

Hitler's domestic
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1933 and 1939
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To say that between 1933 and 1939 Hitler's domestic policies enjoyed widespread popularity is a disputable statement and to understand to what extent the Nazi government was popular it is necessary to investigate factors regarding domestic policies.

When Nazi came to power in 1933, Hitler did not start his chancellorship in a happy way. In his first seventeen months in power there were plenty of opportunities to see the radical, chaotic and destructive nature of Nazi rule. When he called the election for the role of "confidence" imposing bans on newspapers and public meetings attacking the new state and with thousand of political opponents already rounded up, the Nazis gained only 43.9 per cent of the vote in March 1933 and they failed to acquire the absolute majority they had hoped for.

It is obvious from statistics that they lost voters although they still had more votes than the other parties. These "more" voters compared to other parties was a results of promises to be maintained by Hitler in his "superb" speeches telling people what they wanted to hear. Economy was a big issue in the Nazi popularity. One academic joked once: "What was Hitler's economic policy?" was easy to answer, "he hadn't got one". It can't be denied though that he always had economic aims. He promised to rid Germany of unemployment and rearmament for Germany.

Hitler gave this "homework" to Hjalmar Schacht (President of the Reichsbank). Surprisingly in short terms Hitler's delegation of the economy to Schacht seemed to work. Schacht pursued a policy of reflection financed on credit and introduced a work-creation programme based on compulsory

work for unemployed. For average citizens, unless they were among the regime's racial or political enemies, life began to improve. They knew little of the economy theories and they did not even suspect Hitler of laziness when it came to details of domestic policy. Instead they looked around and saw with their own eyes what the regime had done, and most liked what they saw.

Unemployment dropped from a high of 6 million in January 1932 to 2.4 million by July 1934. The programme of public works, particularly the high-profile building of the autobahns was seen as proof of Germany's new dynamism regarding this prosperous "momentum" a hindsight said: "everybody was now happy". This was not the case for the "enemies of state" such as the Jews. The segregation of Jews and the announcement of the Nuremberg Laws in the autumn of 1935 codified the extent of Jewish exclusion from normal German life like taking from them their Reich citizenship and banning them from marrying "Aryans", many Jews thought the regime had finally controlled its hatred. A combination of pressure from Hjalmar Schacht (Minister of economics and president of the Reichsbank) over the economic consequences of persecuting Jews and the necessity of presenting Germany in a good light for the Olympic games of 1936 meant that 1936 and 1937 were relatively quiet years for German Jews.

This is not to say that the persecution disappeared, merely that compared with the harassment meted out in earlier years, life was not quite so bad. However there was still great suffering. The "Aryanization" programme, the forced exclusion of Jews from the owning of businesses meant that many

Jews were deprived of a livelihood. Thousands of other Jews lost their

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livelihood not through an unofficial boycott, but through the raft of legislation in 1930s which prohibited Jews from certain profession like civil service.

Thousand were so desperate that they fled the country.

90 per cent of lawyers in Berlin were Jews. The general opinion was that Jews had gone to far in Germany although there were people that did no support the way Jews were being treated and did not like the Nazi policy over Jews. This is what an "Aryan" woman said: "I, for one, find the Nuremberg Laws and Nazi anti-Semitism to be totally unacceptable. I find it intolerable that such country as Germany exist and I do not want to live here any longer". It is believed that this woman was first sent to the woman's concentration camp and it is said that "her courage cost her life".

In spring 1933 and summer 1935 violence against the German Jews exploited in an unprecedented manner on the night of 9 November "Kristallnacht", the night of the broken glass. Most Germans did not confront the regime. They believed that 1933 was the beginning of a wonderful new period for Germany as a witness describes it "everything was in order again, and clean. There was a feeling of national liberation, a new start". There were the concentration camps, but everybody said at that time that the English invented them in South Africa with the Boers.

The Nazis wanted Germans to believe that the concentration camps were "merely" places designed to shock opponents of the regime into conforming. Since the terror was mostly confined to the Nazis political opponents or to Jews, the majority of Germans could watch what Goring called "the settling of scores" with equanimity if not pleasure. On 6 July 1933 Hitler announced

that he wanted an end to violence on the street “ revolution is not a permanent state”, he declared. He realised that the SA posed a threat to the stability of the new Germany.

One group of powerful Germans agreed with him wholeheartedly: the army. Ernst Rohm, leader of the SA, was trying to take over the armed forces of Germany. They thought he wanted to integrate the Nazi SA into the regular army and become supreme commander of them all. Hitler himself felt compelled to act against the SA.

In addition to learning of the concerns of the armed forces, he also spotted what he took to be a deterioration in Rohm's behaviour. Rohm had talked of a “ second revolution” so that the SA could receive reward they felt had been denied them. Himmler, whose SS that were technically under the SA, moved his men against Rohm on 30 June 1934 the “ Night of the Long Knives”. Hitler also used this occasion to settle old scores against Gregor Strasser (who had quit the Nazi party in December 1932) and General Von Schleicher (the former German chancellor) who both lost their lives.

In all around 85 people were killed. A few weeks later after Hindenburg's death on 2 August 1934, General Von Blomberg, the minister of defence, arranged for all soldiers to swear an oath of allegiance to Hitler personally. In this case, it is quite clear that the army turned “ 100%” Hitler's side and he was seen as a “ god” by the officers. “ In 1933, I had been given three things as a result of Hitler's appointment as a chancellor: faith, veneration for a man and complete dedication to an idea”, this is the way Blomberg felt about Hitler.

A kind remark from Hitler could bring tears to Blomberg's eyes and he used to say that a friendly handshake from the Fuhrer could cure him of colds. Fritz Wiedemann, one of Hitler's adjutant, wrote that Hitler "disliked the study of the documents. He took the view that many things sorted themselves out on their own if one did not interfere". Historians agree about a politician comment though "in the eyes of the people Hitler was the leader who watched over the nation day and night". Apparently this was hardly done. From this point, historians wondered how did really functioned the Nazi state presented by Leni Riefenstahl in a clarity and organized way? Some tried to answer this question by saying that Hitler's subordinates carried all the important work and they were just "acting under orders".

Often, in fact they were creating their own orders within the spirit of what they believed was required of them. The reason Nazi functionaries acted as they did was because they were trying to make an informed judgement about what Hitler wanted of them and more often than not the substance of their actions was retrospectively legitimised. The system could not have functioned without Hitler or without those subordinates who initiated what they believed were desired policies. Hitler "won" major popularity between 1933-1939 thanks to Joseph Goebbels propaganda regarding to some historians. Adolf Hitler ordered censorship of newspapers that offended the actual government, they could just praise the Nazis, this was quite influential on Germans.

Nazis took over the media and to content people they encouraged radio owners to sell sets cheaply having the chance to listen "The Fuhrer"

speeches. Leni Riefenstahl made films promoting Nazi ideas (Triumph of the <https://assignbuster.com/hitlers-domestic-policies-between-1933-and-1939-enjoyed-widespread-popularity-among-the-german-people-essay/>

will 1936). Propaganda means a lot for the Nazi because it was essential on their rise to power and they used propaganda in the period 1933-39 to consolidate their domestic power. The Nazis made great effort to win the support of young people. By 1936 it was compulsory to join "the German Young people" between the age of 10 and 14 and when they reach 14 years they would join "Hitler Youth" until the age of 18, Nazis aim was to create a new generation that could be used in the future wars.

One of the member later said "we were politically programmed". Young people could have different opinions about this movements but they did not have a choice, their parents had to send them there or the Gestapo (Nazi secret police) could intervene severely on them. Young people could have liked these movement because they could have meet new teenagers like them but on the other hand it must have been unsupportable for youth to do the same "routine" every day. There is no discussion the way Trade Unionist and left-wing political leaders felt towards the Nazis during 1933-1939: hate. Trade unions has been banned in 1933, the trade unionists lost their jobs.

Nazis tried to win the support of the manual workers. The political parties leaders were killed or sent to concentration camps. Teachers, lawyer and doctors although some of them were Nazi believers, there were others anti-Nazis but they always acted like they had Nazi idea because of the concentration camps fear. Lastly it can be said the Nazis oppressed people making Germans believe they were doing a great job for the country and taking the freedom from people to express themselves.

As a witness describes it: "You had to praise Hitler or taking a risk".

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