

Reasons for nazi success in maintaining control



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From the 30th of January 1933, it was only a year before the Nazis would consolidate every institution within Germany. This consolidation brought the Trade Unions, the Civil Service, the legal system, the states, the political parties and the German Army under Nazi control. Such a fundamental change begs the question of the Nazis succeeded in maintaining such immense power over Germany. Historians such as Martin Prostate (Lineally, 2013) have argued it was primarily the exploitation of psychological and physical force through the propaganda machine and the use of armed forces. Others such as David Irving argue that it was the colossal popular appeal for the Nazi policies that allowed them to maintain control over Germany (Lineally, 2013). The popular appeal of the Nazis was undeniable. However, it has become evident through hindsight that popular appeal did not always prevail, and in these circumstances the Nazis were quick to summon the propaganda machine to psychologically enforce and implement their policies, through fear and intimidation.

Moreover, it was often the use of physical force and coercion that allowed for the new game to create popular appeal which in turn kept the Nazis in power. Contrary to the statement, it is futile to divorce these perspectives, as their interdependence is primary in ascertaining how the Nazis remained in power. In order to understand this, it is vital to analyse the change in the lives of certain groups within Germany. Women during the Weimarer Republic had experienced their first breakthrough with equality.

Despite much of the 'New Woman' myth in Weimarer being media-generated, it was a considerable progression in the status of women. The constitution

had wanted them absolute equality, the right to vote, hold public office, and there were more female parliament members in Germany than any other European country. However the rise of the Nazis was to backpedal on any advances made in expediting the role of women in society. From the onset of Nazi power, women's presence was minimal, with zero female representation in the party.

Instead, the Nazis gave women a new position as the 'companions to warrior husbands' as stated by Cater Haste; she goes on to explain how their mission was to be wives supporting their husbands, and others breeding the future Germany, and in this, their true role, they would be of value in the New Germany (Haste, 2001, 74). Women's equality was stripped; however a great importance was now placed on motherhood. Policies such as the 1933 Law for the Encouragement of Marriage stated that all newly married couples were to be granted a loan of 1000 marks.

However, Chris Truman remarks that the birth of two children meant that 50% of the loan need not ever be repaid, with the birth of four children clearing the entire repayment (Truman, 2009). Rapidly, over 800,000 newlyweds took up this offer. The status of mothers continued to rise when Hitler introduced an award known as 'Mutterkreuz'; this being a cross awarded to mothers that had given birth to at least four children, to be accompanied with the utmost respect from all members of German society.

It is through such policies that true popular appeal was expressed, as for many, the Depression had strained their lives. As policies such as the Trotter Tallness reflect the restoration of the AT apparel. Popular appeal can be

seen through the success of these policies, as the birth rate rose from 14.7% per-thousand in 1933 to 20. % per-thousand in 1939; however most families remained with only between 2-3 children (Mason ; Fielded, 2007, 144). It was not simply the role of mothers that was altered by the Nazis, but also the role of women in general.

James Mason ; Philip Fielded provide statistics showing that admission of women in Universities dropped from over 18, 000 in 1933 to 5000 by 1939 (2007, 143), making it clear that they were being removed from many aspects of German society by Nazi policy. Michelle Mouton believes that the mandatory participation in the BAD reinforced the Nazi worldview and drew girls away from school influence; more so with the dramatic change in girls' post high school options, creating obstacles to women's higher education (Mouton, 2010, 4).

The phrase 'Kinder, Kirsch undo Kjkchew', meaning 'children, church and kitchen' were impressed upon the minds of women by the Nazi propaganda machine, showing an example of distinct psychological force. Women were often forcefully removed from their Jobs, and for young women the sole act they were encouraged to perform was procreation. This was unacceptable to many women, particularly the older middle-class, but nevertheless these policies were enforced by the Nazis. The indisputable truth is that many Nazi policies towards women were greatly popular.

However there was a great deal of psychological and physical force working interdependently with this popular appeal in order to enhance the ability of the Nazis to maintain power over Germany. Furthermore, Nazi policies

towards women, although dramatic, were not nearly as noticeable as those implemented into the lives of the working class. The Weimer Republic had left the working class deprived of all sense of pride and ownership. As a result, one of the main focal points of the Nazis was improving the conditions of the working class.

This started with the creation of the Bureau of the Beauty of Labor in November 1933 which was aimed at improving the physical conditions in the workplace, and gradually they did improve. The Strength Through Joy movement had an overwhelming appeal, as it was an unquestionably positive concept. The movement provided organized leisure activities for workers, with over 10 million German families going on holidays in 1938 (Mason ; Fielded, 2007, 163). Consciously it offered the working class a chance to travel overseas and feel appreciated.

Subliminally, it unified the working class with the Nazis. Once again, such policies were considered ingenious and gained popular appeal, and they certainly provided the working class with many benefits, with the KAMALA World History stating that unemployment dropped from 26.3% in 1933 to 14.9% in 1934 (2008). However, it can be argued that these policies were there simply to compensate the working class for the authoritarian control the Nazis had over their lives, including the minimal pay and increased expenses.

The Nazis had forcibly abolished both sectors of the Trade Union and made worker membership in the new German Labor Front (DEAF) imperative. Moreover, the use of force in this area cannot be ignored, as it enabled full

consolidation of the once powerful Trade Unions. This was essential in maintaining control over Germany for a prolonged period. There was a shortage of labor by 1939, as the Nazis created an overwhelming number of Jobs, including the construction of autobahns, car and machinery manufacturing and work in agriculture.

However, Ian Seekers comments on ten reaty AT sun Improvements In the working class, stating that: " The working class remained the social grouping least impressed by the 'economic miracle'. After all... Heir own standard of living [was] pinned down to Depression levels in the years 1933-6. Through repression and intimidation, low wages, and longer hours, the 'economic miracle', as most realized, was being carried out on their own backs. " (Shakers, 1986, 50) These Nazi policies represent the interdependence of psychological and physical force with popular appeal in maintaining Nazi power over the State.

However, there was an additional group of Germans that experienced this on a much larger and aggressive scale. Almost immediately after the Nazi accession to power, attacks began against the Jews. The initial policy was brought in 7th April 1933, banning Jews from their Jobs in the civil service, and later banning them from participating in legal professions, medicine, dentistry and Journalism. In 1935 the Nurturers Laws deprived Jews of their German citizenship and political rights, along with outlawing relations between Jews and Germans.

However destructive these policies were, evidence has shown they were infant appealing towards the 'Aryan' German people, as Daniel Golden

describes: " The German perpetrators of the Holocaust treated Jews in all the brutal and lethal ways that they did because, by and large, they believed that what they were doing was right and necessary. Second, there was long existing, virulent anti-Semitism in German society that led to the desire on the part of the vast majority of Germans to eliminate Jews somehow from German society. (Golden, 1997) Hans Mommsen contributes to this idea of popular appeal towards the anti-Semitic Nazi policies by suggesting that there existed an undeniable consensus to rid Germany of the Jews, but that it was essential to combine this with unrelenting propaganda to result in extreme anti-Jewish indoctrination (Mommsen, 1997). It is clear that Nazi policies towards the Jews gained popular appeal naturally, but were nevertheless propelled by force, intimidation and extreme propaganda.

A denunciation system was introduced by the Nazis that offered incentives for any Germans who reported suspiciously behaving Jews, and soon officers found themselves overwhelmed by the multitude of people being denounced. Robert Gallant suggested that the Gestapo could not have operated without the cooperation of the citizens, adding further that somewhere between 80-90 percent of the crimes reported to the Gestapo came from ordinary citizens (The Nazis: A

Warning from History, 1997). The Nazis cultivated their force against the Jews as their support grew, knowing that the ingrained anti-Semitism of the German people would manifest itself in support for the Nazi regime, therefore maintaining support for Nazi control over Germany. Moreover, this shows how the use of force against this group of people led to increased popular appeal, illustrating the distinct interdependence of the two views.

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However, the Nazis were not always inclined to deny their use of force within the German State, and often they used it to repel possible opposition to the Nazi regime. A major aspect of Nazi Germany was the use of Armed Forces. The initial group were the restless Sturm-Battening, known as the AS. They were originally in charge of protecting the Reich and Fuehrer, but soon became notorious for their initiation of terror on the streets of Germany and their unstable behavior.

Out of the AS came an elitist force known as the Black Legion, Hitler's personal bodyguard run by Hermann Goering. Historian Richard Evans writes that it was these immense forces the Nazis controlled which were greatly responsible for their maintenance of power over Germany, as they were in charge of instigating violent attacks on all the Nazis opponents, bullying, intimidation, beatings, murder, maltreatment and humiliation (Hermann Goering: Ambition without Conscience, 2000).

By 1933 the AS numbered 50, 000, increasing to 200, 000 two years later (Mason & Fielded, 1996, p. 176). Although powerful, the AS were by no means as feared by the people of Germany as the Gestapo, the Secret State Police set up November 1933. The Gestapo were the main tools of suppression, and are a prime example of the extravagant force behind the Nazis. The Gestapo were a ruthless force, taught severe torture and terror techniques in order to maintain a firm hold on the people of Germany and suppress possible opponents to the Nazi regime.

Even if the strength and size of the Gestapo, AS and AS were over-exaggerated, they still reveal the Nazis crucial need for physical force to

undermine any opposition to its maintenance of power. What is more, Richard Bessel believes Hitler identified himself publicly with the violent excess of his followers in a manner hardly typical of leaders of major political parties (Bessel, 1987, 1). It was this association with force that makes it clear that control was maintained through the creation of popular appeal often through the utilization of force.

One aspect of this force was the psychological indoctrination created by the propaganda machine. Nazi propaganda was now virtually monopolistic within Germany, and now became greatly refined in its psychological manipulation. In his perspective, Ian Shakers suggests that the attempt to inculcate Nazi values into the German people was in essence a task of propaganda more than of social policy (Shakers, 1989, p. 142). Dr. Joseph Goebbels, Director of the Propaganda Office, had ingeniously instilled Nazi policies into every aspect of German society through propaganda.

This included cinemas, art and literature, radio and even German culture. Every one of the Nazi ideologies and policies were funneled through the propaganda machine in order to inculcate them into the lives of Germans. Such extensive use of propaganda cannot be dismissed as common, but must instead be dealt with as a method of psychologically forcing Nazi policies into the lives of German people in order to maintain Nazi power. It has become discernible that popular appeal towards Nazi policies was often greatly extensive.

However, it is essential to understand the extent of the use of force in creating popular appeal, aiding the observation that it had a much more

important role than the statement suggests. The Nazis introduced a variety of policies they recognized as being essential to the restoration of Germany, and naturally these policies gained popular appeal. However, not all policies prevailed in their popularity, and not all Germans were quick to accept them. It was in these circumstances that popular appeal had to be gained through other means.

At this point, the Nazis summoned their physical and psychological forces in the form of the SA, the SS, the Gestapo and the Propaganda Ministry. This meant that those holding an unfavorable view of the Nazis were easily incarcerated or silenced by fear and repression. From thorough examination, it has become evident that the view that it was primarily popular appeal and less so the use of force that allowed the Nazis to remain in power is flawed. It is to a greater extent correct to ascertain the interdependence of the two as reasons for why the Nazis remained in power over Germany and its people. Word count: 1000