from the Vollmer Company, and with this he had built a time bomb. He had been induced to do this by foreign agents and had acted on their orders ...

Arthur Nebe, who led the police investigation into Elser's crime, disclosed privately to Hans Bernd Gisevius around December 1939

Source 9E

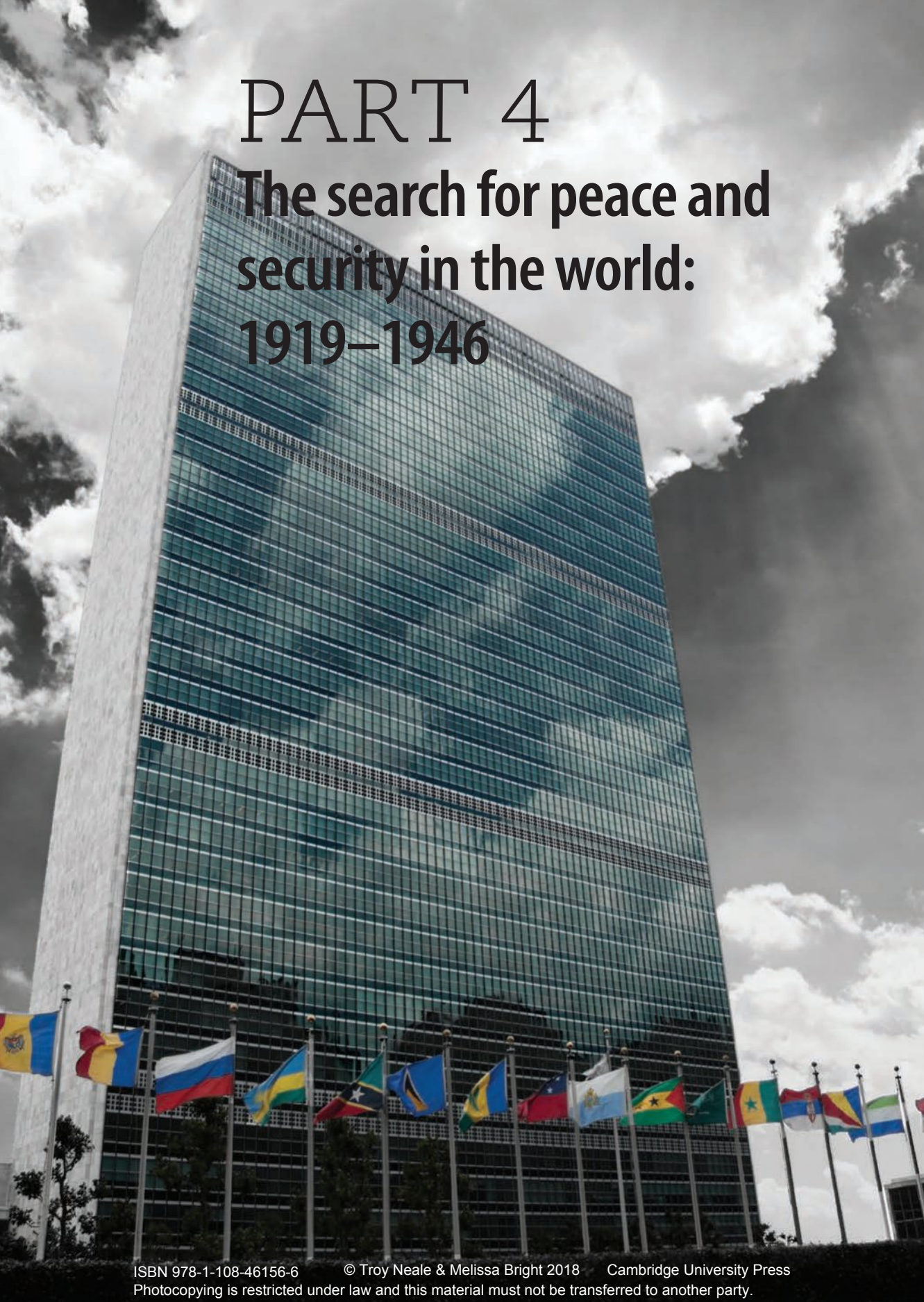
You know what Elser's problem was? This man of the people loved ordinary people; he laid out for me passionately and in simple sentences how, for the masses in all countries, war means hunger, misery, and the death of millions. Not a pacifist in the usual sense, his reasoning was quite simplistic: Hitler is war – and if he goes, there will be peace ...

Questions

- a** Use Source 9A and your own knowledge to explain the reasons why religious groups failed to effectively oppose the Nazi regime.
- b** How did Hitler classify members of the clergy who acted against them?
- c** What do you think Martin Niemöller means in the quote in Source 9B?
- d** How useful is this source for a historian studying the effectiveness of religious opposition to the Nazi regime?
- e** According to Source 9C, what had to occur before members of the German Army were willing to act against the Nazi regime?
- f** What did historian Peter Hoffman consider remarkable about this?
- g** According to Sources 9D and 9E, what were the motivations of Georg Elser in his assassination attempt on Hitler?
- h** How reliable are sources 9D and 9E? Provide reasons for your views.

PART 4

The search for peace and security in the world: 1919–1946





The search for peace and security

10

At the end of this topic you should attempt to answer the following question:

Why did the search for peace and security following the end of World War I fail?

Key syllabus features

The key features are:

- The intentions of Germany in Europe and of Japan in the Asia-Pacific region.
- The ambition and authority of the League of Nations and the UN.

The key features provide the basis for HSC examination questions.

10.1 Introduction

How did the great powers attempt to secure peace after the end of World War I?

FOCUS QUESTION

CHRONOLOGY

- 1919** • The Treaty of Versailles officially ends World War I on 28 June. The League of Nations is formed
- 1921–22** • The Washington Naval Conference
- 1922** • Mussolini's Fascist Party comes to power in Italy
- 1925** • The Locarno Treaty is signed. Hitler publishes *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle)
- 1928** • Kellogg-Briand Pact (Pact of Paris) outlaws war
- 1930** • Japan and Britain sign the London Naval Treaty
- 1931** • Japan invades Manchuria. This is the beginning of the Fifteen Year War
- 1932** • Disarmament Conference. Manchuria becomes a Japanese puppet state named Manchukuo
- 1933** • Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany, and Germany resigns from the League of Nations, as does Japan
 - Germany leaves the Disarmament Conference and begins to rearm
- 1934** • Hitler becomes the Führer
 - Germany and Poland sign a 10-year Non-Aggression Pact
 - Japan abandons the Washington Conference Naval Agreement
- 1935** • Germany introduces conscription
 - The anti-German Stresa Front is created by Britain, France and Italy but ends when Italy invades Abyssinia

- The Anglo-German Naval Agreement is signed, permitting Germany a navy 35 per cent the size of the British navy
- 1936**
 - German troops reoccupy the Rhineland
 - The Spanish Civil War begins
 - Germany and Italy form an alliance by signing the Rome-Berlin Axis
 - Germany and Japan sign the Anti-**Comintern** Pact; the two countries pledge to work together against the Soviet Union's Comintern
 - Japan withdraws from London Naval Conference
- 1937**
 - Italy joins the Anti-Comintern Pact and resigns from the League of Nations
 - Japanese invasion of China
 - The Nanking Massacre occurs
- 1938**
 - German **Anschluss** with Austria
 - After the Munich Conference, the Sudetenland (Czechoslovakia) is handed over to Germany
- 1939**
 - Italy annexes Albania and signs the Pact of Steel with Germany
 - Germany invades the rest of Czechoslovakia and the policy of **appeasement** is abandoned
 - Germany and the Soviet Union sign a Non-Aggression Pact
 - Germany invades Poland and Britain and France declare war on Germany
 - Soviet Union invades and occupies eastern Poland
- 1940**
 - Italy declares war on Britain and France
 - Japan signs the Tripartite Pact to form the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis
- 1941**
 - Japan and the USSR sign a neutrality pact
 - Germany invades the Soviet Union, opening the Eastern Front of the war in Europe
 - The USA enters the war on the side of the Allies after Pearl Harbor, which marks the beginning of the Pacific War
- 1943**
 - Italy surrenders to the Allies
 - The Moscow Declaration is signed
 - The Tehran Conference takes place
- 1944**
 - The Dumbarton Oaks Conference takes place where the structure for the United Nations is proposed
- 1945**
 - The Yalta Conference takes place
 - Hitler commits suicide as German troops surrender in Italy
 - Soviet forces surround Berlin and Germany surrenders in May
 - The United Nations **Charter** is signed
 - The Potsdam Conference takes place
 - Japan is called on to surrender unconditionally
 - The atomic bomb is dropped on Hiroshima
 - The USSR declares war on Japan
 - The second atomic bomb is dropped on Nagasaki
 - Japan surrenders
- 1946**
 - Nuremberg War Crimes Trials begin

As examined in Chapter 1*, the Treaty of Versailles represented the formal end of World War I. Each of the major belligerent nations (with the exception of the USA) had been morally and economically devastated, three great empires had collapsed, revolution was rife, national boundaries needed to be redrawn, and up to 15 million souls had perished. No one wished to experience the horrors of another modern, technological war again. As such, the Treaty was intended to be an authoritative settlement that attempted to organise the reconstruction of Europe and to determine how the hard-fought-for peace would be maintained. To achieve this, US President Woodrow Wilson insisted that a League of Nations be created and ratified in the Versailles Treaty. The League was intended to resolve international disputes and prevent future conflicts. In addition to this, throughout the two decades following the end of the war, many international treaties and agreements were forged in an attempt to counter the rise of militarism, reduce growing tensions, and slow down the **arms race** that was developing. **Disarmament** was a key goal during this period since it would reinforce the sovereignty of each and every nation.

Lastly, a policy of appeasement was also adopted in the 1930s to deal with the militaristic ambitions of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy.

Each of these factors played a key role in the search for peace and security in the aftermath of the Great War, but unfortunately they failed to prevent the outbreak of an even more devastating conflict within two decades. Following the conclusion of World War II, a new international organisation was established with the objective of resolving disputes and preventing conflict. Like its predecessor, it can be argued that the United Nations has achieved some spectacular successes in this endeavour over the last 70 years, but it has also experienced some significant failures too.

**See Chapter 1 for the long-term consequences of the Treaty of Versailles.*

10.2 The intentions and authority of the League of Nations

Why did the League of Nations fail in its quest to prevent another world war?

FOCUS QUESTION

The League of Nations was the brainchild of American President Woodrow Wilson, and was written into the Treaty of Versailles. It was essentially an organisation designed to resolve international disputes, administer world justice and avoid future conflict. The League consisted of an Assembly, where each member nation had a vote; a Council, which was comprised of Britain, France, Italy and Japan; and a Secretariat.

The League's formation and purpose

To achieve its purpose, the League relied on the concept of collective security: if a member country was attacked, the rest of the League would treat the matter as an attack on themselves and would go to the aid of their fellow member. Both military force and trade sanctions could be imposed. In addition, great emphasis was also placed on universal disarmament and the pressure of public opinion. For historian Roland Stromberg, the League was to 'exist as a small beacon of hope in a turbulent world' (R. Stromberg, *Europe in the Twentieth Century 4th Ed*, Prentice Hall, 1997, p. 116).



Figure 10.1 Members attend a League of Nations conference in 1930

The League had various successes, which included:

- Settling a dispute between Finland and Sweden over the Åland Islands in 1920
- Ending Yugoslavia's invasion of Albania in 1921
- Helping to avoid all-out war between Greece and Bulgaria in 1925
- Helping to create the Refugee Organisation, the Health Organisation and the International Labour Organisation
- Effectively administering the Saar region of Germany and the contentious city of Danzig, in Poland.

What were the League's weaknesses?

From its inception the League had some fatal flaws which undermined its authority. Members did not always agree with each other, the League lacked a military force, and nationalism proved more powerful than the notion of internationalism. In addition, some major powers were not members: America was never a member; Germany was only a member from 1926–33; the USSR was excluded until 1934; and Japan and Italy left the League in 1933 and 1937 respectively. A key weakness of the League was the fact that, in the absence of the United States, the League was dominated by Britain and France. Britain refused to commit troops to conflicts and was more focused on internal problems, while France wanted a strong military alliance. Furthermore, decisions were made by the League Council, which was dominated by permanent members France, Britain, Italy and Japan.



Figure 10.2 The Gap in the Bridge. The United States is depicted as the missing keystone in the League of Nations arch.

The rule that Council decisions had to be unanimous made it extremely difficult for the League to make decisions in response to indiscretions. In the end, according to Stromberg, 'nations simply were not prepared to hand over to the League any real power, for this would mean surrendering the jealously guarded sovereign power to choose war or peace, to defend the nation, to provide for national security' (R. Stromberg, *Europe in the Twentieth Century 4th Ed*, Prentice Hall, 1997, p. 114).

Despite it being the brainchild of Democratic President Woodrow Wilson, the United States never became a member of the League of Nations. Having successfully mediated the Paris Peace Conference, Wilson returned to the States to present the Treaty of Versailles to the US Senate. However, the Republicans were unsupportive of the League in general, but especially Article 10 of the League's Covenant, which declared that all members guarantee the political independence and territorial integrity of each member state. They argued, wrongly, that it obligated the US to go to war in defence of a foreign body. They also argued that membership would entangle the US in European affairs, which contravened the policy of isolationism which had been unofficially adopted since President George Washington's Farewell Address. The Republican leader of the Senate, Henry Cabot Lodge, proposed a number of reservations (amendments), which Wilson refused to accept. A stalemate ensued, and the Senate ultimately refused to ratify American involvement in the League. The omission of the world's strongest power effectively undermined the League's ability to maintain international peace.

The 1931 Japanese invasion of fellow League member Manchuria (a geographic region in Northeast Asia) was the first major crisis to face the League. However, no action was taken, highlighting the League's ineffectiveness and the collapse of collective security. The League publicly criticised Japan, but Japan refused to accept such criticism and left the League two years later. No sanctions were enforced by the other member nations in response to this act of aggression.

Having formed an anti-German Stresa Front with Britain and France in 1935, Benito Mussolini's ambitions for a colonial empire and dominance of the Mediterranean region were too great and led to an invasion of Abyssinia in 1935–36. The League attempted to publicly condemn Italy and apply economic sanctions, but the most effective target – oil – was exempted because the Allies feared Italy would just purchase oil from America, who was still following its isolationist policy at this time. Britain and France did not want to push Italy too hard because they wished to avoid upsetting Mussolini, which could possibly push the fascist leader towards an alliance with Germany. As such, the League failed to protect Abyssinia, which was defeated and occupied. To add further salt to the wound, Italy then joined with Germany and Japan to form an Anti-Comintern Pact and withdrew from the League in 1937. The League's credibility was destroyed and all confidence in its ability to settle disputes and avoid war was shattered.

When civil war broke out in Spain in 1936 between elements of the Spanish army led by General Franco and Spain's Republican Socialist Government, Italy and Germany intervened on the side of General Franco while the Soviet Union intervened on the side of the Spanish government. All three provided military advice as well as supplies; Germany's generals used the experience to develop and practice the devastating tactic of *Blitzkrieg*. Britain and France refused to get involved which meant the

League took no action; Franco's Nationalist forces eventually claimed victory in 1939. For many historians, the Spanish Civil War is considered a 'dress rehearsal' for the war that was then considered to be inevitable.

Quite clearly, both the League of Nations and the concept of collective security had failed dismally in their aims to solve major international disputes and avoid the conflict which was now just around the corner. When war was declared in September 1939, no one bothered to even inform the League.

Summary

- The maintenance of peace and the prevention of another war was a key goal of the Versailles Conference.
- The League of Nations was the brainchild of US President Woodrow Wilson. The League was written into the Treaty of Versailles and was designed to resolve international disputes, administer world justice and preserve peace.
- The League relied on the concept of collective security, which meant that if a member nation was attacked, the other members would come to their aid.
- Both military force and trade sanctions could be imposed.
- The League achieved many successes but its weaknesses led to many failures.
- The US Senate rejected American membership in the League out of fear of becoming involved in foreign conflicts, but also due to their long-held isolationist approach to foreign policy.
- The League failed to intervene and prevent the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, and the Spanish Civil War. When war was declared in September 1939, no one even bothered to inform the League.
- Unfortunately, the League lacked the authority required and failed in its objectives.

Key personalities, groups and terms

Personalities



Figure 10.3 Francisco Franco

Francisco Franco: a General who led his fascist forces, with the assistance of German and Italian support, to victory over the Socialist Government in the Spanish Civil War of 1936–39. Ruled Spain from 1939 until his death in 1975.

Benito Mussolini: fascist dictator of Italy from 1925 until his death in 1945

Woodrow Wilson: the 28th President of the United States from 1913–21. His Fourteen Points formed the basis of the Armistice of 1918. Played a major role in mediating the Paris Peace Conference that culminated in the Treaty of Versailles. He advocated for an 'enduring peace' which he believed could be achieved through the creation of the League of Nations.



Figure 10.4 Woodrow Wilson

Terms

Blitzkrieg (lightning war): a combined surprise attack by aircraft, armoured Panzer divisions and soldiers in a concentrated attack on the enemy's defences

internationalism: the ideal of cooperation and understanding between nations. A focus on the common good of all nations

nationalism: the promotion of the interests of one's own nation above all others

sanctions: a coercive measure adopted by several nations acting together against a nation violating international law

Treaty of Versailles: the peace treaty which formally ended World War I, signed 28 June 1919; the terms imposed on Germany were detested by the German people; before coming to power, Hitler promised to revise it

Activities

Thinking historically 10.1

1. Describe the purpose and power of the League of Nations.
2. Using the information in the text, create a timeline to show the successes and failures of the League of Nations.
3. Explain why the League of Nations failed to preserve peace.
4. Assess the significance of the League of Nations in the failed search for peace and security.

Source analysis 10.1

Examine Figure 10.2 on page 174 – political cartoon featuring Uncle Sam – to complete the following questions.

1. Explain the cartoonist's message in this source.
2. Why were Germany, Japan and the Soviet Union omitted from the cartoon?

10.3 Other attempts to secure peace in the interwar period

Other than the League of Nations, how else did nations attempt to secure peace and international security between the two World Wars?

FOCUS QUESTION

The following section has been included to provide historical context. Please note that it goes beyond the scope of the syllabus, and is not examinable.

Disarmament conferences

In an attempt to prevent the possibility of another war, from 1921–22 representatives from Great Britain, the US, Japan, France and Italy met in Washington D.C to work towards reducing their naval capacities. Also present

The Washington Naval Conference

to discuss disarmament and the growing tensions in East Asia were Belgium, China, Portugal and the Netherlands. While seven agreements emerged as a result of this conference, three major treaties are worth discussing:

- **The Five-Power Treaty:** Great Britain, the US and Japan agreed to accept a limitation on **capital ships** in the ratio of 5:5:3 respectively. France and Italy were restricted to 1.75 each. A limit was also placed on the tonnage of warships and the calibre of guns that could be used. Additionally, it prohibited the expansion of pre-existing naval bases in the Asia-Pacific region.
- **The Four-Power Treaty:** This replaced the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of 1902. Great Britain, the US, Japan, and France agreed to respect one another's rights in the Asia-Pacific region and consult with each other in the event of any potential crises before becoming involved.
- **The Nine-Power Treaty:** This was signed by all nine nations and reinforced both China's sovereignty and the United States' **Open Door Policy** in China.

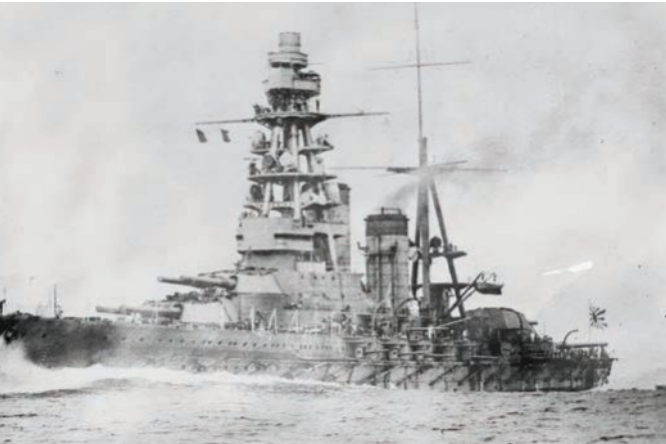


Figure 10.5 Japanese Battleship Mutsu, circa 1921. The ship exploded during the Battle of Midway in World War II.

These treaties served to maintain the status-quo by recognising each nation's interests in the Pacific region. It also resulted in a decrease in tensions and was a step in the right direction towards a reduction in armaments. However, there also emerged winners and losers; the US succeeded in limiting the scope of Japanese imperial expansion for the time being, but Japan was humiliated by the terms of the Shantung Treaty, which saw the province of Shantung returned to China. Undermining the effectiveness of the conference was the lack of provisions made for the adequate enforcement of the

treaties terms. Unfortunately the agreement collapsed altogether in 1934 after Great Britain and the US refused Japan's demand for parity.

The Geneva Naval Conference

In 1927, the US President Calvin Coolidge invited the other four nations from the 1922 Five-Power Treaty to meet and discuss extending the agreement to include other classes of vessels. France and Italy declined the invitation. Great Britain, the US and Japan each wanted to achieve something different from the conference. They could not agree on whether tonnage or the number of vessels should be used to measure naval equality. They were also in disagreement over the question of **cruisers**; Britain wanted to build more light cruisers while the US preferred heavy cruisers, which rendered the light cruisers useless in battle. To solve this problem, Great Britain believed the other two nations should build light ones as well. Great Britain also proposed a 'doctrine of requirements', which argued that the size of a nation's

navy should be dependent on the territory it needed to defend, while the US believed that it should be based on the size of other nation's navies. When the three countries could not come to an agreement over the question of cruisers, the conference ended without a treaty. The real significance of this failed negotiation can be found in the conference's purpose; instead of limiting the size of the navies, a potential new arms race had developed, which in turn increased tensions and undermined the search for peace.

Anxious to avoid an all-out naval arms race, a conference was held in London in 1930, with the main aim of reviewing and possibly extending the 1922 Washington treaties. After three months of negotiations, Great Britain, the US, Japan, France and Italy came to an agreement on the regulation of submarine warfare and a five-year suspension on the construction of capital ships. However, France and Italy refused to sign a treaty which limited battleship tonnage to the ratio of 10:10:7, as they were against the notion of ratios and inequality. Instead of limiting the capacities of their navies, the main result of the conference was actually an increase in shipbuilding.

London Naval Treaty

Another major attempt at maintaining peace and security by securing a reduction in armaments occurred in 1932 in Geneva, Switzerland, the home of the League of Nations. The delegates of the Geneva Disarmament Conference were optimistic that an agreement could be reached. Germany pleaded for arms equality, demanding that the Western powers reduce their land, air and sea power to Germany's levels, which had been severely restricted by the Treaty of Versailles. The Western powers conceded to a statement favouring the equality of armaments in principle. Unfortunately, fearing a strengthened Germany, France was hesitant to implement this principle and called for security guarantees, which Great Britain and the US were unwilling to provide. The conference adjourned and reconvened again just days after Hitler assumed power in Germany. Demanding immediate military equality, Hitler warned that if the Western powers refused this, Germany claimed the right to build up its armed forces. On 14 October 1933, Hitler suddenly withdrew from the Conference, and the League of Nations. Hesitant to enforce **sanctions** against Germany, the Western powers were faced with the prospect of having to increase their own armaments in preparation for war. National security had trumped international peace.

The Geneva Disarmament Conference



Figure 10.6 Postcard commemorating the International Disarmament Conference, 1932. Original caption: 'To be or not to be – disarmament or disaster. That is the question.'

A committed nationalist, German Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann believed that the optimal way to restore Germany's strength was to cooperate with the Western powers. So in December 1925, he suggested that representatives from Germany, France, Great Britain and Italy meet in the

The Locarno Treaty

Swiss town of Locarno to formally recognise the frontier between Germany and France-Belgium as set out by the Treaty of Versailles, including the transfer of Alsace-Lorraine and the demilitarisation of the Rhineland. Germany's total acceptance of the peace settlement in the West was a relief for the Western powers since it was a symbolic gesture that reinforced France's security. However, no such guarantee was provided by Germany concerning her eastern boundaries with Poland and Czechoslovakia as there was obviously hope within Germany that there still might be an opportunity to revise her frontier in the East. Another feature of the Treaty was the stipulation that any future changes would be made by arbitration rather than the use of force. In the following year Germany was accepted into the League of Nations, after having been previously excluded. To the Western powers, it seemed that progress had been made and the security of Europe had been strengthened. Historian Sally Marks views it differently. In her view, 'the public facade at Locarno and the treaties themselves had created an illusion of peace, and ordinary folk rejoiced. Misled by a false front Europe thankfully entered the Locarno years, thinking real peace had arrived at last' (S. Marks, *The Illusion of Peace: International relations in Europe 1918–1933*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). In March 1936 Hitler breached the treaty when he sent German troops into the Rhineland.



Figure 10.7 Map showing German frontiers after World War I

The Kellogg-Briand Pact was signed on 27 August 1928 by almost every country in the world after it was symbolically initialled in Paris and co-sponsored by the US. By signing, each nation ‘condemned recourse to war for the solution of international controversies’ and renounced war ‘as an instrument of national policy’. They also committed to resolve any potential disputes without the use of force. This was considered a turning point in history. The world reacted with much excitement and hopefulness, even if the Pact entailed no actual commitments to maintain peace and was more of a symbolic, and somewhat futile, promise.

The Kellogg-Briand Pact (Pact of Paris)

During the interwar period a number of **neutrality** acts were forged between nations in the spirit of preserving peace and their own national security. The signatories of these acts committed to either remaining neutral in the event of conflict, or promised not to take aggressive action against the other party. Unfortunately, these acts often proved more symbolic than concrete in nature, as many of these acts were violated after they were signed. The following timeline contains some of the acts signed during this period.

Overview of neutrality acts

CHRONOLOGY OF NEUTRALITY ACTS

- 1926** • Soviet-Lithuanian non-aggression pact
- 1932** • The Soviet Union signed a series of non-aggression pacts with Finland, Latvia, Estonia and Poland
- 1933** • Soviet-Italian non-aggression pact
- 1934** • German-Polish non-aggression pact
- 1935** • The US prohibited the export of arms, ammunition and implements of war to nations at war
- 1937** • US ships were prohibited from transporting foreign arms to nations at war
 - Belligerent nations were prohibited from sending their ships into US waters
- 1938** • Anglo-German non-aggression pact
- 1939** • Germany signed a series of neutrality acts with Denmark, Estonia, Latvia and the Soviet Union
 - The US ban on selling arms to nations at war was lifted, US ships were banned from transporting goods to belligerent nations, and trade with these nations was limited to those nations who could pay for goods immediately
- 1941** • Soviet-Yugoslav non-aggression pact
 - Soviet-Japanese neutrality act

Many critics of these neutrality acts argue that they did not represent a firm commitment to peace but rather they were a defensive measure to safeguard a nation’s security in the event of war.

As previously mentioned, isolationism had been unofficially adopted by successive American presidents since Washington had encouraged non-involvement in European politics. Historically, while the US was able to

American isolationism

expand its sphere of influence into South America and the Pacific, it had avoided becoming entangled in conflicts across the Atlantic Ocean. That is until the US became involved in World War I as a result of German submarine warfare and increasing public pressure. The high casualty rate suffered by US forces only served to strengthen the appeal of isolationism and contributed to Congress' decision to reject American involvement in the League of Nations. Their omission struck a decisive blow against the League's ability to maintain international peace.

Isolationism continued to influence American foreign policy during the 1930s, meaning that no action was taken in response to the Italian invasion of Abyssinia or Italian/German involvement in the Spanish Civil War. In terms of promoting peace and security, the US, while refusing to commit itself to any direct involvement, did formulate the **Stimson Doctrine** and signed a series of neutrality acts, more so in an effort to protect American citizens and interests than to preserve international peace.

The US only became directly involved in World War II on the side of the Allies after the surprise Japanese attack on the Pearl Harbor naval base in December 1941.

The impact of the Great Depression

The worst economic downturn in history, otherwise known as the Great Depression, began with the stock market crash of 29 October 1929. Billions of dollars were wiped off the US stock market and millions of investors were financially wiped out. The collapse of the US economy was to have global ramifications because most economies were dependent on US loans and markets, which were now almost non-existent.

The Great Depression was to have a significant impact on the search for peace and security in the 1930s for a number of reasons:

- Most nations found it difficult to raise funds to spend on armament programs, or to justify spending more money on defence.
- Many nations were focused on internal issues and re-building their economies and were reluctant to intervene in foreign conflicts.



Figure 10.8 The stock market crash of 29 October 1929 led to the Great Depression, a global economic catastrophe

- This in turn influenced governments to forge non-aggression pacts or to follow a policy of appeasement or isolationism.
- Many nations experienced a turnover in government as the ‘economic disaster was usually fatal to the party or parties unlucky enough to be in office when it struck’ (R. Stromberg, *Europe in the Twentieth Century 4th Ed*, Prentice Hall, 1997, p. 182). In the case of Germany, the impact of the Great Depression on the economy played a direct role in the rise of the Nazi Party, whose foreign policy goals would prove to be counterproductive to the search for peace and security.

The devastating impact of the Great Depression combined with the intense revulsion against war felt by all combatant nations involved in World War I was to play a decisive role in the years leading up to World War II. The populations of France, Britain, the US and other countries were overwhelmingly **pacifist**, meaning that their governments were more concerned with promoting peace and looking to safeguard their defences than waging aggressive war. Germany however was an exception. While the German people were also in no mood for another war, the level of public resentment felt towards the **Treaty of Versailles** played directly into Hitler’s hands. Additionally, he initially portrayed his foreign policy goals in the light of restoring Germany’s strength whilst stressing peaceful relations with neighbouring countries. This helps to explain how he was able to circumvent the German public’s aversion to war whilst achieving his foreign policy goals step-by-step.

In historian Roland Stromberg’s opinion, this overwhelming ‘feeling against war operated to inhibit preparations for war and thus inadvertently played into the Nazi dictator’s hands. He profited from the weakness of the democracies’ (R. Stromberg, *Europe in the Twentieth Century 4th Ed*, Prentice Hall, 1997, p. 218).

Appeasement is a concept most commonly associated with British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in the 1930s, and at this time it basically meant conceding to the demands of dictators in the hope of avoiding war. Britain was in no mood to engage in another war; the vivid memories of World War I and the effects of the Great Depression strongly influenced public opinion, which was overwhelmingly pacifist. Chamberlain wanted to avoid spending money on defence and believed that Hitler’s demands were reasonable. The French, by contrast, wanted to actively oppose Hitler’s moves, with force if necessary, but needed the support of Britain.

As such, no action was taken in response to German rearmament, the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, the remilitarisation of the Rhineland, the Spanish Civil War or the March 1938 annexation (*Anschluss*) of Austria into the German Reich. Great Britain even signed the Anglo-German Naval Agreement in June 1935.

Hitler then demanded the Sudetenland area of Czechoslovakia, a nation that was only formed in 1919 during the Paris Peace Conference.

The policy of appeasement

The Czechs were prepared to fight rather than hand the Sudetenland over to Hitler, and thus refused his demand. Hitler knew that despite having agreements with France and the Soviet Union, the land-locked nation was vulnerable; neither Britain nor France would be able to send in troops via any land route while Russia was itself suffering the devastating internal impact of the military and Communist Party purges under Joseph Stalin and was in no state to threaten the Wehrmacht. However, unlike the French, Great Britain did not have an alliance with Czechoslovakia and as such was not prepared to go to war for them.

The Munich Agreement and the end of appeasement

Chamberlain, Hitler, Mussolini and the French Prime Minister Daladier met in Munich in September 1938, excluding the Soviet Union and more importantly Czechoslovakia, who was not invited. Intent on maintaining peace in Europe and unprepared for war, the leaders gave Hitler the Sudetenland as he promised it would be his last territorial demand. The Czechs were browbeaten by the Western democracies even though they were prepared to fight and more than capable of taking on the Wehrmacht. Czechoslovakia reluctantly agreed to hand the Sudetenland and 700 000 of its citizens over to Germany on the condition that Hitler's aggressive behaviour cease immediately and promises were made to protect Czechoslovakia. However, these promises were worthless. On 15 March, German troops occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia and the policy of appeasement was abandoned.

Soon after, Hitler began to make demands on Poland regarding the disputed city of Danzig. Danzig had once belonged to Germany; however, the Treaty of Versailles had stipulated that it remain independent of either nation. When the Danzig crisis made it clear that Poland was Hitler's next target, the Allies stood firm. Britain issued a written guarantee of

Poland's security on 31 March 1939, a guarantee also backed by France. Poland was to be their last straw regarding German territorial demands. Historians have shown that Hitler thought the Allies would once again back down given their willingness to divide Czechoslovakia only six months earlier.

Critics of appeasement have suggested that it allowed Hitler to revise the Treaty of Versailles and strengthen the German army, as well as encouraging him to seek more demands and concessions. Historian Frank McDonough has argued that Chamberlain may have prevented war

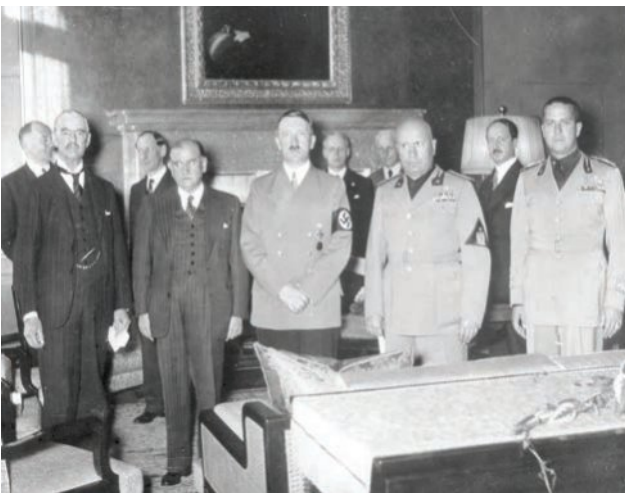


Figure 10.9 (From left to right, front row) British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, French Premier Edouard Daladier, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and Mussolini's son-in-law

if he had stood up to Hitler earlier. For McDonough, Chamberlain's policy of appeasement 'resembles a political and diplomatic crisis strategy led by a clear-sighted but obstinate prime minister who saw war as a real possibility and tried desperately to prevent it' (F. McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain, Appeasement, and the British Road to War*, Manchester University Press, 1998, p. 158). Conversely, historians like Peter Neville have suggested that appeasement was the only practical choice given Britain's public was overwhelmingly pacifist in the aftermath of World War I and its army run down, the Soviet Union was militarily weak and untrustworthy, America was withdrawn into isolationism, and the French were focused on internal divisions. Neville suggested that 'Britain historically had always been a great power which had preferred to settle disputes by diplomatic means' (P. Neville, *Hitler and Appeasement: The British attempt to prevent the Second World War*, Bloomsbury, 2007, p. xiii), meaning that appeasement in the 1930s was just a continuation of this approach.

Historians Robert Self and James Levy support the view that appeasement bought the British government crucial time in which to rearm. It is also important to remember that the British Empire also faced possible threats from Italy and Japan, so it is hardly surprising that Chamberlain crafted a foreign policy designed to avoid and deter a potentially devastating war for as long as possible.

Summary

- Numerous Disarmament Conferences were held in the interwar period, such as the Washington Naval Conference in 1921–22, and the Geneva Disarmament Conference. These aimed to reduce tensions between countries and hopefully avoid an arms race.
- Both the Locarno Treaty and Kellogg-Briand Pact, while not achieving anything concrete, were a cause for celebration in terms of maintaining international security.
- A number of treaties and neutrality agreements were forged during the period as well. They represented the world's hopes of safeguarding international security in the face of growing militarism.
- However, some historians believe that these so-called non-aggression pacts were not forged in the spirit of maintaining peace, but rather as a defensive measure to safeguard a nation's security in the event of war.
- The Great Depression had a significant impact on defence spending, encouraging governments to forge non-aggression pacts or to follow a policy of appeasement or isolationism.
- The impact of the Great Depression along with the memories of the horror of World War I combined to promote an atmosphere of pacifism. As such, earnest attempts were made to secure international peace because voters were unwilling to face the prospect of another war.
- The policy of appeasement helped to prevent the outbreak of war but only until 1939.
- However, appeasement also meant emboldening the ambitions of Hitler and Mussolini by giving into their demands.



Figure 10.10 Neville Chamberlain

Personalities

Neville Chamberlain: British Prime Minister from 1937–40. Followed a policy of appeasement in his dealings with Adolf Hitler and Mussolini as he wanted to avoid war.

Winston Churchill: British Prime Minister from 1940–45. A staunch critic of appeasement, he united the British people in their fight against Nazism. A talented diplomat and orator.



Figure 10.11 Winston Churchill



Figure 10.12 Calvin Coolidge

Calvin Coolidge: the 30th President of the United States from 1923–29. Played a lead role in the 1927 Geneva Naval Conference, which ultimately failed to produce a treaty.

Gustav Stresemann: German Chancellor in 1923. He also served as German Foreign Minister from 1923–29, during which time he was responsible for the reconciliation between France and Germany which came about as a result of the Locarno Treaty of 1925.



Figure 10.13 Gustav Stresemann

Terms

Anschluss: term used to define the union between Germany and Austria carried out by Hitler in 1938. Forbidden under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles

arms race: the increasingly competitive procurement of offensive armaments or spending on the military

appeasement: a policy of making concessions to avoid war; policy of Britain and France towards Germany during 1935–39

capital ships: large warships, such as aircraft carriers and battleships

cruisers: a class of warship

disarmament: the policy of reducing or abolishing a nation's military forces and armaments

neutrality: a country's decision to not take a side or become involved during a war or dispute

pacifist: a person or group/country who refuses on principle to take part in war

Stimson Doctrine: formulated by President Herbert Hoover and Secretary of State Henry Stimson in 1932 in response to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931. The doctrine stated that the US would not recognise any territory gained by acts of aggression or treaties that violated US rights.

10.4 Germany's ambitions in Europe

How did the ambitions of Adolf Hitler undermine attempts to secure peace and international security?

FOCUS QUESTION

As we know from Chapter 5, Nazi ideology consisted of the belief in Aryan racial supremacy, anti-Semitism, anti-communism and an acceptance of militarism. Hitler believed that a focus on German racial purity would lead

What were Hitler and the Nazis' foreign policy goals?



Figure 10.14 Map of German territorial gains, 1936–39

to the emergence of a *Herrenvolk*, which would require raw materials and slave labour to survive. As such, Nazi foreign policy was directly influenced by Hitler's racial aims and desire for *Lebensraum*. This meant territorial expansion, most notably in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Additionally, Hitler aimed to restore the honour of Germany in the international world and to destroy the legacy of the Weimar Republic. This was to be achieved by strengthening Germany again, a goal which could only be attained by revising the despised Treaty of Versailles, reclaiming all territory lost after World War I, uniting all German-speaking people into a greater Reich, achieving self-sufficiency and dominating all enemies, especially France. Thus, the goals of Nazi foreign policy were to set Germany on a collision course with the western democracies. In historian Michael Burleigh's opinion, 'Hitler was not seeking to reset the balance of European power, in the interests of justice for Germany, but to destroy it ...' (M. Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*, Pan Books, 2000, pp. 269–70).

In working towards these foreign policy goals, Hitler believed an alliance with England and Italy would be beneficial. England was an Aryan and anti-communist country with a mutual history which would make them unique allies in the fight against the Jewish and Communist conspiracy. And Italy, a fascist state, would make for a natural ideological ally for the Nazi State. While the Anglo-German alliance never eventuated, Germany and Italy signed the following agreements; the 1936 Rome-Berlin Axis, the 1937 Anti-Comintern Pact, and the 1939 Pact of Steel.

Foreign policy achievements

Hitler withdrew Germany from the League of Nations and the Disarmament Conference in 1933, after Germany had for many years unsuccessfully appealed for arms equality. This demonstrated Hitler's contempt for the Treaty of Versailles. From this moment on, the Wehrmacht began a remarkable increase in the level of weaponry and the number of soldiers at its disposal. In 1935 Hitler re-introduced conscription and signed the Anglo-German Naval Agreement which regulated the German navy to the ratio of 35% of the British navy, and in the following year 30 000 German soldiers occupied the demilitarised Rhineland; all three actions were prohibited under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, as was the *Anschluss* with Austria in March 1938. Hitler followed this by requesting the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia in October; the Sudetenland contained more than three million allegedly oppressed ethnic Germans, as well as the highly prized Skoda Works, the largest munitions complex in Europe. In Hitler's eyes, this area of Czechoslovakia which intruded itself into Germany like a sore thumb was to become part of an extended Third Reich 'at any cost'. Hitler promised that it would be his last territorial demand. Historian Roland Stromberg claimed that Hitler was capable of skilful acting, even as he was 'at times a raging madman, he could be charming, relaxed, or totally calm and composed as the situation demanded. He accompanied



Figure 10.15 Satirical cartoon by Derso and Kelen, showing Hitler playing with all the statesmen at the Munich Conference

each of his daring thrusts with soothing words, promising that this would be Germany's final demand' (R. Stromberg, *Europe in the Twentieth Century 4th Ed*, Prentice Hall, 1997, p. 229).

At the Munich Conference in September 1938, the governments of Britain and France, who were adhering to the policy of appeasement at the time, granted Hitler's request. The following March, Germany invaded the remainder of Czechoslovakia and the policy of appeasement was abandoned.

Despite their natural intense dislike for one another and the conflicting nature of their ideologies, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union shocked the world with the announcement of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact on 23 August 1939. Hitler wanted a free hand to invade Poland without the fear of Soviet intervention; primarily to avoid a two-front war. Germany's quest for *Lebensraum* in the East would be achieved once Britain and France were defeated. Feeling exposed to German invasion, Joseph Stalin wanted to buy time to prepare Soviet defences. The two enemies (and great opportunists) agreed not to go to war with each other for ten years and to remain neutral in the event of a conflict. A secret clause in the agreement confirmed German recognition of Russian interests in eastern Poland, Finland and the Baltic states while Germany could take Western Poland and Lithuania.

As soon as his army was ready, Hitler ordered the invasion of Poland to begin on 1 September 1939; with no ultimatum or declaration of war, fifty German divisions invaded Poland and ignored Allied demands to withdraw. Two days later, Britain and France declared war on Germany, purely as a diplomatic gesture in order to maintain their prestige as Great Powers; the Poles were unaware that little could be done to aid their sovereignty. Hitler had hoped the Allies would not react as they did; he was prepared for a short war, not a general European war.

Precursor to war

Summary

- Nazi foreign policy was directly influenced by Hitler's racial views and desire for *Lebensraum*.
- Germany's ambitions included restoring Germany's military strength, uniting all Germans, achieving self-sufficiency, revising the Treaty of Versailles, and achieving *Lebensraum*. These were to set Germany on a collision course with the Western powers.
- Nazi Germany sought to forge alliances with Britain and Italy.
- Due in part to the policy of appeasement, Hitler was able to withdraw from the League of Nations, rearm Germany, occupy the Rhineland, unite with Austria, and claim the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia.
- With each territorial acquisition, Hitler proclaimed that it would be his last.
- Before he could invade Poland, Hitler required a guarantee of Soviet neutrality in order to avoid a repeat of a two-front war. The resulting Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact shocked the world.
- The German invasion of Poland 1 September 1939 marked the beginning of World War II.



Figure 10.16 Joseph Stalin

Key personalities, groups and terms

Personalities

Joseph Stalin: Undisputed dictator of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) from 1928 until his death in 1953. His policies of collectivisation and industrialisation helped the Soviet Union to strengthen during the 1930s. He was also responsible for the deaths of millions of Russians who died from starvation or were sent to Gulags (work camps).

Terms

Aryan: non-Jewish individuals; considered to be northern European in appearance

Comintern: the Communist International, a Soviet organisation given the task of spreading Communist revolutions throughout the world

Herrenvolk: German term meaning 'master race'

Lebensraum: German for 'living space'; to be acquired in Eastern Europe

Wehrmacht: the German Army during World War II

Activities

Thinking historically 10.2

1. Explain what influenced Nazi foreign policy.
2. Outline Hitler's foreign policy goals.
3. Do you agree with Michael Burleigh's view that Hitler was looking to destroy the balance of European power?

4. Explain why Hitler was seeking to form an alliance with Britain.
5. Using information from the text, create a timeline to show the main events in Nazi foreign policy in the 1930s.
6. Assess the significance of the German invasion of Czechoslovakia.
7. How useful is historian Roland Stromberg's description of Hitler's acting to our understanding of how he was able to accomplish his foreign policy goals?
8. Research the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact. What terms were included in this Pact? What were the motives of both leaders in wanting to negotiate this Pact?
9. Evaluate the importance of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact in contributing to the outbreak of World War II.
10. Explain how the ambitions of Nazi Germany undermined the search for international peace and security.

Source analysis 10.2

Examine Figure 10.14 on page 187 – map of German territorial gains – and complete the questions which follow.

1. Explain why Austria and the Sudetenland were targeted for territorial acquisition.
2. Can you think of any reasons to explain why France was not targeted at this stage?
3. Explain why Poland would be an inevitable victim of Hitler's territorial ambitions.

10.5 Japan's ambitions in the Asia-Pacific region

How did the Western powers attempt to curtail Japan's imperialistic ambitions?

FOCUS QUESTION

Japan's quest for equality

American Commodore Perry arrived in Japan in 1853, requesting the country open itself to trade and treaties with the Western world. Wishing to avoid the same fate as China, which had been carved up by the colonial powers, the Japanese Government did not resist, and opened itself to Western influence. Within half a century, Japan had transformed into a modern, industrial power that had the capacity to defeat China in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95, and, more significantly, defeated the Russian Empire in the **Russo-Japanese War** of 1904–05. Involvement in World War I on the side of the Allies heralded Japan's arrival as a genuine world power and Japan was rewarded with the grant of a **mandate** over Germany's former Pacific Island possessions it had seized during the war, specifically the Mariana, Caroline and Marshall Islands. Japan was also included in the Big Five powers but, significantly, was not considered their equal. American President Woodrow Wilson opposed Japanese territorial claims in China, but instead recognised Japan's special rights in Shantung, China, for the time being anyway. The final blow was the unwillingness of the Western



Figure 10.17 Japanese painting showing the destruction of Russian cruisers during a naval battle of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05 which Japan won, announcing itself as a modern power on the world stage

powers to recognise Japan's proposal to include a clause of racial equality in the League of Nations.

Growing resentment

The growing resentment Japan felt towards its perceived unequal treatment was only exacerbated by the 1921–22 Washington Naval Conference. While it did ease tensions and ensured Japan's superiority in the Western Pacific, China's successful plea to regain Shantung from the Japanese was humiliating, and the inferior battleship ratio created resentment in Japan's military circles. The London Naval Treaty of 1930 only aggravated this resentment and discontent; the United States pressed the Japanese Government to accept a 10:6 interim ratio on heavy cruiser construction. This aroused patriotic opposition within Japan and almost triggered a constitutional crisis, with naval officials accusing the government of violating the emperor's right of supreme command.

Japan was discontent with their treatment during the Treaty of Versailles, which was exacerbated by the Washington Naval Conference and London Naval Treaty, and this combined with internal economic and social issues to influence foreign policy in the 1930s. There was a growing belief that domination in East Asia was essential for Japan's security and self-sufficiency. By the late 1920s, the Chinese Nationalist Party, led by Chiang Kai-Shek, began to pose a threat to Japanese interests in the region. In addition, the increasing power of Stalin's Soviet Union placed Japanese interests in northern China and Manchuria at risk, which helps to explain why Japan signed the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany and Italy, only to be humiliated when Hitler signed the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact in 1939.

In September 1931, field army officers of the Kwantung Army stationed in Manchuria, without orders from Tokyo, triggered a skirmish with Chinese soldiers on the South Manchurian Railway. This triggered a full-scale invasion and the defeat of Chinese forces. While the civilian

Japanese government was initially shocked by the army acting without orders, they soon declared that Manchuria, with its fertile land and rich mineral deposits, was now Manchukuo, a Japanese state. This marked the beginning of the Sino-Japanese conflict. Condemned by the League of Nations for its illegal action, Japan resigned from the League in 1933 and abandoned the Washington Naval Conference agreement the following December.

As the balance of governmental power gradually shifted away from the political parties in favour of the military, **internationalism** had clearly been replaced by a growing sense of **nationalism** which was spurred on by Japanese perceptions of their unequal treatment by the Western colonial powers. An expansionist foreign policy became increasingly appealing in light of this treatment and the growing threats of China and the Soviet Union. Expanding the empire by force seemed a logical step in securing Japan's place in the world and would secure the raw materials and markets Japan required to continue its climb to become a key industrial nation.



Figure 10.18 A Japanese soldier during the Second Sino-Japanese War, 1938

The 7 July 1937 Marco Polo Bridge incident outside Beijing began as a skirmish between Chinese and Japanese troops and evolved into an invasion of China proper, although Japanese forces were never able to take possession of the country as a whole. Strongly opposed to Japan's actions, the US encouraged a moral **embargo** on the trade of strategic materials to Japan. According to historian Elise Tipton, 'Even after the war with China began ... Japanese leaders did not anticipate or prepare for a Pacific war with the United States. Japanese army leaders instead looked upon the Soviet Union as the potential enemy ... [in their] calculations, the USA did not have enough interests in China to go to war over, but they did not perceive that America's Asia policy was not a regional one, but a global one' (E. Tipton, *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History*, Routledge, New York, 2002, p. 122).

Hitler's invasion of Poland in September 1939 triggered the start of World War II in Europe. The Western colonial powers of Britain, France and the Netherlands were distracted by Germany's impressive early victories in Europe, creating a power vacuum in South-East Asia. It was the opportune time for Japan to launch its bid to increase the empire's sphere of influence.

Building an empire

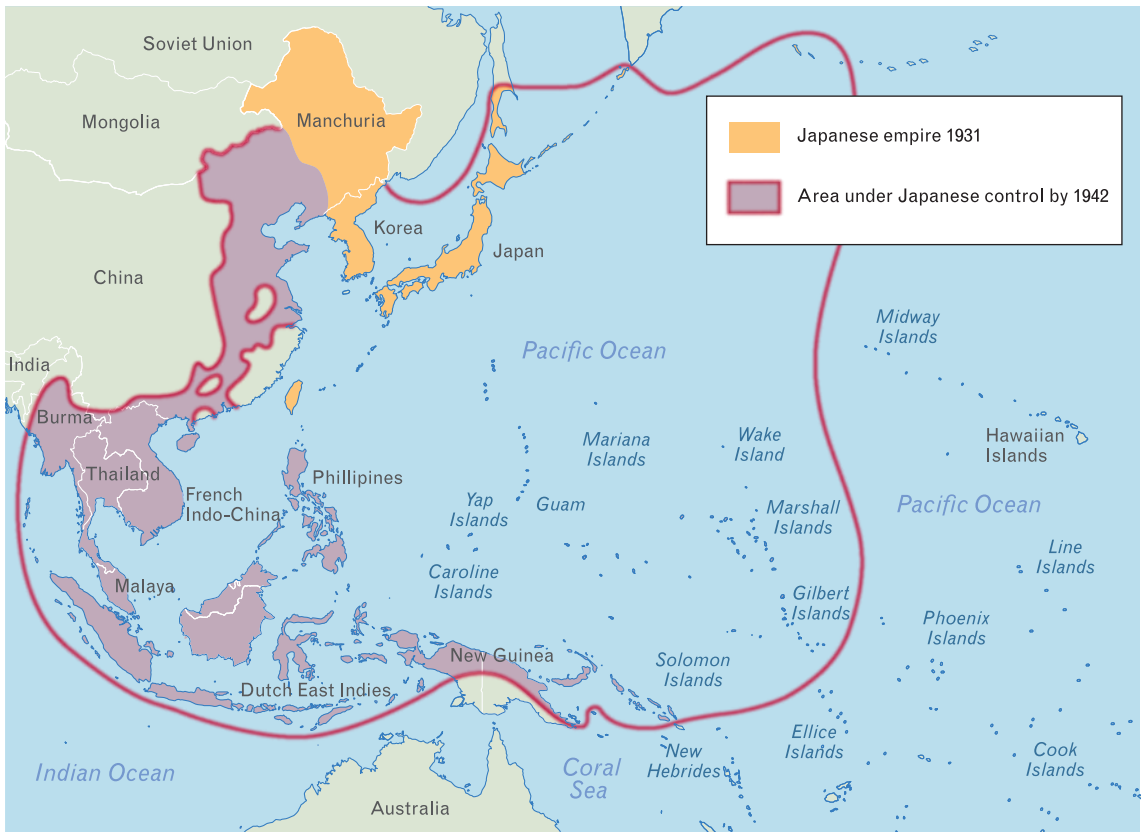


Figure 10.19 Map of the Japanese empire

Precursor to war

After Japan signed the Tripartite Pact to form the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis in September 1940 and started troop movements in French Indochina, the US imposed an embargo on iron and steel scrap, and then on all war materials with the exception of oil. This was followed in 1941 with the freezing of Japanese assets and an oil embargo in July. This only served to reinforce Japanese perceptions of encirclement and strangulation by the Western powers. Dependent on imports of raw materials in order to survive, Japan needed to either refrain from its aggressive expansionist ambitions or advance swiftly into South-East Asia to secure the resources it now desperately needed. Oil could be secured by conquering the Dutch (Netherlands) East Indies. Such a move was justified by Prime Minister Matsuoka Yōsuke’s announcement in August 1940 that Japan intended to establish a **Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere**; this would be a self-sufficient coalition of Asian nations led by Japan rather than one under the yoke of the Western colonial powers. The reality turned out to be quite different. The main obstacle that stood in their way was the US, whose overwhelming size, economic strength and military power would prove victorious in the long term. The solution? A surprise attack on the US’ Pacific Fleet, stationed in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. This would allow Japan



Figure 10.20 Smoke chokes the air during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, 7 December 1941

to continue its expansion into South-East Asia and the Pacific unimpeded. Planned by Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Commander of the First Fleet, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor took place on 7 December 1941, before any formal declaration of war. The war in the Pacific had now begun. For the Japanese, this war was to be one between the ‘have’ and the ‘have not’ nations.

Summary

- After the arrival of Commodore Perry in 1853, Japan set about becoming a modern, industrial power with the capacity to defeat China and the Russian Empire.
- Japan fought in World War I on the side of the Allies and was rewarded with a mandate over Germany’s former Pacific colonies. However, Japan was disappointed to not be considered an equal to the great powers.
- The discontent and resentment felt by the Japanese government was further exacerbated by their unequal treatment in the Washington and London Naval Treaties.
- There was a growing belief in Japan that domination in South-East Asia was essential for Japan’s security and self-sufficiency.
- In 1931 Japanese forces invaded Manchuria and established the puppet state Manchukuo.
- This was followed up by the 1937 Marco Polo Bridge incident.
- Japan’s expansion into French Indochina was met with embargoes from the US. This in turn influenced the decision to expand further into South-East Asia and also to attack the US naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Key personalities, groups and terms



Figure 10.21 Isoroku Yamamoto

Personalities

Isoroku Yamamoto: admiral of the Imperial Japanese Navy. Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Japanese Fleet who planned the surprise air and submarine attack on the US naval base of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in 1941.

Matsuoka Yōsuke: diplomat and Minister of Foreign Affairs in Japan. Famously walked out of the League of Nations talks concerning Japan's invasion of Manchuria. Negotiated the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy in 1940 and the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact in 1941.



Figure 10.22 Berlin, Germany: Adolf Hitler, Japanese Foreign Minister Yōsuke Matsuoka, and Japanese Ambassador Hiroshi Oshima wave from Hitler's balcony, 1941

Groups

Kwantung Army: a group within the Imperial Japanese Army stationed in Manchuria to protect Japanese economic interests.

Chinese Nationalist Party: also referred to as the Kuomintang, a Chinese political party founded in 1912. Dominated by Chiang Kai-Shek from 1928 until 1975. The Party ruled China from 1927–49.

Terms

Comintern: the Communist International, a Soviet organisation given the task of spreading communist revolutions throughout the world

embargo: a governmental order prohibiting trade with a country

mandate: authoritative command over a subject nation

Open Door Policy: a US policy that encouraged all countries to have equal access to China in the early twentieth century

Activities

Thinking historically 10.3

1. Explain why Japan was disappointed by the treatment it received at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.
2. Outline the terms of the Washington and London Naval Treaties. How did they influence Japanese ambitions?
3. Describe the direction of Japan's foreign policy ambitions.
4. Explain why Japan signed the Anti-Comintern Pact.

5. Assess the significance of Japan's invasion of Manchuria and subsequent withdrawal from the League of Nations.
6. Do you agree with historian Elise Tipton's view that Japanese leaders did not anticipate or prepare for a Pacific War with the US? Give reasons for your answer.
7. Assess the impact of Hitler's invasion of Poland on Japanese ambitions.
8. Outline the US response to Japanese aggression in French Indochina. What affect did this response have?
9. Define the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.
10. Describe the objective of the attack on Pearl Harbor.
11. Explain how the ambitions of Nazi Germany and Japan undermined the search for international peace and security.

Source analysis 10.3

Examine Figure 10.19 on page 194 – map of the Japanese empire – and complete the questions which follow.

1. Using the map and your own knowledge, explain why China and the USSR posed threats to Japan's imperialistic ambitions.
2. Aside from the US (in the Philippines), which other colonial powers had interests in South-East Asia?
3. Using the map and your own knowledge, explain why the US naval base of Pearl Harbor was targeted by the Japanese navy.
4. How close did Japanese forces get to the Australian mainland during World War II?

10.6 The search for peace fails: World War II

What was the general course of World War II?

FOCUS QUESTION

The following section has been included to provide historical context. Please note that it goes beyond the scope of the syllabus and is not examinable.

Poland's capital, Warsaw, fell on 28 September 1939, and by November, the Germans occupied the west while the Soviets controlled the east. After the fall of Poland, there was little actual fighting in what was labelled a 'Phoney War'. However, this came to an abrupt end by the spring of 1940, when Hitler's forces attacked and rapidly occupied five unprepared neutral countries: Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium. Hitler's forces then entered and defeated France in just six weeks, forcing the British Army in France to retreat across the English Channel from Dunkirk. France officially surrendered on 25 June and German forces occupied northern France while the rest of the country was left under a puppet French government, in the town of Vichy. Italy joined the war on Germany's side and invaded Greece in October 1940.

1939–40



Figure 10.23 A photo taken from a German Heinkel He 111 bomber during a Luftwaffe raid over London, in the Battle of Britain in 1940

The Luftwaffe's defeat in the Battle of Britain ended all hopes of a German invasion of Britain. Having turned his attention to the east, Hitler still ordered the Luftwaffe to continue bombing Britain's major cities, centres of industry and ports. To hit back at Germany, Prime Minister Churchill ordered Britain's Bomber Command to launch an all-out bombing offensive of Germany's major cities; over 750 000 civilians were killed.

Knowing that the colonial powers of Britain, France and the Netherlands were distracted dealing with German advances in Europe, in September 1940 Japanese forces began their occupation of northern French Indochina and the US responded by placing a total embargo on scrap metal shipments to Japan.

1941 Hitler launched the invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, nicknamed Operation Barbarossa. German commanders believed that they would achieve a quick victory against the larger, but presumably



Figure 10.24 Key events in Europe during World War II

primitive and weak, Soviet forces. The German Army, utilising *Blitzkrieg* tactics, achieved some early successes. However, the German confidence was misplaced as their three-pronged advance began to slow down and by January 1942, the Wehrmacht had lost more than 750 000 troops and Operation Barbarossa had failed.

Meanwhile, Japanese forces invaded southern French Indochina before launching a pre-emptive surprise attack on the US naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on 7 December 1941. This event marked the beginning of World War II in the Pacific. Within three days, two British warships were sunk off the coast of Malaya by the Japanese navy. Germany and Italy declared war on the US in support of their ally on 11 December.

Also in 1941, Erwin Rommel and his Afrika Korps were sent by Hitler to the Western Desert to rescue the Italian Army which had been defeated by the British Army in Egypt. By June 1942 Rommel had recovered most of the territory lost to the Allies and was then threatening Cairo and Egypt's Suez Canal. However, the tide began to turn against the Germans after the Second Battle of El Alamein in October 1942 saw the British Eighth Army defeat Rommel's Afrika Korps. Meanwhile, a US-led invasion of Morocco and Algeria landed on 8 November. In May 1943 the remnants of the Italian-German Army surrendered in Tunisia.

1942 Now Commander-in-Chief on the Eastern Front, Hitler ordered an attack on Stalingrad which lasted for five months between August 1942 and February 1943. Soviet victory in this battle shattered the myth of German invincibility. The German Army was now on the defensive and engaged in a war on two-fronts.

Continuing their advance into South-East Asia, Japanese forces invaded the Malayan Peninsula and forced the surrender of British forces in Singapore on 15 February. By mid-year, Japanese forces had also invaded and conquered the Dutch East Indies, the American-controlled Philippines, and the British colony of Burma. However, the Japanese Imperial Navy suffered two major defeats against the US navy; the first was the Battle of the Coral Sea 4–8 May and the second was the Battle of Midway 4–7 June. The Japanese Army also experienced its first major setback on land; having engaged Australian forces on the Kokoda Track in New Guinea, Japanese forces were stopped just 50 kilometres from Port Moresby. Pushed back over the Owen Stanley Mountain Range, the Japanese New Guinea campaign ended when Allied forces captured Buna and Sanananda in January 1943.

1943 Anglo-American forces soon invaded Italy and, after deposing Mussolini, the Italians quickly surrendered, signing an armistice with the Allies in September. The German forces in Italy maintained fierce resistance up to the

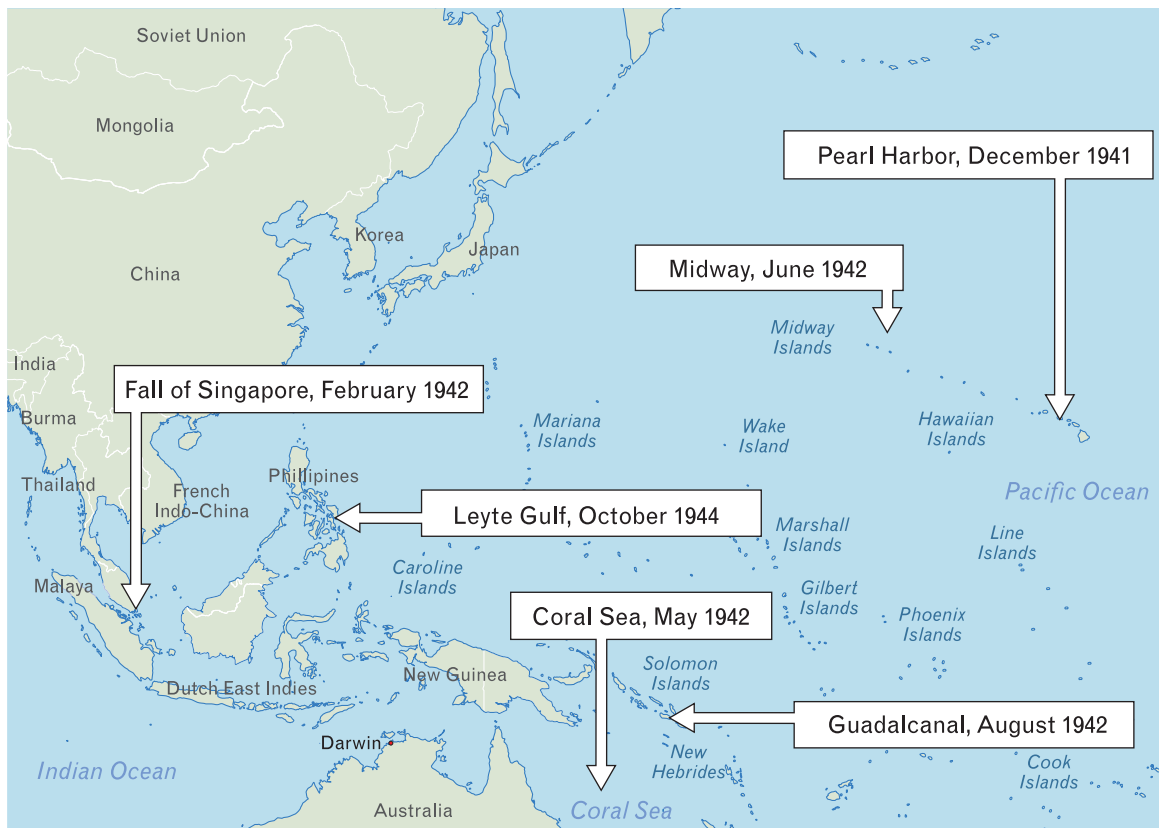


Figure 10.25 Key events in the Asia-Pacific during World War II

end of the war. At the Tehran Conference in November 1943, Churchill and Roosevelt promised Stalin that they would launch an invasion of Western Europe in the spring of 1944; Operation Overlord was to be the springboard that launched the Allies into France and all the way to Germany.

A month after their defeat in the New Guinea campaign, Japanese forces were forced to withdraw from Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. This was followed by the destruction of a Japanese fleet near Rabaul. By the end of the year, American naval forces had begun their advance through the Central Pacific towards Japan.

The initial invasion force of Operation Overlord landed on the beaches of Normandy on 6 June 1944. By August, the now more than two million Allied troops in France began the slow sweep eastward, aided in their quest by the French Resistance. Meanwhile, the shattered German forces streamed back towards their border; German forces surrendered Paris on 25 August. The Allied armies continued forwards on their victory march, liberating most of France and Belgium as they went.

From the beginning of August, the well-equipped Russians began to advance against the outnumbered Germans, constantly wearing them down but never breaking their front. German forces were pushed back from the Baltic States by October.

With the Allies slowly advancing in the west and the Russian steamroller pushing the Wehrmacht back in the east it was only a matter of time before German forces collapsed completely.

In the Pacific, Allied forces continued their counteroffensives, with American troops retaking Saipan, Tinian, and Guam. These strategically important islands were within range of the outer Japanese islands and allowed the American forces to begin bombing raids.

On 22 March 1945, the Americans crossed the Rhine into Germany and a month later the Soviets took Berlin. Hitler committed suicide in his bunker beneath the Reich Chancellery in Berlin on 30 April, two days after Mussolini had been executed by Italian resistance fighters. Despite offering to surrender in the West and continue fighting in the East, Germany surrendered her armies in the West unconditionally to General Eisenhower on 7 May. The Western Allies celebrated VE Day on 8 May, while the Russians received a similar capitulation that same day.

1944



Figure 10.26 US soldiers on the way to land on the beaches of Normandy, France, during D-Day, 6 June 1944

1945



Figure 10.27 Red Army soldiers fly the flag of the USSR over the Reichstag in Berlin on 30 April 1945 – the same day Hitler committed suicide

In February and March, American forces captured the Japanese island of Iwo Jima and by June the island of Okinawa was also captured. Allied forces were now in a position to launch an invasion of the Japanese mainland. But the cost in lives was likely to be too great.

At the Potsdam Conference in July–August, the Allies called on Japan to surrender unconditionally. When this didn't occur, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima on 6 August; upwards of 80 000 people were killed instantly. Two days later the Soviet Union declared war on Japan and began the invasion of Manchuria. The very next day the US controversially dropped a second atomic bomb, this time on the city of Nagasaki. The US insisted on their surrender, and so Emperor Hirohito signed the formal surrender of Japan on board the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on 2 September. World War II had finally come to an end.

War crimes trials were held by the victorious Allies in both theatres of war – Europe and the Pacific. Political and military leaders of both Japan and Germany were tried for conspiracy to wage aggressive war, crimes against peace, crimes against

humanity and war crimes. However, the trials were tainted by victor's justice as Allied war crimes were completely omitted. According to historian Roland Stromberg, 'those who won the war wreaked vengeance on the defeated under a thin guise of legality, while refusing to countenance any discussion of their own crimes' (*Europe in the Twentieth Century*, p. 289).

10.7 The intentions and authority of the United Nations

FOCUS QUESTION

How did the United Nations hope to avoid the same fate as the League of Nations?

From conception to fruition

Much like US President Woodrow Wilson during World War I, the leaders of the great Allied nations were already giving thought to the post-war world before the Axis powers had even been defeated. In October 1943, representatives from Great Britain, the US, the Soviet Union and China met in Moscow to sign a declaration which called for the early establishment of an international organisation to maintain peace and security.

This became known as the Moscow Declaration. Two months later, the Big Three – wartime allies British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the Soviet Union’s Joseph Stalin – met in Tehran, Iran. In addition to discussing the coordinated offensives against Germany to take place in mid-1944, the three leaders also issued a guarantee to remain united until victory over Nazism was achieved, and they reaffirmed their commitment to establishing an international organisation to secure an enduring peace. This organisation was to become the United Nations.



Figure 10.28 (From left to right) Joseph Stalin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill pose in front of the Russian Embassy during the Tehran Conference

On 7 October 1944, representatives from the four signatories of the Moscow Declaration established a structure for the organisation proclaimed in Clause 4 of the Declaration:

That they recognise the necessity of establishing at the earliest practicable date a general international organisation, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving states, and open to membership by all such states, large and small, for the maintenance of international peace and security.

They proposed four bodies; a General Assembly to discuss international cooperation; a Security Council whose responsibility it was to prevent war; an International Court of Justice; and a Secretariat. Since then, the International Criminal Court and the Economic and Social Council have been added.

World War II had proved to be even more devastating than the conflict of 1914–18; Europe had to be rebuilt, national boundaries needed to be redrawn, and up to 75 million souls had perished, including the genocide of six million European Jews. In addition, the Cold War between Western democracy and Soviet Communism was just beginning while at the same time the Asian colonies of France, Britain and the Netherlands began agitating for independence. These were just some of the challenges facing the victorious Allies as they set about attempting to secure a lasting peace.

Forty-six nations were originally invited to the San Francisco Conference in 1945. These nations had to have declared war on Germany and Japan and subscribed to the United Nations Declaration of 1 January 1942.

The birth of the United Nations

Fifty nations would eventually be represented at the conference. The objective of this conference was to produce a United Nations Charter that was satisfactory to all countries. After four years of planning, and many months of negotiations and hard work, the Charter of the United Nations was signed on 26 June 1945, and the organisation designed to end war and promote peace and justice for all humankind came into existence on 24 October 1945. One of the main priorities of the United Nations was to:

Achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.

As such, the intentions of the United Nations can be summarised in four points:

- To maintain peace throughout the world
- To promote and foster friendly relations among nations
- To assist nations to work together to improve the lives of poor people, to overcome hunger, disease and illiteracy, and to encourage respect for each other's rights and freedoms
- To act as a centre for harmonising the actions of nations to achieve these goals.

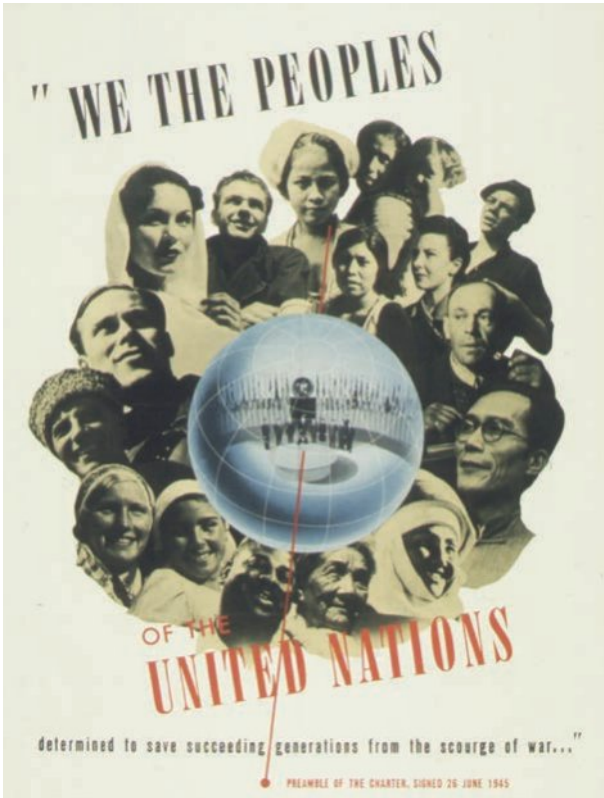


Figure 10.29 A poster from around 1945 promoting the United Nations

The United Nations' power and authority

While every nation has an equal voice in the General Assembly, the real power resides in the Security Council, which was charged with the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. Its five permanent members were the victors of World War II: China, the Soviet Union, France, the US and Britain. The other 10 non-permanent members were given rotating two-year terms, but only the permanent five had or have the power to **veto** any measure. To carry out its charge, the UN Charter granted the Security Council the power to approve peacekeeping missions, issue ceasefire orders, impose sanctions, and to determine the existence of a threat to the peace and to authorise the use of force to deal with the threat. Other enforcement measures include: blockades, arms embargoes, travel restrictions, financial penalties or the severance of diplomatic relations. All member states are bound by its decisions.

There have been no wars on the scale of World War I or II since the United Nations was founded, though how much credit the UN can take for that is a matter for argument. Over the past 70 years it has played a direct role in saving millions from poverty, disease, and starvation, and has played a pivotal role in improving educational outcomes across the world.

The following timeline highlights some of the major achievements of the United Nations since its inception.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

- 1945** • The World Bank (International Monetary Fund) was created to promote healthy international trade
- 1946** • The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, which promotes international cooperation in education, science, culture and communication) is established
- The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, which supports disadvantaged children throughout the world) is established
- Adoption of a disarmament resolution prohibiting the A-Bomb
- 1948** • Adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; founding of the World Health Organisation (WHO, which directs international health and responds to global health emergencies)
- 1951** • Adoption of the Convention on Refugees, the charter for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This outlined the rights of those who flee their country for fear of death or persecution
- 1953** • The UN mediated an armistice to end the Korean War (1950–53)
- 1956** • The UN organised a ceasefire between Israel and Egypt
- 1959** • The UN passed its Declaration of the Rights of the Child
- 1962** • The General Assembly condemned South Africa for its discriminatory policy of apartheid
- 1968** • The General Assembly approved a Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
- 1972** • The World Heritage Convention is adopted which eventually places over 800 global heritage sites under its protection
- 1974** • The General Assembly recognised Palestine's sovereignty and national independence
- 1979** • Adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
- 1989** • The International Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was established to protect the economic, social and civil rights of children
- The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species imposed a complete ban on ivory trade
- 1991** • The Security Council issued a ceasefire to end the Gulf War

- 1993** • The UN Chemical Weapons Convention banned the use of chemical weapons in warfare
- 1998** • The Rome Statute established the first permanent International Criminal Court Tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands
- 1999** • The UN authorised an International Peacekeeping force in East Timor led by Australian forces
- 2000** • Adoption of the Millennium Development Goals which sought to address the most pressing global challenges
- 2005** • Adoption of the International Day of Commemoration to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust



Figure 10.30 UN Peacekeeper forces arriving in Baghdad after the announcement of a ceasefire between Iraq and Iran, July 1991

However, some historians would argue that the United Nations has achieved little in terms of disarmament, particularly the elimination of nuclear weapons, that it has been unresponsive in the face of genocide, incapable of adequately dealing with dictatorships, and failed to prevent countless wars. The power of the Security Council's permanent five to veto any measure which may threaten their interests or that of their allies has undermined the effectiveness of the United Nations to achieve its objectives which, according to the second United Nations Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld, was not to 'lead mankind to heaven but to save humanity from hell'.



Figure 10.31 A photo of the first meeting of the Security Council of the United Nations, 1946

Summary

- Planning for the United Nations began during the war, with the leaders of Britain, the US and the Soviet Union pledging their commitment to establishing an international organisation to secure 'an enduring peace'.
- At the San Francisco Conference in 1945, representatives from fifty nations met to negotiate the Charter of the United Nations.
- The United Nations came into existence on 24 October 1945.
- The United Nations aims to maintain international peace, promote friendly relations between countries and to improve the lives of humankind.
- Every nation has an equal voice in the UN General Assembly but the real power resides in the Security Council.
- All member states are bound by the decisions of the Council, which has the power to approve peacekeeping missions, issue ceasefire orders, impose sanctions, and to authorise the use of force to deal with threats.
- The permanent members of the Council – Britain, France, Russia, the US and China – each have the power to veto any measure which may threaten their interests.
- The United Nations has achieved a lot of positives over the last 70 plus years, but there have also been many failures.

Key personalities, groups and terms

Personalities

Winston Churchill: 1874–1965. British Prime Minister from 1940–45 and again from 1951–55. A staunch critic of appeasement, he united the British people in their fight against Nazism. Churchill was also a talented diplomat and orator.

Franklin D. Roosevelt: 1882–1945. Roosevelt was the 32nd American President and served an extraordinary four terms in office. He led the US through both the Great Depression and World War II. Played a key role in promoting the formation of the United Nations.

Joseph Stalin: 1878–1953. Undisputed dictator of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) from 1928 until his death in 1953. His policies of collectivisation, industrialisation and rearmament helped the Soviet Union to strengthen during the 1930s. He was also responsible for the deaths of millions of Russians who died from starvation or were sent to Gulags (work camps).

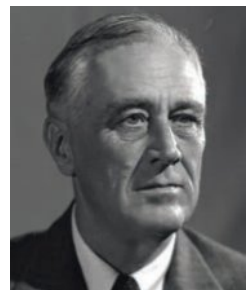


Figure 10.32 Franklin D. Roosevelt

Terms

charter: the fundamental principles of an organisation

veto: the official power to cancel a proposal or measure

Activities

Thinking historically 10.4

1. Describe how the United Nations came into existence.
2. Using your own knowledge and information from the text, outline the challenges facing the world at the end of World War II.
3. Describe the intentions of the United Nations.
4. Explain the power and authority of the United Nations.
5. Research the successes and failures of the United Nations in dealing with conflict between nations and the prevention of genocide.
 - a Assess the effectiveness of the United Nations as an organisation which seeks to end war and promote peace.
 - b Evaluate the United Nations' record in dealing with genocides since the Holocaust.
6. Using the information provided in this chapter and your own research, copy and complete the following table. Some basic details have already been added.

The League of Nations and the United Nations: A Comparison

	League of Nations	United Nations
Duration (years in existence)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 72+ years • Formed in 1945
Purpose and aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolve international disputes • Administer world justice • Avoid future conflict 	
Organisation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Assembly • Security Council • International Court of Justice • Secretariat • International Criminal Court • Economic and Social Council
Main members	Britain, France, Japan, Italy	
Authority		Power rests with the Security Council
Strengths	The concept of 'collective security' (in theory anyway)	
Weaknesses		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent Security Council members can veto measures • Members often do not ratify UN declarations • The UN has little authority to actually stop acts of aggression • Extremely expensive
Supporters	Woodrow Wilson	
Critics		Non-members

Continued ➤

	League of Nations	United Nations
Major successes	Ending Yugoslavia's invasion of Albania in 1921	
Major failures		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Rwandan genocide • The US invasion of Iraq in 2003

Source analysis 10.4

Examine the following historical sources and answer the questions which follow.

Political cartoon, produced after Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931

Source 10A



Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 1924

Source 10B

[Referring to *Lebensraum*] True, they will not willingly do this. But the law of self-preservation goes into effect; and what is refused to amicable methods, it is up to the fist to take. If our forefathers had let their decisions depend on the same pacific nonsense as our contemporaries, we should possess only a third of our present territory.

Martin Broszat, *The Hitler State*, Routledge 2013, p. 353

Source 10C

As long as the foreign policy propaganda of the Third Reich stressed peaceful national revisionism and in so doing energetically stressed respect for neighbouring countries and their interests, this affected the consciousness and the constitution of the nation and of the regime ... In November 1938 Hitler himself was displeased with the undesired outcome of his own propaganda. For years he had been forced to talk of peace and as a result a public mood had arisen which no longer reckoned with war.

Source 10D Martin Broszat, *The Hitler State*, Routledge, 2013, p. 358

... the constant harping on the concept of living-space was bound to lead to a progressive escalation of an aggressive foreign and war policy ...

Source 10E A.J.P Taylor, *The Second World War*, Penguin Books, 1976, p. 17

Far from planning a world war, as they [Hitler and the rulers of Japan] were often credited with doing, they were convinced that a world war would be their ruin. But this did not make them retreat towards peace. Both Hitler and the Japanese planned to make a series of small gains without war ... They counted rightly on the reluctance of the World Powers to go to war ... They intended to creep forward, as it were, unobserved or at least unchecked until they emerged as World Powers too strong to be challenged.

Questions

1. What is the message of Source 10A?
2. Using your own knowledge, explain how Source 10A supports the view that the League of Nations was powerless to prevent member nations from being invaded.
3. How useful is Source 10B for a historian studying the foreign policy ambitions of Germany?
4. Analyse Source 10C. Explain why Hitler was displeased.
5. Using Source 10D and your own knowledge, explain how Nazi propaganda influenced the development of German foreign policy.
6. Is there any evidence in Source 10B to support Martin Broszat's view in Source 10D?
7. Explain how Source 10E assists your understanding of the link between Germany and Japan's ambitions, and the policy of appeasement.

Glossary

abdicate resign from political rule (referring to a monarch)

Abwehr the military intelligence and information section of the German Army

Anschluss term used to define the union between Germany and Austria carried out by Hitler in 1938. Forbidden under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles

Anti-Semitism discrimination against people of Jewish heritage

appeasement a policy of making concessions to avoid war

arms race the increasingly competitive procurement of offensive armaments or spending on the military

Article 48 article in the German Constitution known as 'Emergency Decree Powers'. Under this article, the German Government could allow the president, under certain circumstances, to take emergency measures without the prior consent of the Reichstag

Aryan non-Jewish individuals; considered to be northern European in appearance

Aryanisation the policy implemented by Hermann Göring to expel 'non-Aryans' from German economic life

Autarky the idea that Germany should be economically self-sufficient

authoritarian enforcing strict obedience to authority at the expense of personal freedom

Autobahn a state-funded construction project. Over 2000 miles of motorways were constructed between 1933 and 1938

Blackshirts member of any of the armed squads of Italian Fascists under Benito Mussolini, who wore black shirts as part of their uniform

Blasen anti-authority working class groups of German youth that existed prior to the Nazis rise to power; involved in minor criminal activities and often involved in violent confrontations with members of the Hitler Youth

Blitzkrieg (lightning war) a combined surprise attack by aircraft, armoured Panzer divisions and soldiers in a concentrated attack on the enemy's defences

Bolsheviks a Russian socialist political party, led by Vladimir Lenin, that seized power in Russia during the November Revolution in 1917

Bund deutscher Mädchen (The League of German Maidens or BDM) part of the Hitler Youth; an organisation for young girls aged 14–18

Catholic Centre Party (ZP) formed in 1870 to defend Catholic interests, became more right-wing during the Depression; banned in June 1933

capital ships large warships, such as aircraft carriers and battleships

Central Powers the alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary in World War I. Later the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria became part of the Central Powers

charter the fundamental principles of an organisation

collective security the cooperation of several countries in an alliance to strengthen the security of each

- collectivisation** the process by which the Russian peasants were organised into collective farms under state supervision, in the period 1929–37
- Comintern** the Communist International, a Soviet organisation given the task of spreading Communist revolutions throughout the world
- Communism** the belief in a society without different social classes in which the methods of production are owned and controlled by all its members, everyone works as much as they can and receives what they need
- concordat** an agreement or treaty, especially one between the Vatican and a secular government relating to matters of mutual interest, in this case the Catholic Church and the Nazi party
- Conference of London** a secret pact between the Triple Entente and the Kingdom of Italy. Its aim was to secure Italy as an ally. The Italian government was promised large amounts of land to sign the Treaty with the Triple Entente powers
- Confessing Church** an alternative organisation to the Reich Church; established by Niemöller and Bonhoeffer. Continually criticised the Reich Church and the German Christians. Its pastors were targeted by the Gestapo in retribution
- constitutional monarchy** a form of government in which a monarch acts as head of state within the parameters of a written constitution and parliament
- Corporate State** Mussolini's fascist regime believed in a 'third way' claiming that a genuine alternative to capitalism and communism, and the corporate-state would solve all class and economic problems via collaboration
- coup** a sudden overthrow of a government
- cruisers** a class of warship
- cultural Bolshevism** a term used by the Nazi regime to criticise modern art
- decree** law
- Der Stürmer** a Nazi sensationalist newspaper which contained crude propaganda against the Jews
- Deutsches Frauenwerk (DFW)** a sub-group of the NS-F formed in October 1933. Organised courses to educate women in the domestic arts
- Deutsches Jungvolk (German Young People or DJ)** part of the Hitler Youth; an organisation for boys aged 10–14
- diktat** a dictated peace
- disarmament** the policy of reducing or abolishing a nation's military forces and armaments
- Ebert-Groener Pact** an agreement between President Ebert and Wilhelm Groener (German Army) that ensured the safety of the new Weimar Republic in its early days, in return the army would maintain its independence
- Edelweiss Pirates** a collection of smaller gangs who rejected the militarism of the Hitler Youth and would engage in physical confrontations with Hitler Youth patrols
- Eher Verlag** Nazi publishing company

- embargo** a governmental order prohibiting trade with a country
- emergency decree** an emergency presidential decree under Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution, which gave the president the power to take any measure necessary to protect public safety without the consent of the Reichstag
- Enabling Act** 1933, effectively replaced Germany's Parliamentary democracy with a dictatorship, giving Hitler the power to make laws without the Reichstag. Helped the Nazis put an end to any last remaining sources of political opposition
- Entartete Kunst** the exhibition of 'degenerate art' that was held at the same time as the Great German Art Exhibition in Munich, 1937
- eugenics** a pseudo-science which aims to achieve the purity of the human race through selective breeding
- fascism** a political system based on a very powerful leader, state control, and being extremely proud of country and race, and in which political opposition is not allowed
- Final Solution** the systematic extermination of Europe's Jews during World War II
- Fourteen Points** a speech by Woodrow Wilson to the US Congress on 8 January 1918 that outlined a plan for the reconstruction of Europe and reformation of the international order after the war. The last point was the creation of the League of Nations
- Freikorps** right-wing and anti-Semitic organisation; consisted of ex-soldiers; involved in violent clashes with communists in public
- Führer** (German for leader) the idea that there should be a single leader with complete power rather than a democracy
- Führerprinzip** the principle which Hitler made the base of the party, placing all authority in his hands; nothing happened without his authority
- German Christians (Deutsche Christens)** considered the SA of the Protestant church; a group of Hitler's dedicated supporters within the Lutheran Church
- German Communist Party (KPD)** founded in the aftermath of World War I by socialists opposed to the war, led by Rosa Luxemburg. After her death the party became gradually ever more committed to Leninism and later Stalinism. During the Weimar Republic period, the KPD usually polled between 10 and 15 per cent of the vote and was represented in the Reichstag and in state parliaments. The party was dissolved in March 1933.
- German Labour Front (Deutsche Arbeitsfront or DAF)** the Nazi trade union which sought to win the support of the workers and also to introduce Nazi socialism, led by Robert Ley
- German News Agency (DNB)** part of the Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda
- German Workers' Party** a short-lived political party established in Weimar Germany after World War I, which was the precursor of the Nazi Party

- Gestapo** Nazi secret police, originally established by Hermann Göring in Prussia in 1933
- ghetto** a cordoned-off area in a city inhabited by a deprived minority
- Gleichschaltung** a process which attempted to Nazify Germany by forcing into line all aspects of society
- Golden Twenties** the inter-war period that witnessed great economic, social and cultural prosperity. Attempts at internationalism and collective security to prevent war
- Great Kanto Earthquake** Tokyo-Yokohama earthquake of 1923 struck with a magnitude of 7.9 in the heart of the Tokyo-Yokohama metropolitan area
- Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere** capturing European controlled Asian Territories, to supply resources needed by Japan to support Japanese Expansionism
- Great Purge** or the Great Terror was a campaign of political repression in the Soviet Union which occurred from 1936–38
- Gulags** Stalin-era 'Corrective Labour Camps', where political prisoners and foreign enemies performed hard labour for the state; mainly located in Siberia.
- Heimat** German concept which represents a 'sense of belonging' to the German homeland
- Herrenvolk** German term meaning 'master race'
- Hitler Youth (Hitler Jugend)** a youth movement for young boys aged 14 and up; used by the Nazis to influence young people and recruit them to their cause
- the Holocaust** the systematic state-sponsored killing of six million Jews and millions of others by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during World War II
- indoctrination** to force an individual or group to accept a doctrine without reservation
- Il Duce** National Fascist Party leader Benito Mussolini was identified by Fascists as Il Duce (The Leader) of the Fascist movement
- internationalism** the principle of cooperation among nations, for the promotion of their common good
- Jungmädel (Young Maidens League or JM)** part of the Hitler Youth; an organisation for young girls aged 10–14
- Kapp Putsch** led by Wolfgang Kapp, was an attempted coup on 13 March 1920 aimed to overthrow the Weimar Republic and establish a right-wing autocratic government in its place
- Kristallnacht (Night of the Broken Glass)** state-endorsed violence against Jewish businesses and synagogues throughout Germany, 9–10 November 1938
- Law for the Protection of the People** this law nullified many of the key civil liberties of German citizens and was used as the legal basis for the imprisonment of anyone considered to be opponents of the Nazis, and to suppress publications not considered friendly to the Nazi cause

League of Nations a precursor to the United Nations; an international organisation which aimed to settle disputes between countries and prevent war; member nations were meant to be protected by the concept of 'collective security'

Lebensraum the need for 'living space' for the German nation to expand

Luftwaffe the German Air Force

mandate authoritative command over a subject nation

Mein Kampf (My Struggle) written by Hitler whilst in prison after the failed Munich Beer Hall Putsch. It outlined his vision for a restored Germany, as well as his racial ideology

Meuten youth gangs from working-class backgrounds; left-leaning; often attacked members of the Hitler Youth

militarism the belief that a country should maintain a strong military capability and be prepared to use it aggressively to defend or promote national interests

Napolas National Political Educational Institutions designed to educate the future Nazi elite and guided by members of the SA and SS. Military and physical training were a major focus. Students were selected based on their athletic prowess rather than their academic abilities

Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft (Nazi Women's Group or NS-F) a women's organisation led by Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, which aimed to conduct the cultural, spiritual and political education of German women. The NS-F had 2.3 million members by 1938

nationalism the promotion of the interests of one's own nation above all others

Nationalists (DNVP) a right-wing political party formed in 1918; co-operated with the Nazi Party towards the end of the Weimar Republic

neutrality a country's decision to not take a side or become involved during a war or dispute

Night of the Long Knives also called Operation Hummingbird, or the Röhm Putsch, a purge that took place in Nazi Germany from June 30 to July 2, 1934, when the Nazi regime carried out a series of political executions intended to consolidate Hitler's absolute hold on power

November Criminals the nickname given to the German politicians who negotiated and signed the armistice which ended World War I in November of 1918 and resulted in the 'stab in the back' theory propagated of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party

NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers' Party) commonly referred to as the Nazi Party

Nuremberg the symbolic home of the Nazi Party

Open Door Policy a US policy that encouraged all countries to have equal access to China in the early twentieth century

pacifist a person or group/country who refuses on principle to take part in a war

- Peace Resolution** passed by the Reichstag in an attempt to seek a negotiated peace to end World War I. The resolution called for no annexations, no indemnities, freedom of the seas and international arbitration. It was ignored by the German High Command and by the Allied powers
- pogrom** organised persecution and violence directed at the Jewish community
- propaganda** organised promotion of information to benefit a government or cause
- proportional representation** characterises electoral systems by which divisions in an electorate are reflected proportionately in the elected body. If $n\%$ of the electorate support a particular political party, then roughly $n\%$ of seats will be won by that party
- putsch** a violent attempt to overthrow a government; a coup
- Reich** German term for Empire. In German history, the period 1933–45 is known as the Third Reich
- Reich Church** a national Protestant Church envisioned by the German Christians. Supported a Nazified version of Christianity. Failed to unite all German Protestants
- Reichskulturkammer** Reich Chamber of Culture established and controlled by Joseph Goebbels in September 1933. The Chamber regulated the press, radio, theatre, film, literature and the visual arts
- Reichsmark** German currency from 1924 to 1948
- Reichssicherheitshauptamt** the Reich Central Bureau for Security (RSHA); set up under Himmler's direction, it exercised tight control of all security organisations.
- Reichstag** the German Parliament
- Reichstag fire** an arson attack on the Reichstag building in Berlin on 27 February 1933, one month after Adolf Hitler had been sworn in as Chancellor of Germany
- Reichsstatthalter** Nazi governor
- Reichswehr** formed the military organisation of Germany from 1919 until 1935, when it was united with the new Wehrmacht
- reparations** payments made by a defeated nation after a war to pay for damages or expenses it caused to another nation. After World War I the Paris Peace Conference imposed reparations upon the Central Powers following their defeat in the First World War by the Allied and Associate Powers. Each of the defeated powers was required to make payments in either cash or kind
- Rome-Berlin Axis** Coalition formed in 1936 between Italy and Germany
- Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis** also known as the **Axis**, this group was made up of the key nations that fought in World War II against the Allied forces. The Axis powers agreed on their opposition to the Allies, but did not completely coordinate their activity

Russo-Japanese War the Russo-Japanese War was fought between the Russian Empire and the Empire of Japan over rival imperial ambitions in Manchuria and Korea

sanctions a coercive measure adopted by several nations acting together against a nation violating international law

SA (Sturmabteilung, Storm Troopers, brownshirts) the Nazi private army established in 1921. Used to intimidate political opponents

SD (Sicherheitsdienst) the internal police force of the Nazi Party created by Heinrich Himmler in 1932. Intelligence service of the SS

secret treaties an international agreement in which the contracting parties have agreed to conceal its existence or at least its substance from other states and the public

self-determination the ability or power to make decisions for yourself, especially the power of a nation to decide how it will be governed

show trials a public trial in which the judicial authorities have already determined the guilt of the defendant. In the Soviet Union the term commonly refers to the Moscow Trials held between 1936 and 1938 against so-called Trotskyists and members of Right Opposition of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Social Darwinism a theory that argued the human race was subject to the same laws of natural selection as animals. Based on Charles Darwin's work and used to justify racist views, since discredited

Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) a moderate political party formed in 1875; banned by the Nazi regime in 1933

Spartacists 1914–19; a German revolutionary socialist group led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht (1871–1919), and named for Spartacus, the leader of the 73 BC slave revolt against Rome. It formed the nucleus of the German Communist Party and was bloodily suppressed in 1919 and its leaders killed

SS (Schutzstaffel) originally Hitler's personal protection squad. Grew to become the Nazi police force

standing army a nation's regular and professional armed force

Star of David a symbol of the Jewish religion

Stimson Doctrine stated that the US would not recognise any territory gained by acts of aggression or treaties that violated US rights

Stock Market Crash the Wall Street Crash of 1929 began on 24 October 1929 (Black Thursday), and was the most devastating stock market crash in United States history, and caused the Great Depression throughout the 1930s

Swing Movement groups of upper-class youth which embraced cultural influences from Britain and America, most notably jazz music

synagogue a Jewish place of worship

T4 refers to the location 4 Tiergartenstrasse, Berlin, where the Nazi regime carried out its euthanasia programme

teutonic a term used to describe ancient German culture

The Mother's Cross awards of bronze, silver and gold medals given to women who had four, six or eight children. Handed out on the anniversary of Hitler's mother's birthday, 12 August, the awards were meant to encourage women to have more children

totalitarianism a system of government that is centralised, dictatorial and requires complete subservience to the state

Treaty of Versailles the peace treaty which formally ended World War I; signed 28 June 1919; the terms imposed on Germany were detested by the German people; before coming to power, Hitler promised to revise it

Twenty-five-point Program the political manifesto issued by the NSDAP on 24 February 1920 by Adolf Hitler. The manifesto outlined the Nazi Party's political philosophy and mission.

Untermenschen German term which referred to inferior races

veto the official power to cancel a proposal or measure

Volk German concept referring to the German people or community

Volksfeind German term meaning 'enemy of the people'

Volkgemeinschaft the concept of a 'people's community'; reinforced the view that the German people were racially pure and united against the common enemy, Jews and Communists

Voluntary Labour Service established during the Weimar Republic; provided cheap labour, which was mostly used in agriculture. From 1935 onwards, German youth were required to work in the service for six months

Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 signed on 6 February 1922, the treaty dramatically limited the naval armaments of Japan

Wehrmacht the German Army during World War II

Weimar Republic the name given to the German government between the end of the Imperial period (1918) and the beginning of Nazi Germany (1933). The Weimar Republic (and period) draws its name from the town of Weimar in central Germany where the constitutional assembly met

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