

## Germany in Transition, 1919-39

### Terror and persuasion

#### The use of the SS and the Gestapo

The Nazis used their own organisations to instil fear into the German people. The SS, SD and Gestapo were the main organisations, and they were all under the control of Heinrich Himmler.

##### The SS

- Formed in 1925 as Hitler's bodyguard.
- Wore black.
- By 1934 they had 50,000 members.
- Members were Aryan, and expected to marry racially pure wives.
- After the Night of the Long Knives they were responsible for removing opposition.
- Membership was 250,000 by 1939

##### The Gestapo

- Secret State Police set up in 1933 by Goering.
- By 1936 it was under the control of the SS.
- It could imprison those suspected of opposing the state.
- It would send people to concentration camps.
- By 1939 160,000 people had been arrested for political crimes.

##### The SD

- Set up in 1931 as intelligence body of the Nazis – effectively spies!
- Aims was to discover and remove enemies.
- They were employees of the Nazi party.
- Attracted many educated and professional people such as lawyers, economists and professors.

**Task:** Explain which of the organisations above would have been most effective for the Nazis.

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**Task:** Complete the gap-fill on concentration camps.

Concentration camps were a new type of \_\_\_\_\_ for political, ideological and racial \_\_\_\_\_. At first they were set up to detain \_\_\_\_\_, trade unionists and other left-wing opponents. In 1939 there were 150,000 people under arrest for \_\_\_\_\_ offences. The SA and SS ran the \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_ sent people there. Prisoners were \_\_\_\_\_ by different coloured \_\_\_\_\_ on their clothes. Work was initially hard and pointless, but eventually prisoners were used as forced workers in quarries, coal mines and \_\_\_\_\_. Inmates were underfed and treated brutally. If someone was killed their family would receive a note to say they had died of \_\_\_\_\_ or been shot for trying to escape.

camps

prison

disease

opponents

categorised

triangles

communists

Gestapo

factories

political



#### Different categories of prisoners:

- Political prisoners
- Foreign prisoners
- Work-shy – homeless/alcoholics.
- Sexual offenders
- Professional criminals
- Jews
- Other religious groups opposed to the Nazis

#### Control of the legal system

Even though the Nazis could make laws, Hitler wanted to make sure they were interpreted in a Nazi fashion. Some judges were removed, and those that remained had to become members of the National Socialist League for the Maintenance of Law. Lawyers had to swear an oath of loyalty to Hitler. In 1934 a People's Court was set up to try cases of treason. Judges were loyal to Hitler, and sometimes Hitler would adjust sentences if they were too soft. From 1936 judges had to wear the swastika and Nazi eagle on their robes.

**Task:** Explain why control of the legal system was for Hitler and the Nazis.

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**Task:** Match up the different methods of terror with their descriptions.

SS	A prison for political, ideological and racial opponents of the Nazis
Gestapo	Nazi intelligence body with the aim of discovering actual and potential enemies.
SD	Began as Hitler's bodyguard and became responsible for removing all opposition.
Legal System	Secret State Police group, under SS control.
Concentration Camps	Made to interpret laws in a way the Nazis would approve of. Hitler could adjust sentences.

## Goebbels and propaganda

In 1934 Goebbels set up the Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda to control the thoughts, beliefs and opinions of the German people. It was important that the majority of the population believed in the ideals of the Nazi party.

**Task:** Categorise the following statement about propaganda to show whether they refer to radio, cinema, rallies, posters or books.

All films included a 45 minute advertisement about how great the Nazis were.	We put everywhere in public so people could see them and take in their message.	All plots were shown to Goebbels before they were produced.
Writers were forced to praise Hitler and his achievements.	By 1939, 70% of German families owned one. They were also installed in public.	These were held to show how powerful and popular the Nazis were.
They lacked shortwave reception, which meant Germans could not hear foreign broadcasts.	The annual one was held at Nuremberg, with almost one million people coming to watch.	Students burnt 20,000 of these written by Jews, communists and anti-Nazi professors.
Hitler ordered anti-Semitic films to be made.	About 2500 writers left Germany.	All stations were under Nazi control.

**Task:** Which of the above methods do you think would have been the most effective? Explain your answer.

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## Censorship of newspapers and the arts

All aspects of the media were censored by Joseph Goebbels – the Nazi Propaganda Minister. Anything he felt was unsuitable was banned, with many people leaving Germany as a protest.

**Task:** For each of the following forms of censorship, think of a heading. The first one has been done for you.

➤ **HEADING:** Newspapers

Editors were told what to print, which meant German people only read what the Nazis wanted them to. Non-Nazi newspapers were closed down. Editors could be arrested. By 1935 the Nazis had closed down 1,600 newspapers and thousands of magazines. Any foreign news had to be taken from the Nazi-controlled German Press Agency.

➤ **HEADING:**

Jazz was seen as racially inferior and banned. The Nazis encouraged German folk music and classical music. Richard Wagner was promoted, as he was Hitler's favourite composer.

➤ **HEADING:**

Cheap tickets to see plays were made available, which had a Nazi political or racial theme. They focused on German history and political drama.

➤ HEADING:

Hitler encouraged large buildings made of stone showing the power of Germany. Old fashioned country style buildings were used to family homes, taking pride in Germany's past. Hitler admired the Greek and Roman style of building because he said the Jews had not 'contaminated' it.

➤ HEADING:

Hitler believed he was an expert in art. He hated modern art, which he believed was unpatriotic and Jewish, so he banned it. It was replaced with art which highlighted the greatness of Germany. He wanted art that glorified strong, healthy people. All new public buildings had to have sculptures which shows Nazi ideals.