

Why was opposition to the nazis so ineffective? essay

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Why was opposition to the Nazis so ineffective? Ever since Hitler rose to power in January 1931, up to 1932, he built his power base and managed as well to make it impossible for him to be legally removed from power. He managed to do so, mainly; by making sure that every powerful group that could have indeed removed him from power remained idle or was annihilated. These were, at the time, trade unions, his political opponents, church leaders and army officers, and they were dealt with differently according to how much power they had in reality, either giving concessions or eliminating them ruthlessly. In the case of trade unions, they were thought of as opponents to the Nazi regime due to the fact that most were ideologically linked to the SPD, therefore they were politically opposed; and they represented a true threat for a bad reaction to a Nazi measure could end up in the calling of a general strike by trade unionists. To deal with them, Hitler took advantage of the first German celebration of Labour Day and in the process of the holiday, he made use of force by the SA and SS to shut down all trade unions and in replacement he created one general Nazi trade union called the DAF to deal with all the sectors of labour.

Nonetheless, as complaints were expected, he gave concessions to minimize damage done and make it look as if they were actually benefitting from the creation of the DAF. Some examples of the concessions given were paid holidays, cheap cruises around the Mediterranean and the Rhine, cheap theatre and cinema tickets; all this through the scheme known as Strength Through Joy; alongside the Beauty of Labour movement, which improved working conditions in factories, for example. Even so, they could no longer strike for better pay and conditions, move to better paid jobs and still the

standards hadn't improved much since the Depression; therefore we could state that even though they effectively eliminated trade unions as political opponents, trade unionists were not fully pleased. In the case of political opponents, they were ideologically opposed to the regime as they had been during the political deadlock (1930-1933). Due to the fact that they were many and even though neither had a considerable amount of power, they were dealt with separately still.

The communists were the first to be attacked. After the Reichstag Fire (February 27th), for which they were blamed, Hitler managed to make sure they would cease to exist as an organization through the Emergency Decrees of February 28th, which gave him the power to imprison suspects without trial, break up meetings and suspended civil rights; and he used it in his advantage to crush the KPD. The case of the socialists and other parties who did not have much power either dissolved themselves or were dissolved, which was the case of the SPD. With the Catholic Centre Party, however, he had to deal differently because they were backed by Roman Catholic Church; therefore, even though they agreed to dissolve themselves, some concessions had to be granted.

Nazi measures on this matter can be said to be fully effective because by 1934 Germany was a single-party state. As it has already been mentioned, the Roman Catholic Church was in fact a powerful group in Nazi Germany for there was a significant portion of the population which was catholic and which had the backing of the Church which was powerful itself and could intervene in the case that Catholics were persecuted as Jews were, or

Catholic school banned, etc. As it could not be dealt with as ruthlessly as Hitler did with others of his opponents, he granted political freedom to the Catholics and allowed Catholic schools to be administered by the church in exchange for the voluntary dissolution of the Catholic Centre Party, and could never be reborn and participate in politics again. This was agreed on the 20th July through the Concordat agreement between state and Vatican. Their actions in the end, regarding the Church, proved to be effective indeed for he obtained his ultimate goal – eliminate political opposition – by granting something that didn't carry substantial drawbacks itself.

Finally, there were Army leaders to be dealt with. They were to be taken into consideration for the army was one of the potential groups who was powerful enough to overthrow Hitler. These, however, were at the moment quite pleased with Hitler's actions so far, for they shared conservative, antidemocratic and authoritarian views; but still a matter for their concern and distrust was the SA, a paramilitary army run by the Nazi Party which had a bad reputation for being badly disciplined, and particularly their leader being a heavy drinker, openly homosexual who was in charge of an army over 4 million men, and who was presumed to intend to make the SA a second German army and, what's more, he was also believed to have plotted to overthrow Hitler. To gain full support by the army leaders, Hitler sent the SS on a mission to kill Rohm and arrest SA leaders on what was known as the Night of the Long Knives. He made it look as if he had sacrificed a personal friend of his own to please the army, and in exchange he did get the full support of the army leaders, which were delighted and then on granted their full support to the regime, proving the success of the policy

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Therefore we could state that these were at most highly effective measures for, by 1934, all of the regime's opponents had been made idle and few concessions had to be given to grant this, and even though not everyone could be pleased, those who might show discomfort abstained themselves from this due to tough Nazi policies dealing with opposition to the regime ever since.