

The Weimar Republic

Even before World War I was over, the Germans had suffered badly — many were starving and an outbreak of influenza had killed thousands.

A New Government Took Over When the Kaiser Abdicated

This Government was led by Friedrich Ebert — Germany was now a Republic. Ebert was leader of the Social Democratic Party, a moderate party of socialists. They signed the Armistice on November 11th 1918. The new Government was democratic — they believed the people should say how the country was run. The new Republic was set up in February 1919, at Weimar, because there was violence in Berlin. Ebert became the first President, with Scheidemann as Chancellor.

THE WEIMAR GOVERNMENT

REICHSRAT
(Upper house
could delay
measures
passed
by Reichstag)



New German Parliament

REICHSTAG
(Elected by
proportional
representation)



Leader of largest
Party in Reichstag

Appoints a
Chancellor

President
Elected every
7 years



Friedrich Ebert

Proportional Representation is where the number of seats a party wins in parliament is worked out as a proportion of the number of votes they win. This was the system in Germany and it often led to lots of political parties in the Reichstag (German Parliament) — making it harder to get laws passed.

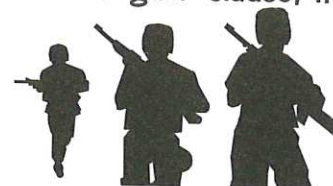
The Weimar Republic had Many Problems

- 1) It was difficult to make decisions because there were so many parties in the Reichstag.
- 2) It was hard to pick a Chancellor who had the support of most of the Reichstag.



- 3) The new Government had to accept the post-war treaties, so they were hated by many Germans because of the loss of territory, the 'War-guilt' clause, the Reparations etc.

- 4) There were many outbreaks of trouble, and Ebert agreed to form the Freikorps, a body of soldiers to keep the peace.



Another Incredibly Useful Fact

LEFT

People who want to change things often through extreme measures

LEFT and **RIGHT** in Politics, named after the French Revolution, where people who wanted to change things sat on the left in the National Assembly

RIGHT

People who want things to stay the same, or even get stricter

Weimar — not a kind of sausage...

Loads to learn here and you really need to know it — it's the basis for this section of the Syllabus. The Weimar Republic was set up in a time of defeat — which made it unpopular right from the start. Don't forget — many people didn't accept the peace settlements at the end of the First World War. Scribble a quick paragraph on the Weimar Republic and how it was set up.

Years of Unrest 1919-1923

Reasons for Discontent

- 1) Thousands of people were poor and starving — an influenza epidemic had killed thousands more people.
- 2) Many Germans denied they had lost the war and blamed the 'November Criminals' who had agreed to the Armistice and the Treaty of Versailles.
- 3) Others blamed for losing the war included the Communists, the Government, and the Jews.
- 4) The Government was seen as weak and ineffective — the Treaty of Versailles had made living conditions worse in Germany.



Soon there were Riots and Rebellions

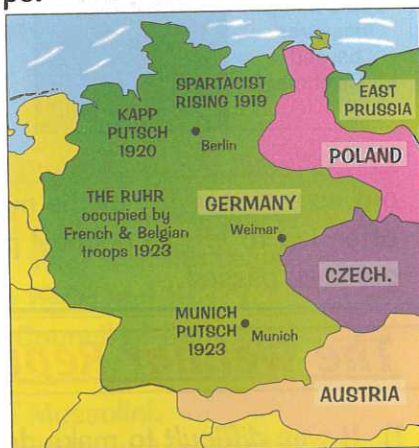
- 1) In 1919, the Communists led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg tried to take over Berlin in the Spartacist Revolt — but they were defeated by the Freikorps.



Wolfgang Kapp

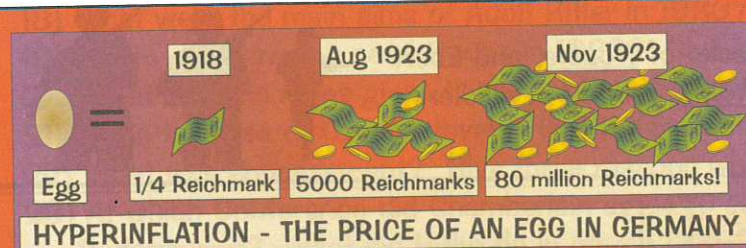
- 2) In 1920, some of the right-wing Freikorps themselves took part in the Kapp Putsch (Putsch means revolt) — led by Wolfgang Kapp, they took over Berlin to form another government. The workers staged a General Strike — Kapp gave up. The Government didn't punish the rebels, because many judges sympathised with people like Kapp.

- 3) In 1922 Walter Rathenau was killed — he'd been the Foreign Minister who signed the Rapallo Treaty with Russia and was Jewish. Many Germans were now anti-Jewish (anti-semitic).



In 1923 Germany Couldn't Pay the Reparations

France and Belgium occupied the Ruhr — the richest industrial part of Germany — to take resources instead. This led to fury in Germany, while workers in the Ruhr refused to work. German industry was devastated again, plunging the economy into hyperinflation.



Hyperinflation happens when production can't keep up with the amount of money there is, so the money keeps losing its value.

Hyperinflation had Three Major Results

- 1) Wages were paid twice a day before prices went up again.
- 2) The Middle Classes lost out as Bank Savings became worthless.
- 3) The German Mark became worthless.



Hyperinflation — sounds good for blowing up balloons...

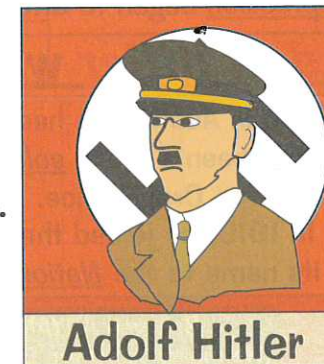
Phew, some complicated economics here — but it's not that hard for you to learn. Remember that discontent got worse when the economy went wrong — that's important for the 1930's too. As the Mark became worthless you needed more of them to buy things — soon people had wheelbarrows full of money. Scribble a list of reasons why there was so much discontent.

Stresemann and Recovery

In August 1923 Stresemann became Chancellor — he gradually led Germany back to recovery.

The Nazis led the Munich Putsch

- 1) Stresemann faced more rebellions — one of the most important came in Munich in November 1923.
- 2) Right-wing Nationalists called the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazis) tried to take over the Bavarian Government.
- 3) Their leader was Adolf Hitler, supported by famous war-hero General Ludendorff.
- 4) They were defeated, and Hitler went to prison for just nine months. Ludendorff was let off and people forgot the Nazis.

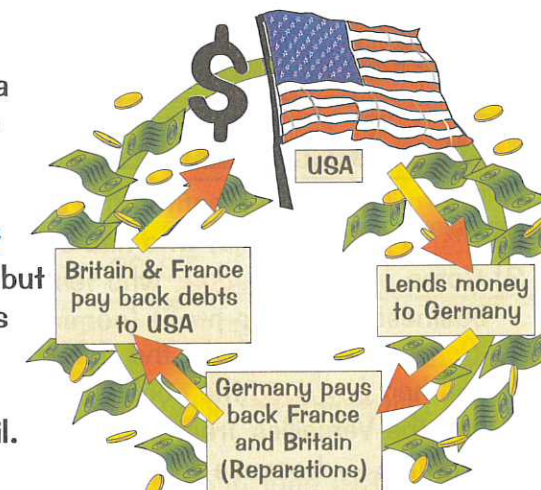


Adolf Hitler

Stresemann wanted International Cooperation

Stresemann was Chancellor for a few months, then Foreign Minister. He believed Germany's best chance for recovery came from working with other countries.

- 1) In September 1923 he told the workers in the Ruhr to return to work.
- 2) He accepted the Dawes Plan in 1924, and introduced a new German Mark called the Rentenmark to make the currency more stable.
- 3) In 1925 the French and Belgian troops left the Ruhr.
- 4) In October 1925 he agreed to the Locarno Settlement where the Western Borders of Germany were agreed, but not the Eastern. He won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in this field.
- 5) In 1926, Germany joined the League of Nations, and became one of the permanent members of the Council.
- 6) In 1929, the Young Plan replaced the Dawes Plan — Reparations would be reduced by one-quarter of the amount, and Germany was given 58 years to pay them.



The Dawes Plan

Germany had Begun to Recover

But They Still Depended on US Money



Gustav Stresemann

Life was beginning to look better for Germany thanks to the work of Stresemann. But he died in October 1929, just before the disaster of the Wall Street Crash. The plans he had agreed would only work if the USA had enough money to keep lending to Germany — but now it didn't. Things were suddenly going to get worse again.

They think it's all over — it is now...

Here you have it, the first appearance of the Nazi party — and you need to know why the Munich Putsch happened and why it went wrong. Remember — the Twenties were a tough decade in Germany with so many rebellions, but Stresemann seemed to have the problems sorted. Scribble a paragraph on the work of Gustav Stresemann — his policies at home and abroad. But don't forget — the Wall Street Crash would hit Germany very hard.

The Roots of the Nazi Party

When life got better under Stresemann, nobody thought about the Nazis. But from 1929 the **Depression** began to affect Germany **badly** — this gave Hitler the **chance** he needed.

Adolf Hitler was the Nazi Leader

- 1) Born in Austria, he had lived in Germany from 1912 onwards.
- 2) He'd been a brave **soldier** on the Western Front in the Great War, winning the Iron Cross twice. He **couldn't accept** that Germany had **lost** the war.
- 3) In 1919, he joined the German Workers' Party, became **leader** and changed its name to the **National Socialist German Workers' Party** (Nazis).



Believed ARYAN races were MASTER RACE
(He meant Northern European people, but got it wrong)

Would join Austria
and Germany (Anschluss)

Would reverse
Versailles Treaty

Would create a
greater Germany



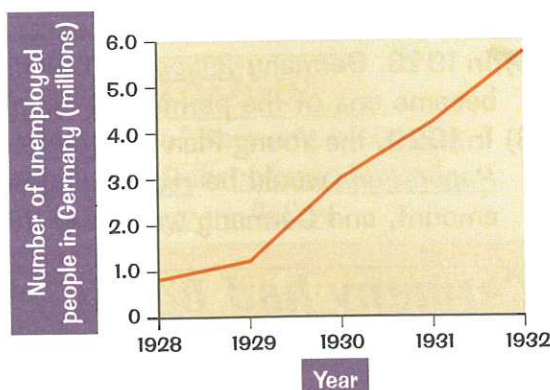
Germans had
a right to
LEBENSRAUM
(more space to live)

He believed other
races were inferior

- 4) He was a **charismatic speaker** and soon the Party had grown.
- 5) In the 1923 elections the Nazis won **6%** of the vote.
- 6) Hitler was **imprisoned** briefly in 1923 after the Munich Putsch, and wrote **Mein Kampf** (My Struggle) which contains many of his ideas — some very odd.

The Nazis became Popular with Several Groups

- 1) The **military**, who resented the end of the war and the small army Germany was allowed after it.
- 2) **Middle class** people, who had suffered financially after the war.
- 3) Some **business people**, who feared the growth of Communism — which didn't believe in businesses making profit (commercialism).
- 4) **Germans** who thought the **government** was weak and had **betrayed** the people in the Peace process and the Versailles Treaty.
- 5) Farmers — because food prices were low.
- 6) People who disliked the Jews — **anti-semites**.
- 7) **Thugs** who found the Nazi way exciting.
- 8) Very **few** people were really **interested** in the Nazis at this stage. There were less than 30,000 members by 1925, and in the 1928 elections, the Nazis had **13 Reichstag members**, compared with 54 Communists and 152 Social Democrats.



The Nazis were like an 'Army'

- 1) Hermann **Goering** was a World War I air-ace.
 - 2) Josef **Goebbels** was a cripple who took charge of Propaganda in the party.
 - 3) Heinrich **Himmler** was later in charge of the SS stormtroopers.
 - 4) Ernst **Rohm**, who was in charge of the Sturmabteilung — the SA.
- The SA were a military force of brownshirted stormtroopers who protected the Nazi leaders and harassed their political opponents.



The Nazis — ready to sweep to power...

Not much fun this page, I'm afraid — but it's very important you learn it, so you know **where** the Nazis came from and **what** they stood for. Remember — the **strong organisation** of the Nazis made them dangerous. Scribble a list of the kinds of people who **supported** them.

The Rise of the Nazis

The Depression hit Germany hard, and by 1929 **membership** of the Nazi party had **risen** to nearly 200,000 — people thought the **Weimar** Government **couldn't** sort out Germany's problems.

The Elections of 1930 showed Nazi Gains



Chancellor Heinrich Brüning couldn't control the Reichstag properly — there was a big increase in seats for both the Nazis (107) and the Communists (77). Brüning had to rule by emergency decree as no single party had enough seats to control the Reichstag.

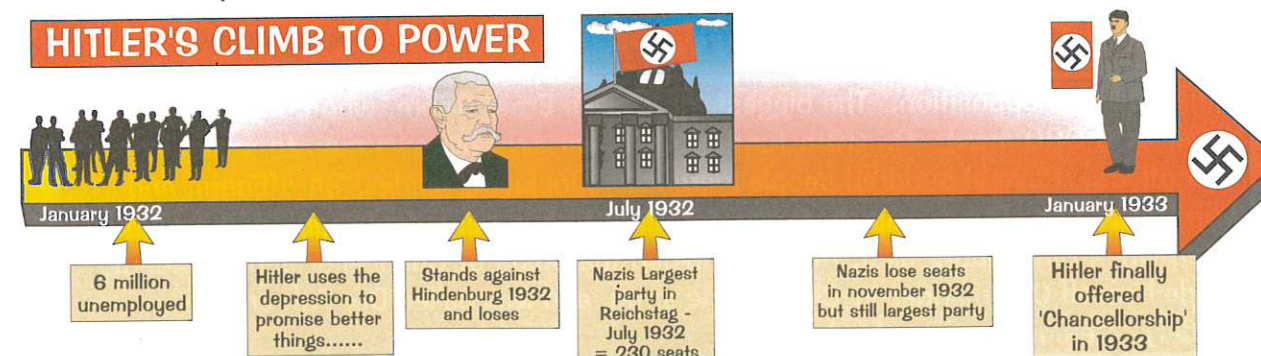
Germany had No Strong Government

- 1) By April 1932, conditions were **serious** in Germany. Over 5 million people were unemployed, and the country was **desperate** for a **strong** Government.
- 2) President **Hindenburg** had to stand for **re-election**, because his term of office had run out. Hitler stood against him, and there was also a Communist candidate.
- 3) Hindenburg, a national hero, said he'd win easily but **didn't** win a **majority** in the first election — in the second ballot he won 53% and beat Hitler who won 36.8% of the vote.

Hindenburg refused to give the Nazis power

- 1) Hindenburg **couldn't find** a Chancellor who had **support** in the Reichstag.
- 2) He appointed the **inexperienced** Franz von Papen.
- 3) Von Papen **couldn't** govern so there were new elections in June 1932.
- 4) The Nazis won 230 seats — they were now the **biggest** party, but didn't have a majority in the Reichstag. Hitler **demand**ed to be made Chancellor.
- 5) Hindenburg **refused** because he **didn't trust** Hitler and reappointed Von Papen. Hitler was **offered** the Vice-Chancellor's job instead, on the advice of Von Papen.
- 6) Hitler **refused**, and waited for the next set of elections.

HITLER'S CLIMB TO POWER



Germany 1930-32 — a state of confusion...

Loads of facts here — but you **don't** need to learn them all by heart. The **key point** is the sequence of events. Hitler didn't come to power overnight — his support increased as the economy **got worse** and as the other political parties **failed to solve** Germany's problems.

Hitler Comes to Power

The new Government *still couldn't* govern properly, and in November **1932** new *elections* were called — here's how Hitler became master of Germany.

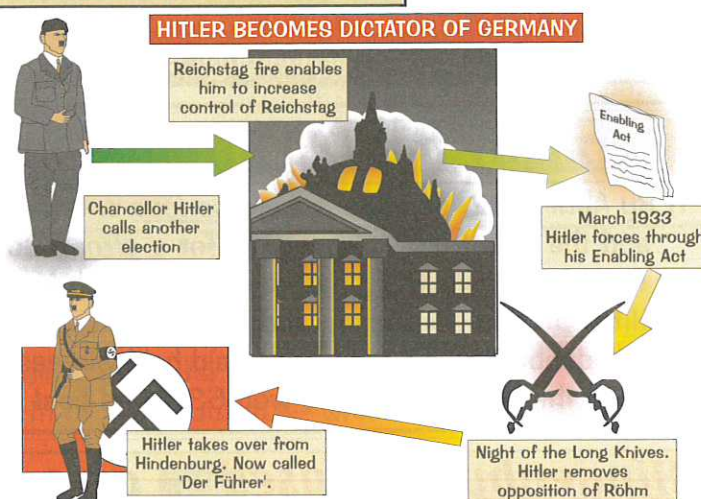
The Nazis *lost* seats in the *Elections*

- 1) The Nazis *lost* 34 seats — the opposition parties thought the Nazis were losing popularity.
- 2) Hindenburg appointed *Kurt von Schleicher* as Chancellor.
- 3) Von Schleicher tried to *weaken* the Nazis by asking another leading Nazi to be Vice-Chancellor — Gregor Strasser — but Hitler *stopped* him accepting.
- 4) Soon, Hindenburg *gave in*, and offered Hitler the post of Chancellor in January 1933.
- 5) Hitler decided to call for *another election* in March 1933, hoping to make the Nazis *stronger* in the Reichstag.

The Nazis used *Dirty Tricks* to *Win* in 1933

The Nazis did well in the elections because:—

- 1) They *controlled* the news media.
- 2) Opposition meetings were *banned*.
- 3) They used the SA to *terrorise* opponents.
- 4) A fire broke out in the Reichstag building, and Hitler whipped up *opposition* against the Communists, who he said started it.
- 5) Hitler used *emergency decrees* to pass measures against terrorists — Communists were *arrested* so that people wouldn't vote for them.



Hitler Changed the *Law* to *Keep Control*

- 1) The Nazis won 288 seats but *no* majority — the Communists still won 81.
- 2) So Hitler *declared* the Communist party *illegal*.
- 3) This gave him *support* in parliament to bring in an *Enabling Bill* which was passed with threats and bargaining in March 1933.
- 4) This Bill let him *govern* for four years *without* parliament and made all other parties illegal. Hitler was almost in full control.

The *Night of the Long Knives*

Hitler still had opposition. The biggest threat was Ernst Röhm, who controlled the SA (over 400,000 men). On 30th June 1934, Hitler sent his own men to arrest Röhm and others. Several hundred people were killed, including leading SA officers, and von Schleicher. Röhm was shot next day, the SA had been destroyed, and a month later, when Hindenburg died, Hitler combined the posts of Chancellor and President, made himself Commander-in-Chief of the army, and was called Der Führer (the leader). Democracy was dead.

Democracy at work — Hitler was elected to power...

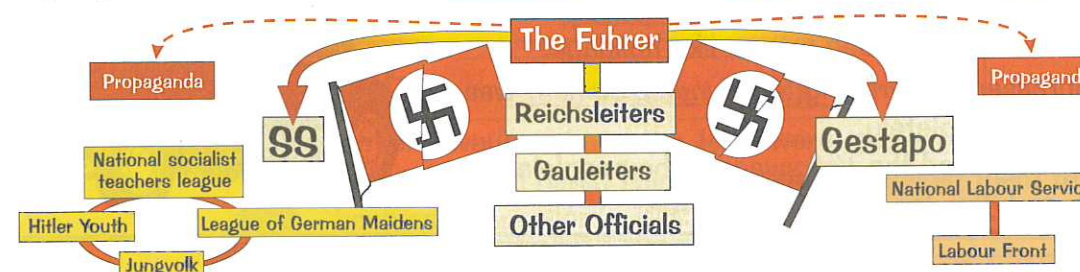
Plenty of facts for you again — make sure you know what *conditions* in Germany made Hitler's rise *possible*, and what he did when he was in power to *secure his position*. Remember the really important fact that Hitler was *elected to power* at first by the German people. Scribble a list of the events of 1933 and 1934, and learn it together with your notes on the previous page.

Life Under the Nazis

Time to look at why so many people *supported* Hitler.

Germany was now under *Strong Leaders*

- 1) Germany was *re-organised* into Gaus (provinces) with a Gauleiter — a loyal Nazi in charge.
- 2) Above them were the *Reichsleiters* like Goering and Goebbels, who *advised* Hitler.
- 3) At the top was the *Führer* — Hitler himself — who was in absolute *control*.
- 4) Every aspect of life was carefully *controlled*, and only *loyal* Nazis could be *successful*.



The Nazis *controlled* all *Information*

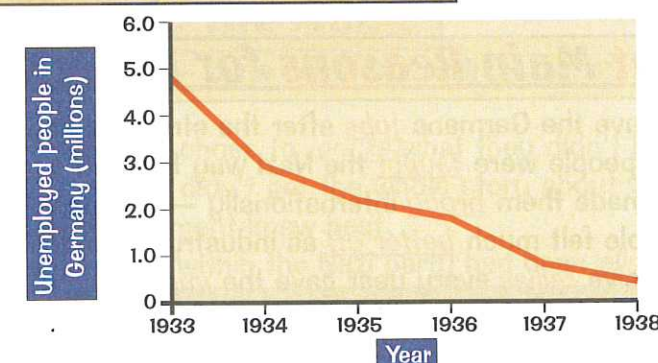
- 1) Goebbels was in charge of *propaganda* and *controlled* all public information — the Nazis controlled the radio, films and newspapers, and education.
- 2) All teachers had to belong to the *National Socialist Teachers' League*, and all schools *taught* that Germans were a *superior* race to others.
- 3) Textbooks were *re-written* to include subjects like Race Studies, and the Nazi version of history.
- 4) Goebbels had the *support* of the *SS*, formed in 1925 as a personal force for Hitler and the leading Nazis. After 1934 it grew in power.
- 5) The *Gestapo* were secret police and could arrest anybody without cause.



Many Germans didn't know what was really going on. They were afraid to speak out, because the Nazis encouraged people to inform on anybody who didn't support them — and these people would be arrested.

Hitler Gave *Work* to *6 Million Unemployed*

Hitler started a huge *programme* of *public works*, which gave *jobs* to thousands of people. From 1933, huge motorways — autobahns — were started, and the Nazis had *big plans* for many public buildings, including the stadium which would hold the 1936 Olympic Games.



Nazi Germany — the good, the bad and the ugly...

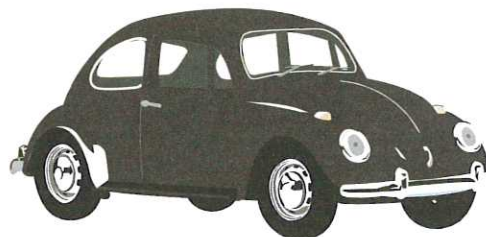
Here you are, the *three major factors* that meant Hitler's control was complete — strong government, control of information and jobs created for 6 million workers. These factors are incredibly important for you to learn because now *no-one* could oppose Hitler, people *didn't know* what was really happening and most Germans were *happier* because there were new jobs.

German Growth Under the Nazis

There are more reasons why so many people supported Hitler, even though there were aspects of Nazi life they didn't like.

People were Encouraged to Work by Rewards

- 1) All men between 18 and 25 could be recruited into the National Labour Service and given jobs.
- 2) Instead of Trade Unions, workers joined the Labour Front, where they wouldn't be allowed to go on strike, but had higher wages than before.
- 3) The Nazis introduced the 'Strength through Joy' idea — good workers were awarded prizes, like holidays.
- 4) Output increased in Germany, and unemployment was almost ended completely.
- 5) The Nazis introduced the Volkswagen (the people's car) as an ambition for people to aim for.



Hitler Re-armed the Germany Military

"German and Italian re-armament is proceeding much more rapidly than re-armament can in England. In three years Germany will be ready."

Adolf Hitler 1936

Another way of creating work was to build up the armed forces. The Nazis did this secretly at first, because the Treaty of Versailles had banned it. Hitler sacked some of the generals, and replaced them with Nazi supporters. Goering was put in charge of the Luftwaffe (airforce), which had been banned at Versailles.

Hitler controlled Young People's Beliefs

At ten years old, all children joined the Jungvolk (Young People) — then boys joined the Hitler Youth and girls joined the League of German Maidens. They were taught to support Hitler, even informing on their parents if necessary! The job of girls and women was to make families and to support their men in making Germany great.

"Look at these young men and boys! With them I can make a new world!"

Adolf Hitler

Eight Main Reasons for Hitler's Popularity

- 1) He gave the Germans jobs after the struggles and unemployment of the 1920's.
- 2) The people were taught the Nazi way from an early age.
- 3) He made them proud internationally — Germans had felt humiliated for a long time.
- 4) People felt much better off as industry expanded.
- 5) Massive rallies every year gave the impression of a strong, prosperous nation.
- 6) The army supported his aim to make Germany strong again.
- 7) Businesses liked the prosperity and the way Hitler attacked the Communists.
- 8) People were frightened to protest against Nazi methods — they knew they'd be arrested.

Nazi supremacy — a growing threat...

It doesn't stop here, I'm afraid — make sure you know how the Nazis encouraged people to work and controlled their beliefs right from childhood. Scribble down a list of the main reasons why people followed Hitler and how he made sure they did what he said. Then learn it.

The Jews in Nazi Germany

Hitler believed the Germans were a Super-Race

- 1) He thought other races were inferior — Goebbels made sure that people agreed with this, and blamed other races for weakening the German people.
- 2) Hitler was angry when a black American called Jesse Owens took 4 gold medals in the 1936 Berlin Olympics, and when the German World Heavyweight Boxing Champion Max Schmelling was beaten by another black American, Joe Louis.



Jesse Owens

The Nazis Hated the Jews

Hitler always claimed the Jews were responsible for many German problems, and harsh laws were passed against them from the time he became Chancellor in 1933.

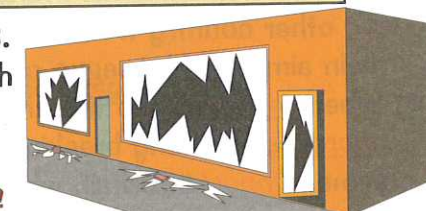
In 1935 He Passed the Nuremburg Laws

- 1) These laws stopped Jews being German citizens.
- 2) Banned marriage between Jews and non-Jews in Germany.
- 3) Banned sexual relationships between Jews and non-Jews.
- 4) Forced all Jews to wear a yellow Star of David on their clothes.

Many Jews went into exile, like Albert Einstein — they spoke out against the Nazi regime from abroad, but the world did nothing.

Kristallnacht 1938 — The Night of the Broken Glass

- 1) A Jew murdered a German diplomat in Paris in November 1938.
- 2) There was rioting throughout Germany — thousands of Jewish shops were smashed, and thousands of Jews were arrested.
- 3) Nazi propaganda made people believe that the Jews were bad for Germany, so they should be sent to special Concentration Camps, or humiliated and maltreated in public.
- 4) People believed the camps were work-camps, where they would work for Germany. Later, Nazi policy became more terrible as they tried to exterminate the Jewish race.



There was No Real Opposition to the Nazis

It's hard to understand why so few people protested — there were four main reasons:

- 1) Everybody was scared of the SS and the Gestapo.
- 2) People were better off after years of hardship, and chose to ignore what they didn't like.
- 3) Goebbels' propaganda was so effective that people didn't get the whole story about what was really going on — but believed the Nazi government knew best.
- 4) Opponents like the Communists or even opponents within the Nazi party had been eliminated.

A few brave men like the churchman MARTIN NIEMÜLLER did speak out against the Nazis, but he was arrested and sent to a Concentration Camp. Many churchmen were arrested when it seemed like the Churches might start to protest against the Nazis. Generally, they didn't.

Nazi Germany — a climate of cruelty and fear...

The Jewish people suffered terribly at the hands of the Nazis — and you need to know how. This is horrific, and it's hard for us to understand why most Germans didn't protest. Remember — it wasn't just Jews who were persecuted, but also gypsies, homosexuals, and Slavic peoples.