

THE HITLER STATE

How Did Hitler Gain Control?



The Munich Putsch/The Beer Hall Putsch

By 1923 Hitler was the leader of the Nazi Party. With inflation running high, Hitler thought the time was ripe for his party to seize control in Germany. With a group of ex-soldiers, including a war time air ace Hermann Goring, and Field Marshall Ludendorff, the Nazis plotted to seize control of Munich, the capital of Bavaria, and then stage a march on Berlin.

It was a disaster. The plotters had not planned things carefully enough and Hitler lost his nerve. He spent most of the crisis making speeches to his own supporters in a beer hall. When Ludendorff finally persuaded him to lead a march through the streets, the police fired on the marchers and Hitler and the Nazis ran away. Two days later Hitler was arrested.

Hitler received a five year prison sentence for the Munich Putsch, but prison was very comfortable and he was let out after serving less than a year. He spent the time writing a book about his ideas - Mein Kampf.

'I'm beginning to comprehend. I think some of the reasons for Hitler's astounding success ... He is restoring pageantry and colour and mysticism to the drab lives of twentieth century Germans ... The hall was a sea of brightly coloured flags. Even Hitler's arrival was made dramatic.

The band stopped playing. There was a hush over 30,000 people packed in the hall. Then the band struck up the Badenweiler march, a very catchy tune and used only, I'm told, when Hitler makes his big entries. Hitler appeared at the back of the auditorium, and, followed by his aides Goering,

Goebbels, Hess, Himmler and the others, he strode slowly down the long centre

aisle while 30,000 hands were raised in salute ... In such an atmosphere no wonder, then, that every word dropped by Hitler seemed like an inspired word from on high. Man's - or at least the German's - critical faculty is swept away at such moments and every lie pronounced is accepted as high truth itself.'

This extract is taken from William Shirer's Berlin Diary, published in 1941 (Shirer was an American reporter who was in Germany at this time)

Hitler promised people what they wanted

The Weimar Republic appeared to have no idea how to solve the problems of the Depression. The Nazis on the other hand promised to solve the problems. Hitler promised most groups in Germany what they wanted. Hitler used the Jews and other sections of society as scapegoats, blaming all the problems on them. To Germans at the time Hitler made sense, he united everyone by providing explanations for Germany's problems.

People in Germany were tired of their poor quality of life. Hitler promised to make Germany proud again - it was exactly what people wanted to hear. Hitler pledged something for every part of Germany society:

GROUP	PROMISE
Farmers	Higher prices for their produce - making up for all their losses during the Depression.
Unemployed workers	Jobs building public works such as roads and stadiums.
Middle Class	To restore the profits of small business and the value of savings. To end the Communist threat.

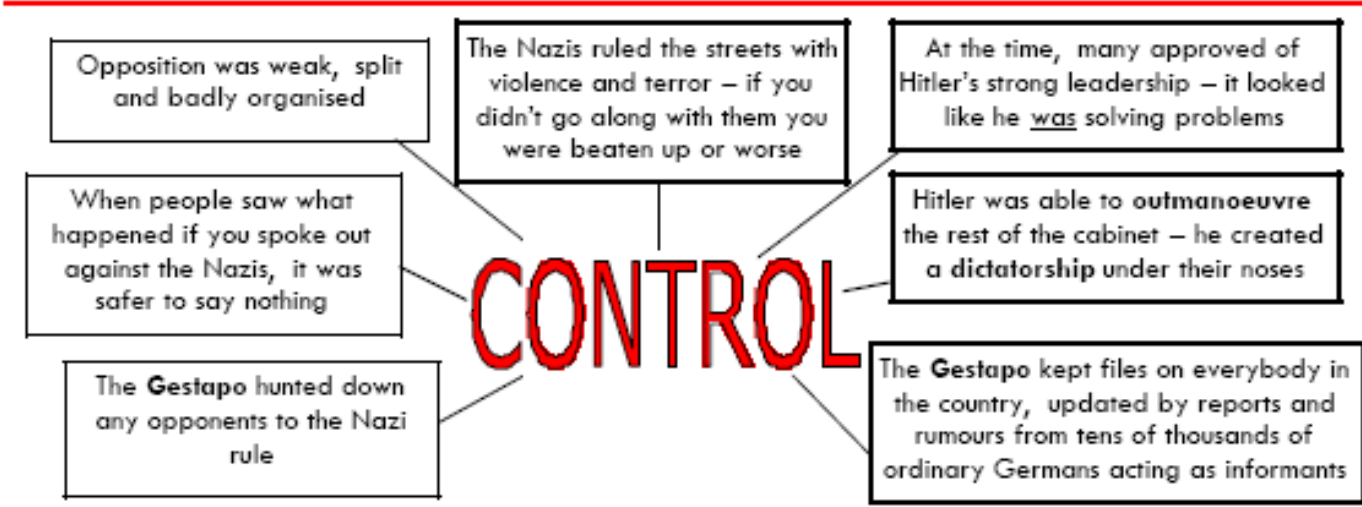
Nazi beliefs

Behind these promises were a set of beliefs that were to lead to the Second World War and the death of millions of people:

1. Rearm Germany and retake what was lost at Versailles.
2. The German Race (blonde, blue eyed Aryans) were a superior race. Anyone else was racially impure and should be removed from Germany. Hitler called the Germans the 'master race'.
3. The 'master race' needed more living space - known (in German) as Lebensraum.

The Nazis gained enormous popularity due to the terrible conditions in Germany, effective propaganda, and their promises to solve all Germany's problems. However, they were never supported by a majority of German voters between 1930 and 1933....

Once Adolf Hitler had been appointed Chancellor (1933), he managed to take total control of Germany:



WHY WAS IT SO DIFFICULT TO RESIST HITLER?

Individual Accounts

Otto Bauer, a 56 year old business man, said on a train in June 1942 that Germans only had two alternatives: to kill Hitler or be killed by him. He was overheard by a married couple who reported him. He was beheaded on 16 September 1943 for causing discontent and unrest.

Erich Deibel: on 29 August 1940 he drew a Communist symbol on the wall of a lavatory in his factory, adding the words "Hail Freedom!" and "Workers! Help Russia! Strike! Up with the Communist Party!". Accused of sabotage and treason, he was executed on 15 August 1942.



GLOSSARY

- Outmanoeuvre** – to use skill and cunning to get advantage.
- Dictatorship** – a state ruled by a leader without any restrictions.
- Gestapo** – Hitler's secret police.
- Interrogation** – asking questions under pressure.



Criticism of Hitler and the Nazi state was banned, and those who broke this ban faced **interrogation**, torture, prison and sometimes death. Germans snoop on each other, informing the Gestapo of any suspicious people. If suspected, your family and friends could also expect investigation – not just you.

Using this policy of fear, the Nazis managed to stop freedom of speech and expression. Everyone had to go along with Nazi policy – or face the consequences.

The Assignment:

Using the information from this sheet create a propaganda poster to convince the Germany people NOT to follow Hitler and the Nazi party.