

Nazism

BACKGROUND

Nazi Beliefs

Nazism was a set of beliefs which included the use of terror and force against the "enemies" of Germany. An enemy was anyone who was not a firm believer and supporter of the Nazi Party and its goals.

One of the most important concepts of Nazism was the belief in Hitler. As *Der Führer* Hitler had supreme leadership power and represented the state, the people, and the movement. Everyone was forced to take an oath of loyalty to the *Führer*. Everyone was required to give each other the Hitler salute with the words "*Heil Hitler*." Those who did not were punished.

Another vital aspect of Nazism was extreme nationalism. The belief in the German *Volk*, or German people, as a group and the sacrifice of all individual desires and interests to serve the *Volk* was essential to Nazism. This led to the racist beliefs of the Nazis. According to the Nazis, Germans were members of the Aryan "race"—the "Super Race." Nazis said that Aryans had perfect bodies and the highest capabilities. Their duty was to improve the human race by populating the world. Nazis believed that all other races were inferior and should survive only to serve the "master race." The Poles and Slavs, for example, were to be used as a pool of slave labour to implement Nazi plans. Jews, however, were considered para-

sites and sub-human. They were to be eliminated, either by deportation or liquidation.

Extreme nationalism was matched with imperialism and the concept of *Lebensraum*—living space. *Lebensraum* was the policy that new lands were needed for those pure-blood Germans whose numbers would be increasing steadily because of the policies of breeding. Aryans would occupy and settle lands previously inhabited by "inferior people."

The policy that the Germans should have large families reinforced a belief in traditional roles for men and women. Men were considered the breadwinners and warriors. Women were expected to stay at home and produce children to serve the *Reich*. German women who had four or more children qualified for a medal called the "Honour Cross of the German Mother." The inscription on the medal's back read "The Child Ennobles the Mother."

Nazi Propaganda

The major task facing the Nazis in 1933 was the education of the German people for service to the new Nazi state. Propaganda was an essential method of convincing Germans to be a part of the Nazi movement.

Goebbels, the Minister of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, used a variety of devices and methods and turned propaganda into one of the Nazis' most successful weapons. Radio broadcasts, theatre productions, newspapers, banners, posters, music, parades, night ceremonies, symbols, uniforms, books, films, and art were all used to "direct" the people's thoughts and actions. All films shown in Germany were about the glory of Germany. All newspapers and books were forced

The Führer at the height of Nazi power. Hitler gave control of the police to Himmler who combined the civilian forces with the SS and assigned the officers to three different areas: ordinary criminal investigations, surveillance and questioning of political "undesirables", and guard detail at the concentration camps.

Mara Vishniac, the daughter of the photographer, outside a Berlin shop that is displaying an Aryan head-measuring device (1933). The Nazis used many pseudo-scientific techniques to bolster their racial theories.



to support Nazi ideas. Anti-Nazi books were burned in huge bonfires.

Supplementing the propaganda was the Nazi demand for discipline and obedience from all Germans. Workers, employers, and children were required to join organizations and take part in Nazi ceremonies to show their loyalty and commitment to the *Reich*. These organizations emphasized loyalty to the German nation, its people, and, above all, to the *Führer*. Boys between the ages of ten and eighteen joined the Hitler Youth and were issued daggers, uniforms, and badges. Girls joined the League of German Girls, and were told that discipline and commitment to the group were all important. Young people were sent to camps where endurance and competition were stressed in order to train strong Aryans to fight for *Der Führer* and Germany. The most promising boys were sent to Adolf Hitler schools where they were specially trained to become the future Nazi leaders.

The control of education was crucial to Hitler's plans. All teachers had to support Nazism or they were dismissed. Textbooks, especially history books, were rewritten to fit Nazi beliefs. Education at all levels laid great stress upon the Jews as the enemies of Germany.

These Hitler Youth are making a bonfire by burning "Jewish-Marxist" books, April 1938 (Salzburg, Austria).



As well as controlling education and workers' organizations, the Nazis controlled leisure activities. "Strength Through Joy" groups were organized, and people were encouraged to participate in spectacles and events in order to strengthen the idea of the *Volk* and of community with each other.

Nazi Treatment of Opponents

Hitler believed that the powerful German Trade Union movement was a breeding ground for socialism and communism, and therefore a source of opposition to the Nazis. In 1933 dozens of union leaders were arrested and beaten up. Their offices were looted and all their funds and property seized.

Hitler also realized that Christianity stood in direct opposition to Nazism. The Catholic Church in Germany became one of Hitler's principal targets. Within a few days of signing an agreement with the Pope to protect the Catholic Church, Hitler broke up the Catholic Youth League and changed Catholic schools into Nazi schools. Children were taught to "worship" Hitler. Many of the clergy were arrested and thrown into concentration camps.

The martial music of buglers and drummers played a key role in Hitler Youth rallies like this one held in Germany in 1935.



Hitler established a "Reich Church" with the intention of uniting all of Germany's Protestant churches under Nazi control. Despite the use of terror, some ministers managed to form the Confessional Church to oppose the *Reich Church* but, like other sources of opposition, the Confessional Church was suppressed.

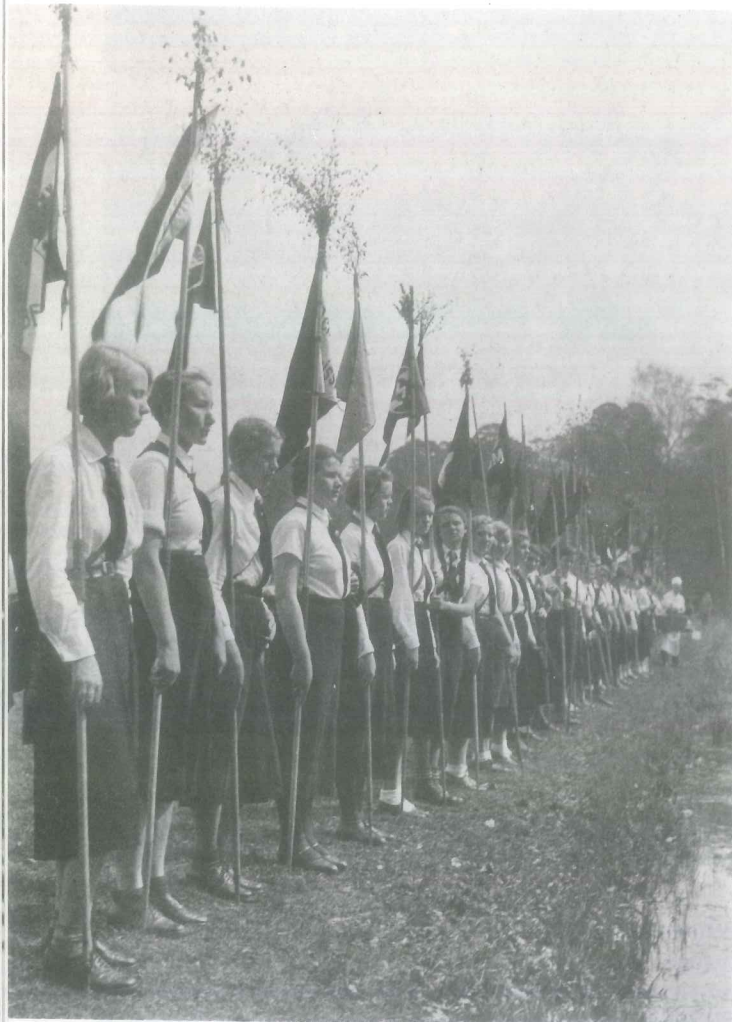
When Hitler came to power, he believed there were enemies within the Nazi Party itself. In 1934 he strengthened his hold on the party by getting rid of his rivals. His friend Ernst Röhm, the head of the S.A. and a former superior officer to Hitler, became, in Hitler's mind, a possible threat to his absolute power. The S.A. had four million members and had grown even larger than the *Reichswehr* (army). Röhm wanted to increase his power even more by combining the *Reichswehr* and the S.A., to form a National Socialist Militia under his command. Hitler refused Röhm's proposal and instead moved against Röhm and S.A. leaders. On the night of June 30, 1934, Hitler and the S.S. surprised Röhm and other S.A. leaders

while they were asleep in Munich. Röhm and hundreds of suspected opponents were executed by firing squad. The evening was called "the night of the long knives."

Throughout the 1930s, Hitler continued to pass laws that stripped Jews of their rights. In 1935, Jews were forbidden to join the army. That summer, signs reading "Jews Not Wanted" were displayed in resorts, restaurants, and businesses. On September 15, 1935, the Nuremberg Laws were passed which forbade marriage between Aryans and Jews and which deprived Jews of all voting rights. Thousands of Jews were transported by the S.S. to the Polish frontier in October 1938. Since the Polish government had no interest in accepting them, the Jews had to camp in "no-man's-land."

On November 9, 1938, thousands of Jewish synagogues and businesses were looted and destroyed. The night was called *Kristallnacht*—Crystal Night—because of the amount of broken glass in the streets. Between 30 000 and 40 000 Jews

A League of German Maidens group forms a line; the girls are carrying their ceremonial pennants.



were taken to concentration camps. *Kristallnacht* was ordered by Hitler as retaliation after a young Jew shot a German embassy official in Paris.

During these years, Jews were encouraged to emigrate but many had difficulty in finding countries that would accept them. Canada, for example, permitted only 6 000 Jewish refugees to enter the country between 1933 and 1938. There were strong anti-Semitic feelings in Canada and many Canadians did not want more Jewish people. Canada was not alone in restricting Jewish immigration. Other countries also limited the number of Jewish immigrants they would accept. Nonetheless, by the spring of 1939, 250 000 Jews had left Germany, in most cases abandoning their belongings.

Reaction Within Nazi Germany

Anti-Semitic acts and the arrests and executions of Nazi opponents created a climate of fear which silenced criticism. Many Germans were repulsed by the Nazis but were too afraid to speak out.

Most Germans went along with the Nazis and obeyed their commands. Out of fear or lack of concern, many people accepted Hitler and lost sight of their principles and individual beliefs. Others actively supported the Nazis and were intensely loyal to the *Führer* and his ideology. Many believed in Hitler because of what he had done economically for Germany. Although in 1933 there had been six million unemployed in Germany, by 1939 Germany was actually short of labour. Hitler rebuilt the armed forces, manufactured military equipment, and constructed public buildings and *autobahns* (highways). At a time when other countries were suffering from the Depression, Germany was thriving.

Questions

NAZI BELIEFS

1. Explain the meanings of the following Nazi beliefs:
 - (a) *Der Führer*
 - (b) *Volk*
 - (c) "Master Race"
 - (d) *Lebensraum*
2. What was the role of women in the Third Reich?

NAZI PROPAGANDA

3. How was propaganda used by the Nazis? What was its purpose?
4. What was expected of children in the Nazi state?

NAZI TREATMENT OF OPPONENTS

5. Why did Hitler attack the German trade union movement?
6. How did Hitler treat the German churches?
7. Why did Hitler execute Ernst Röhm?
8. How did the Nazis persecute the Jews between 1935-1939?

REACTION WITHIN NAZI GERMANY

9. How did the German people react to Hitler during the 1930s?

The 1936 Olympics, held in Berlin, were to have been a showcase for German athletes who were to prove the superiority of "Aryan" competitors. Instead, the American track star Jesse



Owens won four gold medals, confounding Nazi theories that Blacks were inferior. Lutz Long, beside Owens, gives the Hitler salute after receiving the silver medal for the broad jump event.

DOCUMENTS

What Were the Beliefs of Nazism?

THE FÜHRER

At dusk the streets of Berlin were packed with wide columns of men headed for the rally, marching behind banners, with fife and drum units and regimental bands in attendance.

Stands had been set up at one end of the field for the guests of the government, among them the diplomatic corps, compulsory spectators, bidden to be awed into respect and admiration. A forest of glittering banners provided a background for the spectacle; a grandstand, bristling with microphones, cut forward like a prow looming over a sea of human heads. Downstage, Reichswehr units stood at attention with

one million civilians assembled behind them; the policing of this stupendous rally was effected by SA and SS troopers. The Nazi leaders appeared in turn as the crowd cheered. Then came Bavarian peasants, miners and fishermen from other parts of Germany, all in professional garb, then delegates from Austria and the Saar and Danzig, the last being guests of honor of the Reich. An atmosphere of good humor and general glee pervaded the assembly, there was never the slightest indication of constraint. . . .

At eight o'clock the crowds backed up as Hitler made his appearance, standing in his car, his arm outstretched, his face stern and drawn. A protracted clamor of powerful acclaim greeted his passage. Night was now fallen; floodlights were turned on, set at spacious gaps, their gentle bluish light allowing for dark interjacent spaces. The perspective of this human sea stretched out to infinity, moving and palpitant, extraordinary when at once sighted in the light and divined in the darkness.

After some introductory remarks by Goebbels, Hitler took the stand. All floodlights were turned off save such as might envelop the Führer in so dazzling a nimbus that he seemed to be looming upon that magical prow over the human tide below. The crowd lapsed into a religious silence as Hitler prepared to speak.

from *The Fateful Years* (André François-Poncet, French Ambassador to Germany, 1933)

OATH OF REICH OFFICIALS AND SOLDIERS

"Article 1. The public officials and the soldiers of the armed forces must take an oath of loyalty on entering service.

"Article 2.

1. The oath of loyalty of public officials will be: 'I swear: I shall be loyal and obedient to Adolf Hitler, the Führer of the German Reich and people, respect the laws, and fulfill my official duties conscientiously, so help me God.'
2. The oath of loyalty of the soldiers of the armed forces will be:

'I swear by God this sacred oath: I will render unconditional obedience to Adolf Hitler, the Führer of the German nation and people, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and will be ready as a brave soldier to risk my life at any time for this oath.'

1934

from *Documents on Nazism* (J. Noakes and G. Pridham)

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE THIRD REICH

"1. At the head of the Reich stands the leader of the NSDAP as leader of the German Reich for life.

"2. He is, on the strength of his being leader of the NSDAP, leader and Chancellor of the Reich. . . . He is Head of State and chief of the Government in one person. He is Commander-in-Chief of all the armed forces of the Reich.

"4. The Führer is supreme judge of all the nation. . . . There is no position in the area of constitutional law in the Third Reich independent of the elemental will of the Führer.

"The real characteristic of constitutional law in the Third Reich is that it does not represent a system of competencies but the relation of the whole German people to a personality who is engaged in shaping history. We are in a juridical period founded on the Führer's name, and shaped by him. The Führer is not backed by constitutional clauses, but by outstanding

achievements which are based on the combination of a calling and of his devotion to the people. The Führer does not put into effect a constitution according to legal guidelines laid before him but by historic achievements which serve the future of his people. Through this, German Constitutional Law has produced the highest organic viewpoint which legal history has to offer."

—Hans Frank, head of the Nazi Association of Lawyers, 1938
from *Documents on Nazism* (J. Noakes and G. Pridham)

LEBENSRAUM

"... We National Socialists must hold unflinchingly to our aim in foreign policy, namely, to secure for the German people the land and soil to which they are entitled on this earth. And this action is the only one which, before God and our German posterity, would make any sacrifice of blood seem justified. . . . The soil on which someday German generations of peasants can beget powerful sons will sanction the investment of the sons of today, and will someday acquit the responsible statesmen of blood-guilt and sacrifice of the people, even if they are persecuted by their contemporaries."

—*Völkischer Beobachter*
from *The War Against the Jews* (Lucy S. Dawidowicz)

Initially the Lebensraum plan envisioned that the population of the Eastern European countries would become slave to the new German colonists. However, because of labor shortages many of those labeled "undesirables" from the East were deported into Germany to work.

from *Facing History and Ourselves* (Margot Strom and William Parsons)

It was Rauschning, a frequent visitor from Danzig to both Berlin and Berchtesgaden between 1932 and 1934, who recorded Hitler's "table talk" of this earlier period. After this he "defected." Rauschning describes Hitler's monologues as a "passionate self-interpretation," revealing not only the character of the man in his maturity, but the less inhibited expression of his instinctual desire to shape Germany, Europe, and even the world according to his will. He regarded Germany as synonymous with Europe, its heartland: "It will be Germany, only when it is Europe as well. Without power over Europe we must perish. Germany is Europe." To achieve this, the Germans must be hardened, rescued from the degeneracy which has afflicted them and the rest of Europe. "I must be a harsh master," he said, "we must be ruthless." He wanted to shock. "We are barbarians!" he shouted. "We want to be barbarians! It is an honourable title. We shall rejuvenate the world. . . . It is our mission to cause unrest." On another occasion he said, "Brutality is respected. . . . The people need wholesome fear.

Danzig. Some supporters among the German-speaking population greeted the German army with enthusiasm.



They want to fear something. They want someone to frighten them and make them shudderingly submissive." And again, "Unless you are prepared to be pitiless, you will get nowhere. . . . Terrorism is absolutely indispensable in every case of the founding of new power."

from *Hitler: The Man and the Myth* (R. Manvell and H. Fraenkel)

THE ROLE OF WOMEN

"... The slogan, 'Emancipation of women' was invented by Jewish intellectuals and its content was formed by the same spirit. In the really good times of German life the German woman had no need to

emancipate herself. She possessed exactly what nature had necessarily given her to administer and preserve; just as the man in his good times had no need to fear that he would be ousted from his position in relation to the woman. . . .

"If the man's world is said to be the State, his struggle, his readiness to devote his powers to the service of the community, then it may perhaps be said that the woman's is a smaller world. For her world is her husband, her family, her children, and her home. But what would become of the greater world if there were no one to tend and care for the smaller one? . . . No, the greater world is built on the foundation of this smaller world. . . .

"We do not consider it correct for the woman to interfere in the world of the man, in his main sphere. We consider it natural if these two worlds remain distinct. To the one belongs the strength of feeling, the strength of the soul. To the other belongs the strength of vision, of toughness, of decision, and of the willingness to act. . . .

"The sacrifices which the man makes in the struggle of his nation, the woman makes in the preservation of that nation in individual cases. What the man gives in courage on the battlefield, the woman gives in eternal self-sacrifice, in eternal pain and suffering. Every child that a woman brings into the world is a battle, a battle waged for the existence of her people. And both must therefore mutually value and respect each other when they see that each performs the task that Nature and Providence have ordained. And this mutual respect will necessarily result from this separation of the functions of each."

—Adolf Hitler
from *Documents on Nazism* (J. Noakes and G. Pridham)

"The mission of woman is to be beautiful and to bring children into the world . . . the female prettifies herself for her mate and hatches the eggs for him."

Goebbels

from *Documents on Nazism* (J. Noakes and G. Pridham)

Assignment 12



Keeping a Record

Discuss in your journal the beliefs of the Nazi Party. In what ways did these beliefs also help to maintain the party's control of the state? You might prefer to explore in more detail one particular theme of the Nazi platform.

Anti-Semitic propaganda. This poster, displayed on a Viennese street in 1938, shows a caricature of an Orthodox Jew with a handful of gold in one hand and a knotted whip in the other. The propagandist has tucked a communist Europe under the arm of the figure. In Hebraic-like characters are the words "Der Ewige Jude", which means "The Wandering Jew".



What Was the Role of Nazi Propaganda?

NAZI PROPAGANDA
"We have founded a Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda. These two titles do not convey the same thing. Popular enlightenment is essentially something passive: propaganda, on the other hand, is something active. We cannot therefore be satisfied with just telling the people what we want and enlightening them as to how we are doing it. We must replace this enlightenment with an active government propaganda that aims at winning people over. It is not enough to reconcile people more or less to our regimen, to move them towards a position of neutrality towards us, we want rather to work on people until they are addicted to us, until they realise, in the ideological sense as well, that what is happening now in Germany not only must be accepted, but can be accepted."

"... The task of the press cannot be merely to inform, rather the press has above and beyond that the much greater task of instructing. It naturally has the task of making clear to the people what the Government is doing but it must also explain why the Government is doing it, why the Government is forced to act in a certain way and no other."—Joseph Goebbels
from *Nazi Propaganda* (David Welch)

Basically, Goebbels felt that the possibilities offered by film propaganda in schools were too numerous to be left solely in the hands of local educational authorities. Therefore the Party had to give a lead and provide an example. ... Thus on 22 June 1934 Dr. Bernard Rust, Minister of Education, ordered the showing of political propaganda films in all German schools. He explained his policy in a speech to a specially invited audience of teachers:

The leadership of Germany increasingly believes that schools have to be open for the dissemination of our ideology. To carry out this task we know of no better means than the film. The film is particularly important for school children. Film education must not only clarify contemporary political problems but it must also provide children with a knowledge of Germany's heroic past and a profound understanding of the future development of the Third Reich.

from *Nazi Propaganda* (David Welch)

HITLER'S APPEAL TO YOUTH
"German Youth!
You are assembled here on parade for the third time. ... When I think back to that first parade and to the second and compare them with this one today, I see the same development which we can see in the whole of the rest of German life. Our people are becoming noticeably more sturdy and disciplined and youth is beginning to do the same.

The ideal of manhood has not always been the same even for our own people. There were times which now seem to us very far off and almost incomprehensible when the ideal of the young man was the chap who could hold his beer and was good for a drink. But now his day is past and we like to see not the man who can hold his drink, but the young man who can stand all weathers, the hardened young man. Because what matters is not how many glasses of beer he can drink, but how many blows he can stand; not how many nights he can spend on the spree, but how many kilometres he can march. We no longer see in the boorish beer-drinker the ideal of the German people: we find it in men and girls who are sound to the core, and sturdy.

Children were taught Nazi beliefs and behaviour from an early age, such indoctrination being central to the Nazi reorganization of the German school system. Here, mimicking their teachers, these young girls give the Hitler salute as Storm Troopers file past.



What we look for from our German youth is different from what people wanted in the past. In our eyes 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 man so that our people is not ruined by the symptoms of degeneracy of our day. ... —Hitler at Nuremberg Party Rally, September 1935
from *Documents on Nazism* (J. Noakes and G. Pridham)

RECRUITMENT OF THE YOUNG

	HJ (Boys Aged 14-18)	DJ (Boys Aged 10-14)	BDM (Girls Aged 14-18)	JM (Girls Aged 10-14)	Total
End 1932	55 365	28 691	19 244	4 656	107 956
End 1933	568 288	1 130 521	243 750	349 482	2 292 041
End 1934	786 000	1 457 304	471 944	862 317	3 577 565
End 1935	829 361	1 498 209	569 599	1 046 134	3 943 303
End 1936	1 168 734	1 785 424	873 127	1 610 316	5 437 601
End 1937	1 237 078	1 884 883	1 035 804	1 722 190	5 879 955
End 1938	1 663 305	2 064 538	1 448 264	1 855 119	7 031 226
Beg.1939	1 723 886	2 137 594	1 502 571	1 923 419	7 287 470

and the BDM Werk (girls aged 18-21): 440 189

ABBREVIATIONS: HJ, Hitler-Jugend (Hitler Youth); DJ, Deutsches Jungvolk (German Young People); BDM,

Bund Deutscher Mädel (League of German Girls); JM, Jungmädelsbund (League of Young Girls).

from *Documents on Nazism* (J. Noakes and G. Pridham)

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL REGULATIONS

"Teachers and pupils are to give one another the German salute [the Hitler salute] within and outside the school.

"At the beginning of each lesson the teacher goes in front of the class, which is standing, and greets it by raising his right arm and with the words 'Heil Hitler'; the class returns the salute by raising their right arms and with the words 'Heil Hitler.' The teacher closes the lesson after the pupils have risen by raising his right arm and with the words 'Heil Hitler'; the pupils reply in the same way.

"Apart from this, the pupils greet the members of staff by raising their right arms in the appropriate posture within the boundaries of the school.

"Where hitherto Catholic religious instruction began and ended with the verse and response: 'Praised be Jesus Christ, For ever and ever, Amen,' the German salute is to be given *before* this at the beginning of the lesson and *after* it at the end of the lesson.

"The non-Aryan pupils are given the choice of whether or not they want to give the German salute.

... —decree by Minister of the Interior, Wilhelm Frick, December 18, 1934

from Documents on Nazism (J. Noakes and G. Pridham)

JUDGES' LETTER NO. 14

On September 7, 1942, the Reich Minister of Justice, Otto Thierack, instituted the circulation of so-called "Judges' Letters." These letters provided what were in the eyes of the Ministry good or bad examples of sentencing. While the judges involved were not named, the practice exerted pressure on judges and undermined their independence.

"Refusal of the German salute by a child of school age. Guardianship Court judgement of 21 September 1940:

"An eleven-year-old girl has been noticed at school continually refusing to give the German salute. She gives her religious convictions as the reason and quotes several passages from the Bible. At school she shows a complete lack of interest in matters concerning the Führer.

"The parents who have another daughter of six approve of this attitude and stubbornly refuse to influence the child in the contrary direction. They also refuse to give the German salute referring to the Biblical passage: 'Do nothing with a raised hand for this displeases the Lord.' They stick to this despite instructions from the court and from the headmaster of the school. The mother utterly refuses to speak to the child about it. The father is willing to do so but says the child must decide for herself. The parents show themselves to be opponents of the National So-

cialist State in other ways. They do not possess a swastika flag. They have not put down their child for the Hitler Youth. They are excluded from the NSV because they have not joined in contributing although the father could afford it. Nevertheless they deny being opponents of the movement.

"Because of their attitude the Youth Office has proposed the removal of both children from the care of their parents. The Guardianship Court has turned this down and has only ordered supervision. . . .

"The Court of Appeal has revised the verdict of the Guardianship Court and removed the guardianship of both children from the parents because they are unsuitable to bring them up."

Comment by the Reich Minister of Justice:

... "Reserved neutrality . . . is just as damaging as combating the National Socialist idea. Indifference towards education in patriotic citizenship, therefore, means a neglect by the parents of their duties and endangers the education of the child even if this is not immediately apparent. Accordingly, it is not sufficient for the parents in this case not to oppose the child's future education by the school; they must take an active part in the communal education. . . . Those who stubbornly refuse the German salute because of wrong doctrine, who exclude themselves for no reason from the socially constructive work of the NSV [Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt—Nazi Welfare Organization], purposely keep their children away from the Hitler Youth and are inaccessible to all advice, can no longer be said to be 'not sympathetically disposed' towards the movement or not to be furthering it. Through their resistance they are fighting it and are its enemies. This is shown by their attitude and inclination.

"The guardianship judge should therefore have deprived them of their guardianship with the simple explanation that parents who openly profess the ideas of Jehovah's Witnesses are not suited for the education of their children in the National Socialist spirit."

from Documents on Nazism (J. Noakes and G. Pridham)

STRENGTH THROUGH JOY

"Out of the experience of the worker must be created the world picture of a new culture which is rooted in the living nationality. Then the working man will become capable of recognizing his worth and he will be assisted in achieving an idealistic appreciation of his existence in the material sphere of life. The significance of his life must lie once more in work as the highest precept and the highest duty. Such an attitude will enable the individual to see his destiny in art

as well. The work of 'Strength through Joy' is essentially the struggle for the soul of the worker, for leisure time and holidays presuppose the toil of the working day.

"The comradesly experience of work and the equally comradesly community experience of leisure time belong together; in them lies the idea of social life itself. The 'Strength through Joy' land and sea trips mean far more than social travel in the normal sense: their value lies neither in the type of transport nor in the destination of the journey, but solely in the community experience."—Willy Muller, Nazi author on the "new Germany," 1938

from Documents on Nazism (J. Noakes and G. Pridham)

CHRISTIANITY DECLARED TO BE IRRECONCILABLE WITH NATIONAL SOCIALISM

"The concepts of National Socialism and Christianity are irreconcilable. The Christian Churches build on people's ignorance and attempt to preserve the ignorance of as wide a section of the population as possible. National Socialism, on the other hand, is based on scientific foundations. Christianity has immutable tenets, laid down nearly 2 000 years ago, which have increasingly petrified into dogmas incompatible with reality. National Socialism, on the other hand, if it is to continue to fulfil its task, must always be in accordance with the latest findings of scientific research.

"... Our National Socialist ideology is far loftier than the concepts of Christianity, which in their essential points have been taken over from Jewry. For this reason also we have no need of Christianity.

"No human being would know anything of Christianity if it had not been drilled into him in his childhood by pastors. . . . If, therefore, in the future our youth learns nothing of this Christianity, whose doctrines are far inferior to ours, Christianity will disappear of its own accord."—Martin Bormann, June 1941

from Documents on Nazism (J. Noakes and G. Pridham)

Assignment 13



Keeping a Record

In your journal, analyze the propaganda methods used by the Nazis to increase their influence over the German people. What was especially "modern" about their use of the media? Why do you think it was important to the Nazis to create a "mass" audience?

How Did the Nazis Treat Their Opponents?

THE NIGHT OF THE LONG KNIVES

In the early morning of the 30th a fast-moving column of cars tore down the road from Munich to Wiessee where Röhm and Heines were still asleep in their beds at the Hanselbauer Hotel. The accounts of what happened at Wiessee are contradictory. Heines, the S.A. Obergruppenführer for Silesia, a convicted murderer who was found sleeping with one of Röhm's young men, is said to have been dragged out and shot on the road. Other accounts say he was taken to Munich with Röhm and shot there.

Back in Munich, seven to eight hundred men of Sepp Dietrich's S.S. Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler had been brought in from their barracks—the Army providing the transport—and ordered to provide a shooting squad at the Stadelheim Prison. It was there that Röhm had been imprisoned on 9 November 1923, after the unsuccessful Munich putsch; it was there that he was now shot by order of the man whom he had launched on his political career and who seven months before had written to thank him for his imperishable services. Hitler ordered a revolver to be left in his cell, but Röhm refused to use it: "If I am to be killed, let Adolf do it himself." According to an eyewitness at the 1957 Munich trial of those involved, he was shot by two S.S. officers who emptied their revolvers into him at point blank range. "Röhm wanted to say something, but the S.S. officer told him to shut up. Then Röhm stood at attention—he was stripped to the waist—with his face full of contempt."

In Berlin the executions, directed by Göring and Himmler, began on the night of 29-30 June and continued throughout the Saturday and Sunday. The chief place of execution was the Lichterfelde Cadet School, and once again the principal victims were the leaders of the S.A. . . .

The executions went on all day Sunday—while Hitler gave a tea-party in the Chancellery garden—and were not confined to Berlin. A considerable number of people . . . were shot at Breslau, and another thirty-two in the whole of the rest of Silesia. Only on Monday morning did the shooting cease, when the German people, shaken and shocked, returned to work, and Hindenburg addressed his thanks to the Chancellor for his "determined action and gallant personal intervention, which have nipped treason in the bud. . . ."

The largest group of victims belonged to the S.A., and included, besides Röhm, three S.A. Obergruppen-

führer—Heines, von Krausser, and Schneidhuber. . .

[However] many of those murdered had little, if any, connection with Röhm or the S.A., and fell victims to private quarrels.

from *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (Alan Bullock)

ANTI-SEMITIC LAWS AND KRISTALLNACHT

The energies and the emotions of the masses . . can be harnessed and heightened to their highest pitch by holding up before them the image of a single enemy implacable, terrifying and lusting after their lives.

from *Mein Kampf* (Adolf Hitler)

"Increase and intensify the antisemitic Enlightenment of the populace . . the Jewish question had been rather neglected in propaganda since the outbreak of war. . . such neglect was 'false and dangerous' for the Jewish question 'must . . remain . . at the core of our political attitude.' Above all the propaganda should harp on the theme that the Jews had instigated the war . . the Jews are to be blamed for the war. They are therefore to be blamed also for all the distress, sadness, discomfort, privations, burdens and strains that the war brings. But the end of the suffering and of Jewry is not far off."—excerpt from secret Nazi party circular

from *Facing History and Ourselves* (Margot Strom and William Parsons)

The basic definition of a Jew, supplanting the definition of April 11, 1933, was published November 14, 1935, in the first supplementary decree to the Reich Citizenship Law. Later regulations defined categories of *Mischlinge* [cross-breed] that did not come under the rubric [heading] of Jew.

There were three categories: I. JEW; II. MISCHLINGE First Degree; and III. MISCHLINGE Second Degree.

"JEW: Someone who had two full Jewish grandparents and belonged to the Jewish religious community on September 15, 1935, or who joined later, or who was married to a Jew then or later, or who was the offspring of a marriage contracted with a Jew after September 15, 1935, or who was born out of wedlock after July 31, 1936, the offspring of extramarital relations with a Jew.

"MISCHLINGE I: A person with two Jewish grandparents and who did not otherwise fit into the group defined as Jews (not affiliated with the Jewish religious community, not married to a Jew, etc.)

"MISCHLINGE II: A person with only one Jewish grandparent and who was not a participant in the Jewish religious community.

"GERMAN: Anyone who was $\frac{1}{8}$ or $\frac{1}{16}$ Jewish—with one Jewish great-grandparent or great-great grandparent was to be considered of German blood."

By introducing these laws at Nuremberg, Hitler completed the disenfranchisement of Jews. These distinctions by degree seem insane to us, but they were used to decide whether a human being would live or die.

from *The Holocaust* (Board of Education of City of New York)

A MAJOR STEP TOWARD TERRORIZING A NATION

On November 9, 1938, the Nazis carried out what the German press called a "spontaneous demonstration" against Jewish property, synagogues, and people. Dr. Goebbels, the propaganda minister, claimed that the demonstration was in reaction to the shooting of a third-secretary of the German Embassy in Paris. A Jewish boy who had escaped from Germany to France because of the Nazi persecutions of Jews had planned to kill the ambassador because his father had been deported to Poland in a sealed boxcar.

Throughout Germany fires and bombs were used to destroy synagogues and shops, and store windows were shattered, leaving broken glass everywhere. That night became known as the night of the glass, or Kristallnacht.

Later, German documents showed that Kristallnacht had been carefully planned weeks in advance by the Nazis who were waiting for the right incident before carrying out their plans.

In Nuremberg, one German city, Jewish homes were destroyed with hatchets, because earlier at a rally of about 30 000 Nazis, a Nazi official made a speech that incited the crowd against the Jews. Each Nazi was given a hatchet and permission to do whatever he wanted to the Jews.

The following is one memory of that night:

"I lived in Cologne . . on a street opposite an Orthodox synagogue. . . I woke up in the middle of the night hearing noises. . .

"Nazis were going in and out of apartments. Some Nazis rolled heavy kegs from [a perfume] factory into the synagogue and put it on fire. I ran downstairs and woke my parents. We took a small amount of jewelry and ran back to my room, locked the door, and hid the jewelry on the roof. We heard lots of noise, both in the house and in the restaurant. Finally the Nazis left. We went downstairs. Everything in the apartment and restaurant was smashed to pieces, including my beautiful grand piano. It was over-turned and every single string had been cut. Sofas and chairs were upside down and books and valuables had been stolen. My father was taken by two Nazis and put in jail. . .

This Jewish pharmacy and photo store in Berlin was a target of Nazi violence during Kristallnacht, November 10, 1938.



"My father was sent to Buchenwald (a concentration camp) for five weeks. We had almost nothing to eat, and no one would sell us anything. My mother had a heart attack and the doctor refused to come. Jewish children were not allowed to go to public schools. At that time Jews could still be ransomed, and we finally were able to ransom my father. When he returned home, he had lost 60 pounds. Later, no one could be ransomed. We were fingerprinted and forced to wear a yellow star on the front and back of our clothing and on arm-bands. A large 'J' was stamped on our passports. . . ."—A 14-year-old girl.

from *Facing History and Ourselves* (Margot Strom and William Parsons, quoting Bea Stadler's *The Holocaust: A History of Courage and Resistance*)

The following note was sent to all Gestapo (secret police) stations before Kristallnacht:

"This teleprinter message is secret:
At very short notice Aktionen against Jews, especially

against their synagogues, will take place throughout the whole of Germany. They are not to be stopped. . . Preparations are to be made for the arrest of about 20 000 to 30 000 Jews in the Reich. Wealthy Jews in particular are to be selected. More detailed instructions will be issued in the course of this night."

from *Facing History and Ourselves* (Margot Strom and William Parsons)

Assignment 14



Keeping a Record

In your journal write a report of why Hitler feared certain individuals and groups inside and outside the Nazi Party and how he dealt with them. How did Hitler make use of their persecution to unite the German people?

How Did People React to the New Nazi Germany?

NO TIME TO THINK

Milton Mayer went back to Germany after the war to interview the citizens who were once his friends, to ask how it could have happened. His friend the baker explained, "One had no time to think. There was so much going on."

People reported that they had become separated from their government with every new crisis of reform. Gradually they accepted decisions made in secret because they trusted Hitler and others who they felt knew more than they did.

The following is one man's description of how the dictatorship came into his life and why he didn't resist it:

"... Nazism gave us some dreadful, fundamental things to think about—we were decent people—and kept us so busy with continuous changes and 'crises' and so fascinated, yes, fascinated, by the machinations of the 'national enemies,' without and within, that we had no time to think about these dreadful things that were growing, little by little, all around us. Unconsciously, I suppose, we were grateful. Who wants to think?..."

"Men like me... are the greater offenders, not because we knew better (that would be too much to say) but because we sensed better..."

"One doesn't see exactly where or how to move. Believe me, this is true. Each act, each occasion, is

worse than the last, but only a little worse. You wait for the next and the next. You wait for one great shocking occasion, thinking that others, when such a shock comes, will join with you in resisting somehow. You don't want to act, or even talk alone; you don't want to 'go out of your way to make trouble.' Why not?—Well, you are not in the habit of doing it. And it is not just fear, fear of standing alone, that restrains you; it is also genuine uncertainty..."

"But the one great shocking occasion, when tens or hundreds of thousands will join with you, never comes. That's the difficulty. If the last and worst act of the whole regime had come immediately after the first and smallest, thousands, yes millions, would have been sufficiently shocked—if, let us say, the gassing of the Jews in '43 had come immediately after the 'German Firm' stickers on the windows of non-Jewish shops in '33. But of course this isn't the way it happens. In between come all the hundreds of little steps, some of them imperceptible, each of them preparing you not to be shocked by the next..."

"And one day, too late, your principles, if you were ever sensible of them, all rush in upon you. The burden of self deception has grown too heavy, and some minor incident, in my case my little boy, hardly more than a baby, saying 'Jew swine,' collapses it all at once, and you see that everything, everything, has changed and changed completely under your nose. The world you live in—your nation, your people—is not the world you were born in at all."

from *Facing History and Ourselves* (Margot Strom and William Parsons, quoting Milton Mayer's *They Thought They Were Free: The Germans 1933-45*)

Level of Unemployment at the End of Every Month in the Years 1933-1939

	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
January	6 013 612	3 772 792	2 973 544	2 520 499	1 853 460	1 051 700	301 900
February	6 000 958	3 372 611	2 764 152	2 514 894	1 610 947	946 300	196 800
March	5 598 855	2 798 324	2 401 889	1 937 120	1 245 338	507 600	134 000
April	5 331 252	2 608 621	2 233 255	1 762 774	960 764	422 500	93 900*
May	5 038 640	2 528 960	2 019 293	1 491 235	776 321	338 400	69 600
June	4 856 942	2 480 826	1 876 579	1 314 731	648 421	292 200	48 800
July	4 463 841	2 426 014	1 754 117	1 169 860	562 892	218 300	38 400
August	4 124 288	2 397 562	1 706 230x	1 098 498	509 257	178 800	34 000x
September	3 849 222	2 281 800	1 713 912	1 035 237x	469 053x	156 000	77 500
October	3 744 860	2 267 657x	1 828 721	1 076 469	501 847	163 900	79 400
November	3 714 646x	2 352 662	1 984 452	1 197 140	572 557	152 400x	72 600
December	4 059 055	2 604 700	2 507 955	1 478 862	994 590	455 700	104 400

* 216 000, including Austria and the Sudetenland. x The italicized figures are the lowest level in each year.

THE CHOICE OF TAKING THE OATH OF LOYALTY

An employee in a defense plant remembers the day the "world was lost" for him, the day in 1935 when he took the oath to be faithful to the Fuehrer. That day he went against his conscience. He remembers his decision:

"I was employed in a defense plant (a war plant, of course, but they were always called defense plants). That was the year of the National Defense Law, the law of 'total conscription.' Under the law I was required to take the oath of fidelity. I said I would not; I opposed it in conscience. I was given twenty-four hours to 'think it over.' In those twenty-four hours I lost the world..."

"You see, refusal would have meant the loss of my job, of course, not prison or anything like that. (Later on, the penalty was worse, but this was only 1935.) But losing my job would have meant that I could not get another. Wherever I went I should be asked why I left the job I had, and when I said why, I should certainly have been refused employment. Nobody would hire a 'Bolshevik.' Of course, I was not a Bolshevik, but you understand what I mean..."

"I tried not to think of myself or my family. We might have got out of the country, in any case, and I could have got a job in industry or education somewhere else.

"What I tried to think of was the people to whom I might be of some help later on, if things got worse (as I believed they would). I had a wide friendship in scientific and academic circles, including many Jews, and 'Aryans,' too, who might be in trouble. If I took the oath and held my job, I might be of help, somehow, as things went on. If I refused to take the oath, I would

certainly be useless to my friends, even if I remained in the country. I myself would be in their situation.

"The next day, after 'thinking it over,' I said I would take the oath with the mental reservation, that, by the words with which the oath began, 'Ich schwöre bei Gott, I swear by God,' I understood that no human being and no government had the right to override my conscience. My mental reservations did not interest the official who administered the oath. He said, 'Do you take the oath?' and I took it. That day the world was lost, and it was I who lost it."

"There I was, in 1935, a perfect example of the kind of person who, with all his advantages in birth, in education, and in position, rules (or might easily rule) in any country. If I had refused to take the oath in 1935, it would have meant that thousands and thousands like me, all over Germany, were refusing to take it. Their refusal would have heartened millions. Thus the regime would have been overthrown, or, indeed, would never have come to power in the first place."

from *They Thought They Were Free: The Germans 1933-45* (Milton Mayer)

Assignment 15



Keeping a Record

In your journal, try to explain why many Germans tolerated or went along with or even supported the Nazis during the 1930s. Discuss what options were available to individuals and the consequences these options would likely have.