**Quote Bank and Key Information**

**The Second Reich 1900-1919**

***The Constitution of the Second Reich***

* Established following Prussia’s victory in the Franco-Prussian War 1870-1871
* Following German unification, Prussia compromised 65% of the surface area of unified Germany and 62% of the population – Prussia dominated
* The Kaiser was top dog and he had the powers of: Commander-in-Chief, in charge of foreign policy, appointment and dismissal of Chancellor, dissolve Reichstag and president of the Bundesrat.
* Germany was ruled by Kaiser Wilhelm II from 1888 to 1918
* All men over the age of 25 could vote in Reichstag elections
* The Chancellor was responsible for presenting legislation to parliament and the Chancellor and ministers implemented laws – both were only accountable to the Kaiser
* The Bundesrat could initiate legislation and if 14 or more members of the Bundesrat voted against a law it could be vetoed. The Prussians had 17 members
* The Reichstag could vote to accept, reject or amend legislation. Members democratically elected
* Federal constitution
* The German army was accountable to the Kaiser and swore an oath of allegiance to him and not to the government
* Bismarck ensured that the army was a ‘state within a state’

***Economic Developments***

* Between 1890 and 1914, economic growth averaged at 4.5% a year
* In 1890, coal production was 89 million tonnes. By 1910 it was 222 million tonnes
* In 1890, steel production was 2.3 million tonnes. By 1910 it was 13.8 million tonnes
* By 1914, Germany’s industrial strength matched that of Britain
* Thanks to companies like AEG and Siemens, Germany produced around 50% of the world’s electrical goods
* In chemicals, Germany led the world in production of synthetic dyes and pharmaceutical and in precision engineering
* Industrial economy, the contribution that industry made to the country’s GNP rose from around 33% to 42% during the period
* Early 1870s, annual defence budget = 100 million marks. By 1913, it was 2405 million marks

***Social Consequences***

* Stimulated urbanisation. By 1910, 60% of the population lived in urban areas, the highest rate in Europe
* Berlin had in excess of 2 million inhabitants by 1910
* Despite low unemployment and increases in average wares, the standard of living for most working people was low. Discontent about this created a boom in Trade Union membership: over 3 million people were members by 1913
* Class tensions between the Junker elite who wanted to keep their power in tac (Sammslungpolitik) against the working class who were angered at their pay and conditions at work

***Political Developments***

* SPD (Social Democratic Party): growing throughout the whole period, main left-wing party. 1887= 0.03% of the vote with 11 seats. By 1912= 28% of the vote with 110 seats making them the largest party in the Reichstag
* Anti-socialist laws that limited the possible representation of the SPD were in place in 1887
* Main right-wing party was the German Conservative Party (DKP) who represented Junkers and was strong in Prussia
* The Centre Party (Z party) represented German Catholics (around a 1/3 of Germans) and consistently received approximately a ¼ of votes in Reichstag elections. The party usually worked more with conservative parties, but at time (e.g. over the budget in 1906) sided with the SPD. Thus the Centre Party often held the balance of power in the Reichstag

***The Kaiser and his Chancellors***

* Historian John Rohl (umlaut on the O) argues that the Kaiser developed a system of autocratic personal rule during the 1890s: he appointed ministers who would further his conservative political agenda and sought to control the work of his Chancellors and government. Rohl says how the Kaiser was at “the heart of the system”
* Historians like Chris Clark say he never attempted to be an “absolute monarch” and instead the Chancellors and the democratic Reichstag held the power in Germany
* In 1896-97, the Kaiser exercised his powers of patronage to remove more progressive ministers from the government and replace them with those who shared his conservative vision, such as von Bulow and von Tirpitz
* After Bismarck and Caprivi, the Chancellors worked with the Kaiser (Hohenlohe, von Bulow and Bethmann Hollweg).
* Although, von Bulow (umlaut on the u) defeated the Kaiser over the Tariff Law of 1902
* 1911 Imperial Insurance Cod, Sickness Insurance 1902 and Child Labour 1908 laws and reforms show how the people did get their way sometimes

***How did the political system work in practice??***

* In 1906, the SPD and the Centre Party deputies in the Reichstag joined forces to vote against the government’s budget, in protest at Germany’s colonial policies. The Kaiser consequently used his powers to dissolve the Reichstag and a new election was called in 1907, known as the Hottentot election. Conservative imperialist parties emerged strengthened after the election. This event demonstrated:
* The Reichstag trying to control the actions of the Kaiser, government and army
* The tensions between a left-win Reichstag and a permanently conservative government
* The power that the Kaiser had to dissolve the Reichstag
* Support from the German public for a brutal imperialist agenda
* The Daily Telegraph Affair, 1908 – Kaiser made many unguarded comments like the British were ‘mad, mad as March hares!’ for thinking that Germany posed a threat to peace
* The Kaiser was perceived in German as to of exceeded his authority in talking to the foreign press in this way.
* Event demonstrated that the Reichstag and German Press were willing to criticise Kaiser
* Also shows how Kaiser could not always act in an autocratic manner, with the Reichstag forcing him to guarantee he wouldn’t do anything like it again
* He pressurised von Bulow into his resignation after the matter
* The Zabern Affair 1913. A German soldier based in Zabern, Alsace, made a derogatory comment about the Alsatian locals (“Wackes” was said by Second Leiutenant Forstner) Tensions escalated between the German army and local inhabitants, and matters came to a head when the soldier was acquitted by a military court of injuring a man who jeered at him. The Kaiser backed the military, while the Reichstag criticised the conduct of the army and of Chancellor Bethmann. Event demonstrated that…
* The army operated independently of civil authority in Germany and were accountable to the Kaiser who, by 1913, was very supportive of them
* The Reichstag were not able to hold the Chancellor to account: the Chancellor only needed the Kaiser’s support
* The Reichstag could be ignored by the Kaiser and the army
* Tensions existed between different parts of the German system, especially between the army and the Reichstag

***Where did the power lie in the Second Reich?***

Germany was an autocracy

* Wilhelm II May 1891 “There is only one man in charge of the Reich and I will not tolerate another.”
* John Rohl – the Kaiser was at “the heart of the system”

Germany was dominated by elites

* Historians like Hans-Ulrich Wehler described the elites ruling as “revolution from above.”
* Conservative pressure groups like the Agrarian League and the Central Association of German Industrialists successfully lobbied for increased agricultural tariffs in 1902
* Sammslungspolitk

Democracy

* Christopher Clark – the Kaiser never attempted to be an “absolute monarch” and Wilhelm II was too erratic for personal rule to be possible
* Reichstag decided the defence budget

***Impact of the First World War***

* Early 1870s, annual defence budget was 100 million marks. By 1913, it was 2,405 million marks
* “We will not desert our Fatherland in its hour of need,” – Hugo Hasse (chairman of the SPD)

Economic Impact

* Only 16% of the £8.4 million cost of the war was met by taxation: war bonds were also used and money printed – which led to inflation
* From 1913 to 1918, the mark declined in value by 75%
* Food shortages “Turnip Winter” (1916-1917)

Social Impact

* 2 million soldiers were killed and 6.3 million were injured
* Living standards fell by 20-30%
* Spanish Flu pandemic in 1918

Political Impact

* At the start of the war, appeared politically unified under the Burgfrieden (political truce)
* Large crowds gathered at Under Den Linden and Odeonsplatz in Munich on August 2nd 1914 to celebrate war effort
* As the Kaiser announced to the Reichstag at the start of the war, “I know no parties anymore, I know only Germans”.
* However, this situation did not last: the view of the left that only defensive war was justified was not compatible with the aim of many on the right for a war of expansion and conquest (a Siegfriede)
* By 1917, 42 SPD deputies had broken away to form the anti-war and radical socialist USPD. Mounting concern about the war led to a Reichstag vote, the ‘peace resolution’, which urged the government to try to negotiate a peace settlement. The left and the centre won the vote by 212 to 126
* War saw the formation of the Spartacist League who wanted a social revolution
* 1918 wave of strikes, such as one in Berlin which lasted for 5 days involving half a million workers.
* Elites called the socialist critics “enemies of the Reich”
* 1918 – Burgfrieden died
* By 1916, the ‘Silent Dictatorship’ of Supreme Commanders Generals Hindenburg and Ludendorff were essentially in charge of the country
* Germany’s impending defeat came as a great shock to many Germans. This contributed to the outbreak of the revolution and the acceptance of the ‘stab in the back’ myth (Dolchslosslegende)

***The German Revolution***

* The revolution from above (29th September – 3rd October 1918) , Kaiser attempted to form a new civilian government which would please the working class yet keep power centralised in the elites. On 3rd of October, liberal Prince Max of Baden formed a new government containing liberal and socialist members of the Reichstag
* Andrew White said the elites “had no intention of surrendering its own power.”
* The revolution from below (31st October – 8th November 1918), sailors in Kiel mutinied against a final suicide order by Chief Scheer – this spread across Germans. Riots in many areas like Berlin Cologne and Stuttgart. Moderate socialists were declaring the existence of a “democratic republic”
* 9th November 1918, Wilhelm II abdicates to Holland and a government of SPD and USPD members was formed with Friedrich Ebert as the dominant member
* Armistice agreed on 9th November 1918
* 10th November – January 1919. Ebert-Groener Pact agreed which made a deal between the army and Ebert’s government

**Controversy 1: Causes of the First World War**

***Full blame on Germany***

* A.J.P. Taylor – ‘the sole cause for the outbreak of war in 1914 was the Schlieffen Plan.’
* A.J.P also had the theory of War by Timetable - 'The First World War had begun - imposed on the statesmen of Europe by railway timetables.
* Fritz Fischer – strong ‘ will to war’ among German leaders before 1914 (Fischer thesis where he argued it was Germany’s fault in his book, *Germany’s Aims in the First World War* and *War of Illusions 1969.* John Rohl (umlaut) also supported this view
* James Joll – German rulers had ‘accepted war as inevitable’ by December 1912
* Chief of the General staff, von Moltke said “In my opinion, war is inevitable, and the sooner the better.”
* Mark Rathbone on the Schlieffen Plan, “Germany had committed an act of unprovoked aggression against another country.”
* The War Council meeting 1912, where the Kaiser and the military leaders met and the topic of the possibility of war was a main one. Fischer uses this as key evidence
* Weltpolitik
* Schlieffen Plan
* The September Programme 1914
* The Blank Cheque – 5/6th of July, Kaiser Wilhelm II (under pressure from Ludendorff and Hindenburg) gave full support to Austria-Hungary. Austrians subsequently issued an ultimatum to Serbia after Franz Ferdinand’s assignation by the Black Hand Gang, when 1 of their 10 demands was not met – war was declared

***Did Germany destabilise peace?***

* 1890, Wilhelm II allowed the Reinsurance Treaty (ties with Russia) to lapse and began closer links with the Austro-Hungarian Empirie
* The Bosnian Crisis, 1908. Declining power of Ottoman Empire in Balkans led a power vacuum to be open, the Balkans v Austria-Hungary. Germany gave support to Austria-Hungary and promised military assistance against Serbia, whereas Serbia was backed by Russia
* The First Moroccan Crisis, 1905-1906. Conference in Algeciras debating who had power in the region after the Kaiser called for a conference in a speech he made in Tangier in 1905. All countries present accepted French influence in the area except for Germany and Austria-Hungary
* The Second Moroccan Crisis, 1911. Following French suppression of an anti-French uprising in Fez, Morocco. Wilhelm II argued France had exceeded their rights and ordered a gunboat, the Panther, to assist the rebels; Britain and France found this aggressive. Eventually, Germany was given the right to control parts of the Congo in return for accepting French influence in Morocco
* German Naval expansion. The Second Naval Law in 1900 increased the size of the German navy to 38 battleships and consistently increased throughout the period. Britain saw this as a threat, and in 1912 tried to negotiate with Germany to limit their naval expansion, but to no avail
* “the most formidable document I had ever seen addressed by one state to another that was independent.” – Sir Edward Grey, British foreign secretary on the Austrian ultimatum
* On 28th July, Austria declared war on Serbia and in response Russia, who was allied with Serbia and concerned to prevent Austria expanding in the Balkan region, began to mobilise her army. On 31st July, Germany declared war on Russia
* 3rd August, Germany declare war on France and invade Belgium on 4th August. Britain declare war on Germany due to their alliance with Belgium

***Not all Germany’s fault….***

* Gerhard Ritter – “No one in a position of (German) authority wanted to bring about a world war.”
* Emil Ludwig – “a few dozen incapable leaders” led Europe “into a war which in no way was destined or inevitable.”
* “I foresee that very soon I shall be overwhelmed by the pressure brought upon me and be forced to take extreme measures which will lead to war.” – Russian Tsar’s telegram to Wilhelm II on 29th July 1914
* Europe ‘slithered into war’ – Lloyd George UK PM (by accident)
* Christoph Mick – “The First World War was a result of the collective failure of the European political elite.”
* Sarah Ward – “expansionist ambitions of states such as Russia, Austria and Germany were to blame for war breaking out in July 1914.”
* Britain participated in the naval race with Germany and launched the dreadnought class of warship in 1906, provoking Germany to expand their navy in the Third Naval Law
* Russia’s decision to mobilise her army in July 1914 pushed Germany to enact the Schlieffen Plan
* Austria- Hungary trying to save its dying empire got Germany caught up e.g. Balkans Crisis and ultimatum
* Triple Entente raised German fears of ‘encirclement’ i.e. being surrounded so they had to break out
* Britain, Russia and France were all building empires in time of Weltpolitik
* Russia had plans to increase their army by 500,000 from 1916
* France decided to increase conscription from two to three years from 1916
* 1907 Anglo-Russian Entente. Created the Triple Entente
* Could also say that Germany pushed for war to escape domestic pressures e.g. Zabern Affair, SPD. Weltpolitik “aimed at diverting the attention of the masses from social and political problems at home by a dynamic expansion abroad.” – Imanuel Geiss
* Imanuel Geiss – “the Bosnian crisis in the East was a kind of dress rehearsal for the First World War.” – Imanuel Geiss

***So the interpretations are…***

* The war was caused by German desire for European power
* German leaders pushed for war (aggression) to escape domestic problems
* Germany feared encirclement
* German leaders believed war was inevitable, and the sooner the better
* Other European countries

**The Weimar Republic 1919-1933**

* Following elections in January 1919, a National Assembly met in the city of Weimar to form an interim parliament and to agree a new constitution. The largest party in the Assembly was the SPD, which had won 38% of the vote. SPD co-operated with other pro-democracy parties, the Centre Party and the DDP (German Democratic Party) and formed a liberal democratic system with protection for workers
* Had two Presidents, Friedrich Ebert (1919-1925) and Paul von Hindenburg

***The Weimar Constitution***

* A President to be elected every 7 years with the power to select and dismiss the Chancellor
* President was Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces
* The President could dissolve the lower house of the German parliament, the Reichstag and call new Reichstag elections under Article 25 of the constitution
* The Chancellor and government were accountable to the Reichstag and had to resign if they lost confidence of the Reichstag
* The Reichstag was to be elected every 4 years. Universal suffrage for people over the age of 20
* Proportional Representation: minimum requirement for a seat in the Reichstag was just 60,000 votes across the entire country
* Federal system
* Referendums if enough people petitioned one
* Freedoms of speech, right to work, worker’s rights and welfare rights guaranteed under Bill of Rights
* Under Article 48, the President had the power to rule via presidential decree in the event of an emergency. However, this power was checked as the Reichstag could review and overturn any decree issued under Article 48

***Treaty of Versailles***

* ‘Death rather than slavery’ thundered the nationalist newspaper Deutsche Zeitung in reaction to the Treaty
* The Constituent Assembly accepted the treaty in June 1919 by 237 votes to 138
* Those who signed the Treaty, (Ebert and the SPD) were known as the ‘November Criminals’
* ‘War guilt’ clause number 231 – all blame put on Germany
* Treaty meant Germany
* Lost 13% of its territory
* Lost 12% of its population (6.5 million)
* Lost 48% of its iron ore
* Lost 16% of its coal
* Lost 15% of its agricultural production
* April 1921, decided 132,000 million gold marks over 30 years
* Conscription abolished, army reduced to 100,000 – no tanks or aircraft
* Navy limited to 6 battleships, 6 cruisers, 12 destroyers, 12 torpedo boats and no submarines
* The first election in 1919 produced a whole majority for the pro-Weimar parties but the 1920 election saw their support slump to only 45%

***The Threat from the extreme left***

* The Spartacist uprising 1919 – launched an attempted communist revolution. President Ebert ordered the paramilitary Freikorps (volunteer groups of ex-servicemen) to crush the rebellion. The leaders, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were killed
* Communists also temporarily took control or rebellion in a number of areas in Germany : Bavaria in 1919, the Ruhr in 1920 and Saxony and Thuringia in 1923
* Ebert-Groener Pact meant Freikorps and army crushed these rebellions
* The left assassinated 22, 10 got sentenced to death and 17 to severe punishment
* The highest share of the vote that the KPD received in Reichstag elections of the 1920s was 12.6%

***The Threat from the extreme right***

* The Kapp Putsch, 1920. Led by Wolfgang Kapp, a group of right-wing politicians and soldiers seized control of Berlin. Lack of support, putsch died after general strike paralysed Berlin
* Munich Putsch 1923. 8th November Hitler and Nazis took control of a conservative political meeting and Hitler announced a national revolution. Bavarian police able to stop it on 9th November
* “The enemies of the state stand on the right.” – 1922 by Joseph Wirth, then chancellor, following assassination of Walter Rathenau
* Stahlhelm ( Steel Helmets) paramilitary group membership reached around 400,000
* Right assassinated 354, 326 went unpunished and only 1 rightly sentenced to severe punishment
* The political right did not just undermine Weimar through direct action. The ‘stab in the back’ myth had a pernicious influence in that it made democracy appear weak and un-German and portrayed democratic politicians as traitors

***1923 – Year of Crisis***

* By early 1923, the German government was failing to meet its reparations obligations – so it started printing money
* The Ruhr Crisis. Failure to meet payments meant France occupied the Ruhr to take “what is rightfully theirs”. The German government ordered ‘passive resistance’, refusing to cooperate with the French.
* To help those in the Ruhr, and reparations by 1923, 300 paper mills and 150 printing presses worked 24 hours a day to create paper currency
* Hyperinflation! In April 1919, 12 marks were needed to buy $1. However by December 1923, 4.2 trillion marks were needed to buy $1.

***How did Weimar survive all this shit?***

* Poor leadership and planning of attempted putsches. E.g. during the Munich Putsch, Hitler exhibited indecision as he dithered overnight about whether to launch his coup, which gave time for others to alert the authorities.
* The Spartacists only had around 15,000 members
* Some 700,000 people demonstrated in Berlin against political violence after assassination of Walther Rathenau in 1922 – and it was this public revulsion rather than police or judicial action that ended the assassinations
* Ebert was ruthless against both extremes, ruling under Article 48 during the Munich Putsch
* As chancellor, Gustav Stresemann helped to solve the crisis of 1923. He payed the reparations payment with worthless money, ended passive resistance and got the economy back on track
* Stresemann sacked 700,000 state employees – necessary
* He helped negotiate the Dawes Plan, US loans and investments to assist the German economy
* Dawes Plan also redesigned reparations, the annual payment of gold marks was reduced to 1 million, rising to 2.5 million from 1929
* Rentenmark established
* The Elite supported Weimar – the civil service and banking community refused to co-operate with the Kapp government

***Some more fun facts on Weimar***

* 18 governments from 1919-1933 with only 9 elected by elections
* 1928 election, 76% of people supported pro-Weimer parties, with the Nazis only gaining 2.6% of the vote
* Numbers killed in political violence 1924-1929.
* Nazis = 29
* Communists = 92
* Stahlhelm = 26
* Reichsbanner (SPD paramilitary group) = 18
* Total = 162
* Peukert argues that “The electoral decline of the liberals was the decisive event of Weimar politics because it undermined the pro-republican centre from within.”
* American Journalist William Shirer wrote, “life seemed more free, more modern, more exciting than in any place I had ever seen.”
* The 1928 election saw the Social Democrat Party gain the biggest share of power, with 29.8% of the vote
* By 1928, production equalled that of 1913 and national income was 12% higher than in 1913
* Exports rose by 40% in 1925-1929
* Despite wages rising every year 1925-1929, inflation remained low and hyperinflation never threatened
* Unemployment did not fall below 1.3 million and levels were climbing before 1929
* Agriculture was in recession from 1927
* Too reliant on US
* By 1927/28, Imports>exports
* Nazis only gained 2.6% of the vote in 1928
* The creation of the Grand Coalition in 1928 had a 60% democratic majority – led by SPD’s Muller (umlaut)
* Hindenburg upheld the new constitution and chose a SPD chancellor in spite of his hostility to socialism
* KPD obtained 10.6% of the vote in 1928
* By 1929, extremist threats were on the decrease. There had been no putsch attempts since the Munich Putsch in 1923 and only 162 political assassinations happened during 1924-1929 compared to 376 between 1919 to 1923
* William Carr: “superficial prosperity and the growing international stature of the republic served to mask a state of chronic political weakness.”
* William Carr: “Chancellor Stresemann acted upon the simple truth that a government which lacks power cannot play power politics.”
* Second round of votes 26th April for Presidency.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Votes (millions)** | **Candidate** | **Votes %** |
| 14.7 | Hindenburg (DNVP) | 48 |
| 13.8 | Marx (Z) | 45 |
| 1.9 | Thaelmann (KPD) | 6 |

***A bit of extra foreign policy for all the fans***

* In 1925, Stresemann agreed to Germany’s post-war borders with France as part of the Locarno Pact
* Germany was admitted to the League of Nations in 1926
* The Young Plan 1929 increased repayment tern to 59 years and reduced annual payments
* A right-wing coalition, including the DNVP and the Nazis with some backing from nationalist industrialists like steel magnate Fritz Thyssen, organised a referendum opposing the Young Plan. Their proposal only attracted the support of 13.9% of people who voted

***Weimer culture and society in the 1920s***

* In art, George Grosz and Otto Dix produced works reflecting on the impact of the First World War and satirising the Junker class
* In architecture and design, the hugely influential Bauhaus movement created modern designs for buildings, furniture and graphics
* Lively jazz scene in Berlin
* In cinema, Germany had a world-leading industry and expressionist works, such as Fritz Lang’s Metropolis (1927) were particularly influential
* Gay life flourished in Berlin and some young women in cities were able to pursue careers and live in an independent manner

The Rise of the Nazis

* In 1920, Drexler (founder of the German Workers’ Party (DAP)) and Hitler drew up the party programme for the newly named National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP), the 25 Points and IN 1921 Hitler became leader, or Fuhrer, of the party.
* The 25 points contained the key elements of the Nazi Party message. Hitler developed this ideology in speechers and his books Mein Kampf (1925) and Zweites Buch (1928)
* His main ideas were –
* German nationalism: to develop German power, needed ‘living space’ (Lebensraum). The Treaty of Versailles should be repudiated do accompany them
* Racial ideas: Aryans at top – Germany needed to be racially pure
* Anti-Semitism: Jews inferior race group
* Social Darwinism: ‘survival of the fittest’

***The early years of the party***

* The Munich Putsch. 8th November 1923, Hitler, Rohm and the SA (Sturmabteilung) (backing of Hindenburg) took control of a conservative right-wing meeting and Hitler announced a national revolution. Only lasted a day
* Hitler found guilty of treason and received a 5 year sentence, only serving 9 months
* Party in disarray during this period, as the Nazis were banned in Bavaria and Hitler in jail
* Benefits of the Putsch:
* Hitler was able to write Mein Kampf in prison, outlining his vision and ideology
* Hitler reconsidered his tactics, and decided to use the Weimar system to try gain power and not through force
* Hitler made some vital changes to the party….
* Hitler persuaded the Chancellor of Bavaria to lift the ban on the party in 1925
* In 1925, a small bodyguard for Hitler led by Heinrich Himmler, the Schutzstaffel (SS) were formed
* At the Bamberg Conference 1926, Hitler asserted his ideology and the Fuhrerprinzip (Hitler as Fuhrer)
* Hitler also established a national party network during this time. Regional party bosses called gauleiters, were appointed by and accountable to Hitler
* 1926 – Hitler Youth founded and had 25,000 members by 1930
* Nazis received 6.5% of the vote in May 1924, but only 3% in December elections
* Agrarpolitischer Apparat (AA) founded in 1930 to draw peasantry into Nazi ‘movement’
* Nazis distributed 600,000 copies of their Immediate Economic Programme
* Over 6000 people had passed through Nazi speaker training school by 1933
* 1931, Nazi membership rose from 390,000 to 800,000
* “We must struggle with ideas, but if necessary also with fists” – Hitler on SA
* Sturm-Abteilung (SA) had 500,000 members by 1933
* 1921-23 and 1930-34 SA led by Ernst Rohm (umlaut). “Since I am an immature and wicked man, war and unrest appeal to me more than good bourgeois order.”
* Nearly 100 paramilitary members killed in July 1932 alone
* 1928 – Nazis receive 2.6% of the vote

***Economic crisis in Germany 1929-1933***

* Following the Wall Street Crash in October 1929, the US economy experienced a severe depression due to German dependence on US loans
* Uh Oh…
* National income shrunk by 39% between 1929-1932
* Industrial production declined by more than 40%
* Number of unemployed rose to around 6 million by 1932
* By 1933, 33% were unemployed
* Some 50,000 businesses went bankrupt
* 1931 – 5 banks collapsed including the Danatbank
* Homelessness and poverty increased and people’s standard of living decreased

***Political crisis in Germany 1929-1933***

* The Grand Coalition led by Muller (umlaut) fell apart as parties disagreed over the issue of unemployment benefits
* Following this, subsequent governments were minority administrations which lacked Reichstag support. Chancellor Bruning’s government failed to get backing for its budget in July 1930
* Chancellor von Papen’s government lost a vote of no confidence in 1932 whilst von Schleicher’s administration lasted for only 2 months
* Bruning and von Papen relied heavily on presidential decrees, as governments in this period went from ‘parliamentary democracy’ to ‘presidential government’
* In July 1932, von Papen and Hindenburg also used Article 48 to seize control of regional government in Prussia, still the largest and most populous German state, whose left-wing SPD led government they objected to
* Governments failed to handle crisis, Bruning nicknamed the “hunger Chancellor”
* In 1931, 44 emergency decrees issued under Article 48. Only 5 in 1930
* July 1932 election, Nazis receive 37.3% of the vote – 230 seats. Become the largest party in the Reichstag

***The Growth of Nazi Support***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Election date | 1928 | 1930 | July 1932 |
| Vote percentage | 2.6% | 18.3% | 37.3% |
| Number of seats | 12 | 107 | 230 |

* July 1932 – Nazis become largest party in the Reichstag
* A much larger number of people voted for the Nazi Party than were members
* Nazi members were most likely to be young (2/3’s of members in 1930 were aged under 40) and male, partly because the party did not encourage active female participation
* However, women were more likely to vote Nazi than men.
* Catholics were less likely to support the Nazis than Protestants, as the majority of Catholic voters supported the Centre Party
* Urban dwellers were less likely to vote Nazi
* Working-class people formed the largest number of Nazi Party members at 31%, but were on average less likely to be members of the party than most other social classes. This apparent paradox can be accounted for as at 46%, the working class formed the largest social group in Germany
* Office workers and the self-employed or Mittelstand were over-represented as party members
* Thomas Childers – “a catch-all party of protest” to describe Nazi vote tactics
* March 1933 – Nazis receive 43.9% of the vote to gain 288 seats – KPD only got 81 seats
* July 1932 election – 51% of Schleswig-Holstein voted Nazi (rural, protestant) whereas only 24.6% of Berlin voted for them
* William Carr – “The old established middle class…felt instinctively that this man meant what he said: he would destroy Marxism and restore the old values.”
* Robin Lenman – “the hard core of Nazi supporters were male, Protestant and broadly speaking, middle class.”
* Richard Overy – “Nazism became the authentic voice of the small townsmen, the anxious officials and small businessmen, the peasant who felt he had a raw deal from the republic.”
* Jeremy Noakes – “Nazism was weakest in the big cities…particularly in predominantly Catholic ones.”

***Propaganda***

* Messages about bread and work were deployed in working-class areas
* Joseph Goebbels 1934 “Propaganda was our sharpest weapon in conquering the state”
* ‘Deutschland Erwache!’ to the military elite
* Messages about the Weimar Republic’s supposedly lax moral standards were tailored to conservative mothers
* Anti-Semitic messages were targeted at small shopkeepers
* First party to use radio and film. E.g. Triumph of the Will (1935) which portrayed Hitler leading Germany to glory
* Nazis benefitted from their association with the DNVP, as their leader Alfred Hugenberg put his media empire at the service of Nazi propagandists
* Must be noted that the Nazi’s vote increased dramatically even in areas where they did not target propaganda
* Joseph Goebbels, Propaganda Minister, cultivated an image for Hitler as Germany’s heroic saviour
* During the 1932 presidential election, Hitler’s campaign ‘Hitler over Germany’ portrayed the Nazi leader as dynamic and modern as he harnessed modern technology to put his message across, and used an aeroplane to campaign

***Support from the conservative elite***

* 1932, Hindenburg appoints von Schleicher as Chancellor, Hitler refused the role of vice-Chancellor
* What led to Hitler’s appointment as Chancellor?
* As crisis continued, elites were fearful of communist takeover. The KPD had seen its vote increase from 3.2 million in 1928 to 5.9 million in November 1933. Influential industrialists and bankers, including Hjalmar Schacht, IG Farben and Gustav Krupp persuaded Hindenburg to elect Hitler
* Von Papen, Hindenburg’s son Oscar and state secretary Otto Meissner worked to persuade Hindenburg
* Many elites, like Hugenberg and steel manufacturer Fritz Thyssen contributed to Nazi’s funds
* Von Schleicher’s plan of gaining popular legitimacy for his government by working with part of the Nazi movement and the Trade Unions collapsed
* Despite a decline in the Nazis vote, only 32% in November 1932 election – they were still the largest party in the Reichstag
* German Conservatives: old Junker elite and new business class
* On 30th January 1933, Hitler appointed Chancellor and von Papen vice
* Papen boasted to intimates that "Within two months we will have pushed Hitler so far in the corner that he'll squeak." – oh how he was wrong

***Nazi Consolidation of Power***

* July 1932 election – 100 killed and 7000 injured thanks to SA ban being lifted
* The Reichstag Fire, 27th February 1933. A Dutch communist, Marinus van der Lubbe, was believed to of set fire to the Reichstag building – although now it is generally accepted it was done by the Nazis and framed on van der Lubbe. President Hindenburg declared a national emergency in response to the fire and the supposed communist plot
* 28th February 1933, The Reichstag Fire Decree was issued and that suspended parts of the Weimar constitution, like: right to free speech, right of habeas corpus (so police could now arrest for any/no reason and people could be held indefinitely) and this led to mass arrests of communists
* 5th March 1933, Nazis increased their vote share to 43.5%. Conducted in an atmosphere of violence, SA harassed and attacked the KPD and SPD, and many members of the KPD had been arrested before the election
* 20th March 1933, Dachau opened and was the first concentration camp, the Nazi’s political opponents were imprisoned their
* 21st March 1933, ‘Potsdam Day’: a propagandistic ‘day of national unity’ was held at Potsdam – seat of the Kings of Prussia and Kaisers of Germany. Hitler and Hindenburg appeared before huge crowds together – this helped legitimise Nazi rule
* 24th March 1933, Enabling Act. Gave Hitler the power to issue law by decree, bypassing both the Reichstag and the President. Needed 2/3 majority to pass, this was achieved as the Centre Party were persuaded to back the Act, which was passed by 444 votes to 94. SPD members, some of whom were prevented from attending the vote by SA intimidation, were the only deputies to oppose the Enabling Act; members of the KPD were banned from attending
* The Concordat with the Catholic Church of 20th July 1933 was designed to reassure Catholics by protecting their religious freedoms in return for an agreement that the Church would stay out of political matters
* Gleichschaltung (Nazification). The law for the Restoration of Professional Civil Service of 7th April 1933 removed Jews and political opponents of the Nazis from the civil service, schools and courts. After independent trade unions were abolished, a Nazi labour organisation, the Deutsche Arbeitsfront (DAF) was established. The Nazis also moved to take over local government: regional parliaments were dissolved in March 1933 and Reich governors (usually Gauleiters) took over
* In 1933…
* Some 150,000 – 200,000 political opponents of the Nazi Party were imprisoned in 1933
* Concentration camps were opened
* The KPD were banned shortly after the Reichstag Fire, trade unions all shut on 1st May 1933, the SPD was banned in June 1933 and all other political parties disbanded by July 1933
* Hundreds of left-wing newspapers were closed
* In July 1934, Hitler had a number of political opponents murdered (including conservatives like von Schleicher) and supporters whom he believed to be a threat, such as Ernst Rohm (umlaut) of the SA on the Night of the Long Knives

How popular and efficient was the Nazi regime in the years 1933-1939?

***Evidence that the regime was popular***

* A series of plebiscites were held in Nazi Germany on various issues – helped to create a climate of what historian Ian Kershaw has called ‘plebiscitary acclamation’

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Plebiscite question** | **% in favour**  |
| 1933 | Do you agree with the government’s decision to pull out of the League of Nations? | 95 |
| 1934 | Do you endorse Hitler taking over Hindenburg’s remaining powers on Hindenburg’s death? | 90 |
| 1935 | Do you want the Saarland to reunify with the rest of Germany? | 90 |
| 1936 | Do you support the remilitarisation of the Rhineland? | 99 |
| 1938 | Do you support the union of Germany and Austria (Anschluss)? | 99 |

* No significant attempts to overthrow the regime, and the plots that there were against Hitler came from lone individuals, like Georg Elser, or groups in the elite, such as a plan to remove Hitler orchestrated by General Bek in 1938.
* Robert Gellately has argued that the regime was a ‘consensus dictatorship’ – evidence suggests the terror was not as widespread as first thought and some policies were genuinely popular….
* In the city of Wurzburg (umlaut): there was not an extensive network of terror as only 21 Gestapo officers covered the Wurzburg area (overstretched) and therefore these officers did not have time to mount surveillance against lots of people and relied heavily on denunciations from ordinary people in order to root out those who did not conform to the regime
* Repression not that extensive, only 4000 (mostly a-socials) held in concentration camps in 1935. The use of these camps seems to of been widely known about and supported by many German people in the 1930s
* 1933=unemployment at 6 million. 1936=1.6 million and economic growth returned
* Strength Through Joy allowed some working-class people to enjoy more leisure activities. For example 28,500 workers for Siemens in Berlin were able to take a holiday due to the programme
* In foreign policy, the army managed to peacefully and successfully remilitarise the Rhineland in 1936 and unify Germany with Austria in 1938
* Evidence from reports produced by SOPADE, the SPD in exile indicates that people viewed these areas of Nazi policy positively
* Pregnant ‘Aryan’ women were given free health care
* By 1938, 2.5 million families benefitted from increased benefits for larger families

***The Impact of propaganda***

* A ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda led by Joseph Goebbels was established in 1933 and promoted propaganda in various ways:
* Newspaper editors were essentially censored as they were accountable to the Propaganda Ministry for what they published
* Newspaper also received daily press briefings
* The content of newsreels was controlled
* Radio was used to propagate Nazi messages
* The annual Nazi Party Nuremburg Rally became a showcase for Nazi power
* Education and Nazi organisations like the Hitler Youth and the Nazi Women’s League were also used to promote Nazi ideas
* Propaganda does undermine the ‘consensus dictatorship’ argument as the people could have been manipulated by propaganda into supporting the regime
* The Hitler Myth – Goebbels worked hard to create an image of Hitler as a saviour of Germany

***Times of Opposition***

* Active Resistance – such as attempts to overthrow the regime such as Bomb Plot of 1944
* Protest – such as criticism of an aspect of Nazi policy. An example of this was Catholic priests reading out an encyclical from the Pope (*With Burning Concern, 1937)* condemning some Nazi ideas
* Non-Conformity – failing to adhere to Nazi ideals by, for example, listening to American jazz, dressing in an unconventional manner, telling anti-Nazi jokes or complaining about Nazi life

***The terror against the left***

* The SA broke up SPD meetings and arrested, imprisoned and in some cases murdered members of the SPD and KPD. Armed SA members also took over trade union offices in May 1933
* Concentration camps were established to detain the regime’s opponent. In 1933, between 150,000 and 200,000 people were detained. Believing they had crushed the left, a third of prisoners were released in May 1933 and most of the remaining ones in August 1934

***The Terror State***

* Under the Nazis, people lost the freedom of speech and the Gestapo could arrest anyone for no reason. Whilst a law of 24th April 1933 made seeking constitutional change a treasonable offence
* From 1936, the head of the Schutzstaffel (SS), Heinrich Himmler, was in charge of a huge network of terror and repression including the SS, SA, security service, the police and the Gestapo
* The courts suppressed opposition. In 1935, 5000 people were convicted of high treason. 23,000/53,000 prisoners were political prisoners
* The regime kept an eye on people via agents such as party officials and Block Wardens who monitored their local areas for signs for deviancy
* Gleichschaltung meant that the Nazis were in control of most aspects of the state
* Between 1936 and 1939, the numbers held in concentration camps rose from 7500 to 21,000. The majority of inmates were classified as a-social: in Buchenwald: 8892 of the 12,921 detainees were labelled as a-social.

***Histiography – Germans gave consent***

* Theory is based around the 1980s and 1990s
* Fritz Stern ‘Germany coordinated itself’
* Robert Gellately “Hitler was largely successful in getting the backing, one way or another, of the great majority of citizens”
* Gellately “the Nazis aimed to create and maintain the broadest possible level of popular backing”
* Gellately “the Germans generally turned out to be proud and pleased that Hitler and his henchmen were putting away certain kinds of people who did not fit in”
* Eric Johnson – “A great majority of the German populace found ways to accommodate the Nazi regime”

***Histography – Coercion***

* Tim Mason argues that the working class were the only class that did not consent. Saying “Every time the state tampered with the rights of living standards of the working class, it provoked a wave of resentment” – e.g when the Nazis tried to limit wages in 1938-39
* Theory generally based 10-20 years after 1945
* Delarue on the Gestapo – “Never before, in no other land and at no other time, had an organisation attained such a comprehensive penetration [of society], possessed such power, and reached such a degree of ‘completeness’ in its ability to arouse terror and horror, as well as in its actual effectiveness”
* Roger Griffin The Nazis “neutralize opposition” using “nazification” e.g. “Curricular, textbooks, student assignments and lectures were soon applying Aryan principles”
* Richard Evans “The Gestapo quickly attained an almost mythical status as an all-seeing, all-knowing arm of state security and law enforcement.”

***Geary/Kershaw compromise***

* Story of consent differs by policy, age, social class, region, genders and individuals
* 90s viewpoint – Gellately took the plebiscites at face value, when really their integrity needs to be questioned
* Geary: Consent can only exist when people are free to choose between alternative – not the case in Germany. No rule of law, legal system destroyed – survival strategies rather than consent. “Context rather than consent explains the collusion of many Germans with the regime.”
* Kershaw – “ For most of the German population, Hitler stood for at least some things they admired”

***Hitler – Strong dictator?***

* At the Nuremburg trials, senior Nazis defended themselves on the grounds that they were following Hitler’s orders
* Intentionalist historians argue that the Nazi state was totalitarian (all within the state) and organised to carry out Hitler’s will
* Bracher – “the dicatator held the key position precisely because of the confusion of conflicting power groups”
* Carlton Hayes (1939) American historian – “a totalitarian dictatorship in which the will of the dictator was imposed on society through a highly disciplined Nazi Party.”
* Ernst Fraenkel – “dictatorial power is exercised by the leader and Chancellor either personally or through his subordinate authorities.”
* Richard Evans – “When the occasion demanded, he [Hitler] could intervene powerfully and decisively.”
* N.Rich – “Hitler was master in the Third Reich.”
* In 1936, Hitler took the decision to remilitarise the Rhineland against the advice of his generals, and he was instrumental in the Anschluss in 1938
* It was Hitler’s decision to push forward with expaniosnit policy in Eastern Europe in the late 1930s, as can be seen in his 1936 4 year plan memorandum, urging the creation of a Wehrwirtschaft (war economy) to enable a large-scale war to be fought within four years, and in his war plans, known as Operation Green
* Hitler’s power in this area can be seen in the removal of two senior military figures, Fritsch and Blomberg, who had expressed reservations about the plan for war that Hitler presented at the so-called Hossbach meeting in 1937

***Hitler – weak dictator?***

* Brozat – “The authoritative Fuhrer’s will was expressed only irregularly, unsystematically and incoherently”
* Mommsen – “Hitler delayed important decisions to disrupt the conduct of affair.”
* Mommsen – “Hitler was just one extreme element of extensive malevolence of the Nazi system.”
* David Welch – “Hitler had always found it difficult to make up his mind in times of crisis.”
* There were no clear decision-making procedures, and structures were often overlapping. From 1936, for example, both the Office of the Four Year Plan and the Economics Ministry had authority over economic policy
* Nazi Party bureaucracy sometimes competed with state institutions like government ministries and the independent Gauleiter who were only accountable to Hitler
* The picture of a chaotic state has been characterised as ‘polycracy’. The idea that the state was too chaotic for Hitler to of been in full command of it (structuralist view of Mommsen and Broszat)
* In 1935, the Nuremburg laws were introduced following pressure from local Nazi organisations for stronger action against Jews. At the Nuremburg Rally of 1935, Hitler announced the Laws: he had originally planned to discuss foreign policy in his speech
* Kristallnacht November 1938 was orchestrated by Goebbels and much of the action occurred spontaneously at local level. Hitler had authorities the action however
* Nazi official Philipp Bouhler brought Hitler’s attention to a letter from the father of a disabled child asking Hitler to allow his son to be killed. Hitler authorised this and a programme to kill mentally and physically disable children. This policy was known as Aktion T4

***“Working Towards the Fuhrer” – Ian Kershaw compromise view***

* Kershaw – Nazi officials took “initiatives to promote what were presumed to be Hitler’s aims and wishes.”
* Kershaw “ initiatives were taken, pressures created, legislation instigated – all in ways which fell into line with what were taken to be Hitler’s aims,”
* Goering was prepared to enact Hitler’s aim of a Wehrwirtschaft. He was given far-reaching powers by Hitler over economic policy as Plenipotentiary (full powers) of the Office of the Four Year Plan in 1936. In contrast, Schacht – Economics Minister, was sidelined after this time as he did not want to devote the level of resources to rearmament that Hitler wanted. He was ultimately replaced by Walther Funk
* Goebbels orchestrated Kristallnacht partly because he was out of favour with Hitler following an affair with a racially inferior Czech actress. Kristallnacht was Goebbel’s attempt to win favour with Hitler by ‘working towards’ him
* In pursuing the idea of murdering disabled children, Bouhler was ‘working towards the Fuhrer’: Hitler sought to create a racially ‘pure’ society in which people who were not fully fit and strong were eradicated from the ‘race’

**Life in Wartime Germany, 1939-1945**

***Overview of the Second World War***

* 1ST September 1939, Nazi Germany invaded Poland. On 3rd September, Britain and France declared war on Germany and the Second World War began
* Causes?
* Hitler’s aggressive foreign policy: his policy of Lebensraum led to expansion of the military, and invading Poland was one step too far
* Weak military system….
* USA and USSR were isolationist
* Britain and France were not in a strong position to uphold international order as they both had problems resulting from the Depression
* Britain appeased Hitler as they were keen to avoid war and felt that the Treaty of Versailles was too harsh
* USSR signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact, which allowed Poland to be carved up between themselves and the Germans. Hitler could now attack Poland without fear of Soviet opposition
* December 1941, after Pearl Harbour the USA join the war. After relative German success, this certainly was a turning point in the war
* 30th April 1945, Hitler committed suicide when Soviet soldiers reached Berlin – war effectively over

***Civilian Morale during the war***

* Nazis managed to maintain domestic supplies quite well…
* While meat was rationed, it remained at the reasonable level of 500g until April 1942
* Extra rations were given at Christmas and for those in strenuous jobs
* Until 1944, rations were in excess of the minimum calories required
* Early victories in Poland, Norway, Denmark, Luxembourg, Belgium and France helped maintain morale
* After 1942, morale and support weakened…
* Working conditions were difficult: hours at work increased, particularly in armaments factories
* Some young people reacted negatively to the militarisation of the Hitler Youth after 1939
* Defeat at Stalingrad could not be covered up by the regime as the scale of the losses was so great
* Allied bombing killed 305,000 people, injured 780,000 and destroyed 2 million homes in Germany
* The Soviet advance from 1943 and the consequent threat of Soviet invasion caused fear among the German public
* The V1 and V2 in a 1944 rocket campaign against south-eastern England and Allied ports like Antwerp failed to have a decisive impact
* Civilian morale did not collapse entirely, like it did in 1918. Goebbels famously called upon a crowd to support ‘total war’ in a speech at the Sportpalast in Berlin February 1943. Films such as The Adventures of Baron Munchausen (1943) and Kolberg (1945) tried to encourage patriotic feeling

***Opposition during the war***

* The Catholic Church continued to speak out where they though their interests or values were threatened. E.g. Large protests against an order to remove crucifixes from Bavarian schools caused the order to be reversed
* Individual Protestant churchmen attacked the regime. Dietrich Bonhoeffer spoke out against the regime and was arrested in 1943 and executed in 1945
* The Youth – some Edelweiss Pirates became more active during the war, working with the left-wing underground and helping to smuggle out escaped prisoners of war. The leaders of the Pirates in Cologne were publicly hanged for their activities in 1944
* The Youth – The White Rose student movement was formed in Munich in 1942. The movement of urged Germans to reject Nazi values on ethical grounds. The group distributed anti-Nazi letters and leaflets. Brother and sister Hans and Sophie Scholl were beheaded for their activities in the movement in 1943
* Left Wing opposition – Robert Uhrig, established resistance cells in factories: in the summer of 1941, there were 89 of these in Berlin
* Communist network Rote Kappelle, some of whose members had access to sensitive information, collected intelligence and engaged in the distribution of anti-Naxi leaflets. The network was uncovered and destroyed by the military intelligence in 1942. Other communist groups led by Wilhelm Knochel (umlaut) were broken up in 1943
* Conservative opposition – The Kreisau Circle was a conservative group led by Junker Helmuth Graf von Moltke which by the end of the war had contacts with the left-wing opposition and opponents of the regime in the army
* In the army some officers rejected the regime (after Stalingrad). In the 1944 Bomb Plot, an army group sought to assassinate Hitler and seize power. Assassin Stauffenberg’s bomb did not kill Hitler and the plot was uncovered. As a result, 22 generals were executed and Field Marshal Rommel was prevailed upon to commit suicide.
* Opposition did not succeed in overcoming the regime as…
* Lack of support – The Bomb Plot only involved 22 out of 2000 generals
* Existence of terror state, capture meant execution or concentration camps
* Acted too late, conservatives for example, only started to resist the regime once Nazi power was secure
* No worked out plan

***How efficient was the Nazi war economy?***

* Between 1939 and 1941, German military expenditure doubled
* By 1941, 55% of the workforce was involved in war-related projects
* German productivity was low however. Britain produced twice as many aircraft as Germany in 1941 and the USSR 2600 more tanks. Chaotic structure interfered with efficiency
* Hitler appointed his trusted confident, Albert Speer, as Minister of Munitions in February 1942 following Fritz Todt’s death.
* Speer took a number of vital actions, like: deploying production lines, trying to exclude military influence from economic planning and using concentration camp prisoners as labour
* Speer had considerable success, as ammunition production rose by 97%, tank production rose by 25% and total arms production rose by 59%
* Between 1942 and 1944, German war production trebled
* Productivity per worker increased by 60% in munitions

***The failures of the war economy***

* Although production increased, Germany was still out-produced by the USA and crucially also by the Soviet Union. The failings contributed to Nazi defeat
* Goering was a main reason for the Nazi war economy performing so badly. He refused to introduce mass production into the aircraft industry and wasted resources on ersatz goods when cheaper imports were available. From 1939, he was off his nut on morphine all the time too, eating chocolate, shopping in Paris and tripping balls
* State remained chaotic with some Gauleiters and the SS often acting against economic efficiency
* Unlike in the Soviet Union, Britain and the USA, women were not fully mobilised
* There was a heavy reliance on foreign labour (of whom there were 6.4 million by 1942). These were often little more than badly treated and underfed slave labourers: as a result, their productivity was 60-80% lower than that of the average German worker
* Shortages of raw materials, especially coal and oil
* The SS were often more preoccupied with implementing racial policy than effectively organising the territory that they held and plunder did not amount of efficient economic organisation
* In the Soviet Union, Stalin’s scorched earth policy hindered the Nazis: in the Donbass region of the Ukraine, the output of Soviet coal mines was only 5% of pre-war levels in 1942, for example
* Allied bombing reduced the capacity of the German economy to expand further: industry was targeted and the Germans had to divert crucial resources towards defensive measures
* Only 52% of females worked at the time of outbreak of war

***Victims of the Nazis***

* The Second World War caused more than 60 million deaths in total, including 26.6. million Soviet citizens
* Around 6 million Jews died in the Holocaust (2/3’s of the Jewish population of Europe) along with 250,000-500,000 Roma people and 15,000 homosexuals
* Over 1 million people (primarily Jews) were murdered by the Einsatzgruppen and their local collaborator’s in Eastern Europe and the USSR
* Some 3 million Soviet prisoners of war were murdered or starved to death

***Jewish Persecution***

* 1ST April, 1933 – boycott of Jewish shops
* April 1933 – All Jews except war veterans removed from the civil service
* September 1935 – The Nuremberg Laws banned Jews from German citizenship
* November 1938 – Kristallnacht, some 20,000 Jewish men sent to concentration camps
* September 1939 – Ghettos for Polish Jews established
* 1941 – All forced to wear Star of David
* January 1942 – The Wannsee Conference, where Nazis agreed upon the ‘Final Solution’
* Spring 1942 – Death camps established at Auschwitz, Sobibor and Treblinka

***The Causes of the Final Solution***

* In Hitler’s speeches, the 25 Points of the Nazi Party (1920) and in Mein Kampf (1925), Hitler’s view that Jews should not be Germans was clear
* Himmler’s diary entry explains how in December 1941, Hitler authorised or ordered that Jews should be “exterminated as partisans.”
* However, most historians do not believe that Hitler had a clear plan for the ‘Final Solution’ that pre-dated the war
* Another explanation is that the Final Solution was a consequence of the process of ever-growing extremism that occurred in the Third Reich as a result of the chaotic decision-making procedures. ‘Cumulative radicalisation’ led to escalating action
* War also led to it. The invasion of Poland had created the problem of around 3 million Jews, the ghettos were far too overcrowded and something had to be done
* As war went on, the cost of feeding Jews got too expensive
* Tried alternatives, like the Madagascar Plan (1940) but these all failed
* The Einsatzgruppen were SS Death squads who followed the German army as Germany conquered Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, carrying out mass killings of ideological and ‘racial’ enemies of the Nazis