

TOV

- German people were NOT told if war had lasted, Germany would have eventually been invaded by its enemies, rather they thought the army ended the war undefeated and celebrated the return of the troops
- They thought they would have a fairly negotiated treaty, but were shocked and angry when they found out the terms, and Ebert (president) was reluctant to sign but had no choice to sign on 28 June 1919
- Aftereffects: undermined the Weimar republic, many Germans thought Ebert and the Weimar politicians were forever to blame for the Treaty

Economical challenges

After the TOV, Germany's economy had a downfall...

- The TOV forced Germany to pay reparations of 6.6 billion pounds → Even though the Germans protested that this was unaffordable, their pleas were ignored → Germany failed to make a payment in January 1923, French and Belgian troops occupied the Ruhr Valley, Germany's most important and valuable industrial region + took what was owed to them in the form of raw materials and goods (this was considered legal under the terms of the TOV) → In response, the German government ordered the workers to go on a strike and not to cooperate with the French → sudden halt in industrial production caused the German currency to collapse → The government continued to print more money → caused the value of currency to decrease → led to hyperinflation + with prices of daily needs rising rapidly
- Hyperinflation caused great hardship for the Germans → The middle-class Germans lost the most → personal savings were wiped out + unemployment was widespread → Resulted in the Weimar government losing support from the middle-class Germans, who felt that Weimar Republic favoured workers, industrialists and politicians instead of them

The Great Depression (1929)

US economy crashed, caused a severe economic depression → US bankers and businessmen asked German banks to repay the loans and removed their investments in Germany → Resulted in an economic collapse in Germany

- The impact of unemployment
 - By 1932, unemployment was at 6 million → Most sections of German society were affected (farmers etc) + Many small business and shops went bankrupt → income of the average German fell by 40% between 1929 and 1932 → led to hunger, and often illness
 - Many Germans were evicted from their homes because they could no longer pay rent → Makeshift shelters and slums began to appear in most cities

The failure of democracy

- The Weimar government had adopted a system of proportional representation → Parties won seats in parliament based on the number of votes won → many parties gained seats, but no single party could gain total authority → resulted in many parties forming coalition governments, but often unable to compromise to make important decisions and so did not last long.

- Between 1919 and 1933, there were twenty coalition governments that broke up → projected a disunited and unstable Weimar government to the people, and led them to seek a strong leader who could offer more political stability, allowing Hitler's Nazi party to win more support
- The Weimar government was also weak due to the lack of support from various groups. The civil service, judiciary, military and wealthy businessmen did not support it and preferred a return to a monarchy → undermined the authority of the Weimar government, making it look weak and thus it was harder for it to get the support of people. As such, Hitler could present the Nazi Party as a viable alternative to the weakened government.
- The frequent changes in the government also made it difficult for any laws to be passed. The failure to do so made the Weimar government appear even weaker to the German people. The German people sought a strong leader who could offer more political stability. The German people's perception of the Weimar Republic's weakness was an important factor in facilitating Hitler's rise to power.
- When the crisis struck, Germany was under a coalition government led by SPD (Social Democratic Party Germany), who wanted to increase welfare for the unemployed but the coalition partners refused → coalition collapsed in 1930 → President had to appoint a new chancellor using article 48 → was not very successful, many in the Reichstag did not agree with the harsh measures → had to use emergency powers again
- From this point onwards, the Weimar Republic failed → the parties were so divided and that it proved impossible to form a coalition with a majority of the seats

The rise in communism

- communists had rebuilt their movement during the 1920s → Had local party branches, a youth movement and a very effective publicity machine.
- Between 1929 and 1932, ~1 million workers began to look to KPD rather than moderate SPD; KPD representation in the Reichstag went from 10% to 15%.
- Many workers began to feel that the Weimar Republic was not managing the economic crisis well and had let them down → Many turned to the German Communist party + The rise of the communists frightened many Germans → Business leaders feared the communists because of their plans to introduce state control of business → All these concerns about communism created a climate of fear + Many had little trust in the Weimar Republic's ability to deal with communists

Thus, many decided to turn to the Nazi Party, a party that seemed to be willing to take control of the situation and face the communist

Hitler's abilities (!!)

- Reorganisation of the party
 - Hitler was focused on rebuilding the Nazi Party and planned to take power through democratic means → convinced that legal means and not force alone would help him gain power, which was what led him to concentrate more on reorganising the Nazi Party
 - Thus, he set out Nazi policies simply and clearly, basing them on his book Mein Kampf + re-established his control of the party by creating a new force, the Protection squad, SS
 - With this, he was now secured as supreme leader of the party

His own abilities

- Hitler was very persuasive and charming → powerful and confident speaker who prepared and practised his speeches + good at gauging the mood of the audience and appeared sincere to them → delivered speeches in beer halls, addressed people's concerns
- Did tour of rallies on a plane

As a result, he managed to win over many important business owners and industrialists who agreed with his anti-communist and anti-trade Union views → contributed financially

May 1924: won 32 seats in Reichstag elections

1929: membership grew to over 100000

Propaganda

- Joseph Goebbels was in charge of propaganda → Nazi leaflets, newspaper, radio + blamed economic problem on TOV(reparations) + Blamed the Weimar politicians for being too selfish and divided to take actions necessary to get people back to work
- Also promised strong and decisive actions → rebuilding armed forces, creating millions of jobs + Nazi's 25 points promised sympathy and support for workers
- Nazi propaganda also offered up culprits like the Jews to blame for the problems

Effect

- Won the support of many Germans as Hitler promised to
 - End ineffective coalition govts
 - Restore glory days of the authoritarian rule
 - Return to traditional german values
 - Fight threat of communism in elections, in Reichstag or in street
- Addressed the people's fears → large number of ppl gave their support
 - Wealthy industrialists provided party with campaign funds + Middle class germans all across the country supported him + in rural communities where Nazis gained many votes from those who shared the views about traditional values

THE CONSOLIDATION OF NAZI RULE IN GERMANY

The Reichstag Fire (27 February 1933)

- On 27 February 1933, the Reichstag building was burnt down by a lone and mentally unstable communist → Hitler immediately declared that the fire was the beginning of a communist uprising + He persuaded Hindenburg to pass the Decree for the Protection of People and State, giving Hitler sweeping emergency powers.
- The SA and SS (Police) arrested 4000 communists → Opposition party meetings, newspapers and radio broadcasts were also banned → difficult for the opposition parties to campaign.
- In the elections of 5 March, the Nazis gained 288 seats (52% of the seats)

The Enabling Act (24 March 1933)

- Hitler wanted to introduce a new measure called the Enabling Act, which would allow him to make and pass laws without consulting the Reichstag.
- Only the SPD voted against Hitler during the elections. (Since the communists were in prison)
- The Enabling Act was passed on 24 March.

Gleichschaltung (April-July 1933)

- Hitler continued to strengthen his power in a process called Gleichschaltung, or Coordination → bringing all aspects of the state under Nazi control.
- April 1933: Hitler passed a law which banned Jews from the civil service.
- May 1933: Trade unions were banned, and all local councils had to have a Nazi majority.
- By July, Hitler passed a law banning all other political parties, resulting in Germany being a one-party state.

The Night of the Long Knives (29-30 June 1934)

- By the middle of 1934, Hitler was starting to see the SA (particularly its leader, Ernst Rohm) as a threat + The members of the SA were fiercely loyal to Rohm, supported his calls to tax elite groups, but Hitler had been put into power by said elite groups. → The army commanders also became suspicious of the SA and were unsettled by Rohm's talk of making the SA into a second German army.
- On the weekend of 29-30 June 1934, squads of SS men arrested Rohm and other leading figures in the SA. Hitler accused Rohm of plotting to overthrow and murder him. Rohm and possibly as many as 400 others were executed. This purge came to be infamously known as the Night of the Long Knives.
- Although the SA was not disbanded afterwards, it lost much of its prestige and influence + Many of its members were absorbed into the army and the SS.
- The SA was not the sole target of the purge. Hitler also targeted his old rivals → von Papen was placed under house arrest + Hitler offered him the post of ambassador to Austria → Von Papen accepted the offer.

The Army and the Oath of Allegiance (2 August 1934)

- Soon after the Night of the Long Knives, Hindenburg died. The only figure who could rival Hitler's authority was now gone. → Hitler took over as Fuehrer (Supreme Leader) of Germany.
- On 2 August 1934, the entire army swore an oath of personal loyalty to Hitler → agreed to stay out of politics and to serve him → In return, Hitler spent vast sums on rearmament, brought back conscription and made plans to make Germany a great military power again.

NAZI ECONOMIC POLICIES

- Hitler had promised the German people he would get them back to work and restore the economy → The situation was terrible as around five million were unemployed in 1933, → Hitler was fortunate that the worst of the Depression was already over by then.

- Germany's finances were organised to fund a huge programme of work creation → The Reich Labour Service sent men on public works projects and conservation programmes, in particular to build a network of highways or autobahns + major house-building programmes and new public building projects such as the Reich Chancellery in Berlin.
- Hitler appointed Hjalmar Schacht first as President of the Reichsbank in March 1933, then in August 1934 as Economics Minister → By using state regulations such as **deficit financing**: borrowing money from the public through loan bonds with the promise of paying them back in the future → he played a critical role in the economic recovery and in stabilising German finances to fund grand programmes.

These measures were effective in reducing unemployment and were welcomed by most Germans.

Rearmament and the Move to a War Economy

One of Hitler's most cherished plans was rearmament.

1935: he reintroduced conscription for the German army.

1936: he announced a Four-Year Plan under the control of Goering → aimed to get the German economy ready for war within four years → Priority had to be given to rearmament and Germany had to be made as self-sufficient as possible in food and industrial production, a policy known as autarky.

- Goering proceeded to manage the economy through a series of regulations that controlled most aspects of labour, prices and raw materials
 - setting new targets that the private industries had to match.
 - The conscription reduced unemployment.
 - The need for weapons equipment and uniforms created jobs in the coal mines, steel mills and textile mills.
 - Engineers and designers gained new opportunities, particularly when Hitler decreed that Germany would have a world-class air force (the Luftwaffe).

Besides bringing about economic recovery, these measures boosted Hitler's popularity because they renewed national pride. Germans began to feel that their country was finally emerging from the humiliation of WWI and the Treaty of Versailles Germany was now able to put itself on an equal footing with the other great powers.

Living Standards in Nazi Germany

- Big companies benefitted the most from Nazi rule. As these companies flourished, so did their managers. Their incomes rose much faster than those of their workers.
- However, life in Nazi Germany was not always as prosperous and comfortable as experienced by the big businesses or as the propaganda machine liked to portray. For groups such as the farmers and middle classes, it was a mixed picture.

Working Conditions in Germany

- Propaganda praised the workers and tried to associate them with Hitler (often called Germany's "First Worker"). Hitler fulfilled his promise to lower unemployment, which helped to ensure Nazi popularity among industrial workers.

- He also tried to win their loyalty with various initiatives. Schemes such as Strength Through Joy (Kraft durch Freude or KdF) gave them cheap theatre and cinema tickets, organised courses, trips and sports events, and even offered discounted cruises on luxury liners.
 - By 1939, over 50 million Germans had been on a KdF holiday.
- Beauty of Labour (Schönheit der Arbeit) movement. This improved working conditions in factories.
 - It introduced features not seen in many workplaces before, Such as washing facilities and low-cost canteens.
 - A state scheme was introduced to help workers buy the Volkswagen Beetle, the "people's car" It became a symbol of the prosperous new Germany even though no worker ever received one because the war halted all car production in 1939.

What was the cost of these advances?

- The workers lost their main political party, the SPD, They lost their trade unions and for many workers this remained a source of bitter resentment.
- All workers had to join the DAF run by Robert Ley → DAF kept strict control of the workers → could not strike for better pay and conditions + were even prevented from moving to better-paid jobs.
- Wages remained comparatively low, although prices of goods were also strictly controlled. By the late 1930s, many workers were grumbling that their standard of living was still lower than it had been before the Depression

SOCIAL POLICIES

Role of Women in Nazi Germany

- The ideal German Aryan family expected women to conform to their traditional role as care-givers.
- Under Nazi rule, women were excluded from politics and academics. Many young German girls instead received vigorous training in domestic tasks.
- Employment opportunities for women were limited and discrimination against women was encouraged.

Education and the Hitler Youth

Education:

- The Nazis ensured all teachers had to attend training courses stressing Nazi ideology.
 - The curriculum was changed to reflect a greater emphasis on Nazi values. This included infusing Nazi ideas into subjects such as history and biology, as well as the production of Nazi-approved textbooks.

The Hitler Youth:

- The Hitler Youth was a paramilitary organisation of the Nazi Party to groom German youths to be future leaders in Nazi organisations.
- 1933: it had 2.3 million members
 - It organised a variety of activities, such as camps, sports, and physical training, and this was backed up by indoctrination in anti-Semitism and Nazi ideology.

The Persecution of Minorities

- The Nazis wanted to use eugenics to improve the Aryan race through a euthanasia and sterilisation programme.
 - They persecuted members of other races and many minority groups such as Roma, homosexuals and mentally ill people, and any group that they thought challenged Nazi ideals.
 - Between 1934-1945, over 300,000 men and women were forcefully sterilised.
 - A so-called “euthanasia programme” of the disabled and mentally ill, even if they were of the Aryan race, started in 1939 → At least 5,000 disabled babies and children were killed between 1939 and 1945 either by injection or by starvation. 1939-1941: 72,000 mentally ill patients were gassed before a public outcry in Germany ended the extermination.
- By contrast, there was little protest about the treatment of the Roma. Five out of Six Roma living in Germany in 1939 were killed by the Nazis. Similarly, there was little to no complaint about the treatment of homosexuals and the so-called asocials
- alcoholics, the homeless, prostitutes, habitual criminals and beggars → who were rounded up off the streets and sent to concentration camps.

Jews

- Hitler became obsessed with the fact that Jewish people ran many of the most successful businesses, particularly the large department stores → blamed Jewish businessmen and bankers for Germany’s defeat in WW1. He thought they had forced the surrender of the German army.
- As soon as Hitler took power in 1933, he began to mobilise the full powers of the state against the Jews.
 - They were banned from the civil service and a variety of public services such as broadcasting and teaching. At the same time, the SA and later the SS organised boycotts of Jewish shops and businesses, which were marked with the Star of David.
- The Nuremberg Laws
 - 1935: Nuremberg Laws took away German citizenship from the Jews and deprived them of all civil and political rights. Many Jewish businesses had to close down.
 - Kristallnacht: SS troopers smashed up Jewish shops and workplaces with pickaxes and hammers, resulting in the murder of 91 Jews.
 - The Final Solution: Many Jews were sent to concentration camps to work as slave labour, forced to live in ghettos and then systematically killed.

CONTROL AND FEAR

- The SS: led by Heinrich Himmler → very highly trained and totally loyal to Hitler
 - primarily responsible for destroying opposition to Nazism + carrying out the racial policies of the Nazis
 - The SS had various sub-divisions which ensured Nazi control → monitored political opponents + stopped spies who tried to infiltrate the Nazi Party

- Gestapo: could arrest citizens + send them to concentration camps without trial or even explanation. 1939: sent around 160,000 people to concentration camps → The Gestapo was perhaps the organisation most feared by ordinary citizens.
- Concentration Camps: Almost as soon as Hitler took power, concentration camps were set up to "correct" opponents of the regime.
 - Prisoners were forced to do hard labour and given limited food → They suffered harsh discipline, beatings and random executions.
 - Jews socialists, communists, trade unionists, churchmen and anyone else brave enough to criticise the Nazis ended up in these camps + many Germans who were unfortunate enough to not fit in.
 - One famous example was revealed in a TV documentary: a German woman admitted that she in the 1990s informed her neighbour because the neighbour was "very artistic" .
 - Historians estimate that around 1.3 million Germans, half a million European Roma and countless others are political. → prisoners, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals as well as Russian and Polish prisoners of war spent at least some time in concentration camps between 1933 and 1939.
 - by the late 1930s, deaths in the camps were increasingly common and very few people came out alive

The Legal System: Police, Judges and Courts

- Judges had to belong to the Nazi-approved National Socialist League for the Maintenance of the Law, or else they could not practise, This soon created a form of self-imposed control
- judges knew what they were expected to do and did it. Hitler abolished trial by jury, so all cases were decided by judges. This meant that opponents of Nazism rarely received a fair trial.
- 1933-1936: though the police forces were controlled by the regional governments in Germany, the Nazis made sure these forces were headed by a high-ranking Nazi. → Goering had control of the Berlin police force. 1936: Hitler issued a decree making Himmler the Chief of Police of Germany → made the normal police forces part of the SS. Thus, the police became increasingly involved in political activities as well as law and order

PROPAGANDA AND CENSORSHIP

- It was headed by Joseph Goebbels, the Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda → used propaganda to encourage German nationalistic sentiments
- Posters and portraits of Hitler and the Nazi Party were spread throughout Germany to brainwash the German people + he also stirred up anti-communist and racist feelings, particularly anti-Semitism, as shown in the early propaganda cartoons.

To Impress Germans and Win Them Over

- The Nazis put huge investment into impressing Germans to win them over.
- Every year, the Nazis held spectacular rallies, marches and meetings in the Bavarian city of Nuremberg. The Nazis invested heavily in the film industry as well.
- 1936: Olympics were held in Berlin. Goebbels used it as a showcase for Nazi rule.

To Limit German Access to Information and Ideas

- Goebbels kept very strict control over what Germans were allowed to read, hear and watch.
- No books, paintings or any other art form could be produced without Nazi approval → heavy censorship + newspapers were not allowed to print anti-Nazi ideas.

- All films had to carry a pro- Nazi message + The newsreels shown along with films all proclaimed Nazi achievements.
- The government made cheap radios available so all Germans could buy one and listen to Nazi propaganda when aired.

There were harsh penalties for anyone who listened to unauthorised stations → all of these restrictions were enforced strictly → Gestapo agents and informers monitored anyone thought to be producing or consuming banned works + The police, SD and Gestapo would arrest any offenders and take them to concentration camps.

To Remind Germans of the Power of the State

- Local Nazi parties held regular marches at least once a week, often handing out leaflets. Hitler Youth groups also marched regularly. These activities created the impression that the state was everywhere, even if this might not have been the case

RESISTANCE AND OPPOSITION

Political Opposition

- Some socialists and communists were still alive, sending reports back to their leaders in exile or trying to encourage workers to resist by striking or sabotaging equipment → Any opponents who were caught were punished very harshly.

Military Resistance

- Aristocratic officers and conservatives opposed the Nazi regime.
- There was a failed assassination attempt in July 1944 called the Bomb Plot. → Many of these officers were later arrested, tried and executed.

Refusal to Conform

- Criticism by Churches
 - The Nazis had a difficult and tense relationship with the churches → disliked the churches but could not close them down.
 - Many members of the clergy criticised the Nazis in their sermons and eventually, 400 Catholic priests ended up in the clergy block of the Dachau concentration camp.
- Some Protestant ministers also resisted and many of them ended up in concentration camps.
- Anti-Nazi Youth Groups
 - The Nazis tried to control and win over the young through organisations such as the Hitler youth.
 - However, there were also some youth groups such as the White Rose and Edelweiss Pirates which rejected the Nazis