

How did Hitler change Germany
from a democracy to a Nazi
dictatorship, 1933-34?

Revision lesson 5



The
Reichstag
Fire

March
elections

Democracy
to
dictatorship

The
Enabling
Law

Elimination
of political
opposition

Elimination
of the SA

The
Furher

One party
state

Step 1 - Reichstag Fire

- Hitler needed to get rid of the communist party before the March Elections
- Dutch Communist Van der Lubbe was caught setting the Reichstag building on fire
- Many believe Hitler was behind the fire
- Hitler persuaded Hindenburg that the Communists were plotting a revolution & he passed an emergency decree to ban the Communist party & allowing Hitler to arrest any political opposition against the government.
- This helps him to create a dictatorship as it removes his main political rivals.

Step 2 – the March election 1933

- Hitler hoped to get absolute majority but failed.
- The Nazis were however the largest party with 44% of the seats.
- Hitler persuaded the Centre Party to support the Nazis by promising to protect the Catholic Church.
- He also won the Nationalist party support.
- Hitler used this support to get the Enabling Act passed.

Step 3 – the enabling Law/Act

- Members of the Reichstag were persuaded & bullied in to voting to pass the enabling Law.
- 444 politicians voted in favour of it & only 94 against.
- This gave Hitler and the Nazis the power to disband the Reichstag & to rule alone unchallenged.
- Germany was no longer a democracy.

The elimination of political opposition 1933 - 1934

- Communist party had been banned after Reichstag Fire.
- Using Enabling Act he passed a law banning the formation of political parties.
- May 1933 Trade Unions were closed down and funds confiscated.
- July 1933 Hitler signed the Concordat with the Pope. He promised not to interfere with the Catholic Church in Germany so that Catholics would support him.
- Jan 1934 he got rid of State Parliaments (local governments)

The elimination of the SA

- The Night of the Long Knives
- June 1943
- Up to 2 million members
- Regular army would not support Hitler unless he got rid of them.
- He was scared Ernst Rohm was plotting to overthrow him.
- Up 200 shot including SA leaders, but also some politicians such as former chancellors Von Papen and Von Schleicher were arrested.
- Hitler told the world he had stopped a rebellion.

The Fuhrer

- 2nd August 1934 President Hindenburg died at the age of 84.
- Hitler combined the role of President and Chancellor into one
- The army swore an oath of loyalty to him
- Hitler now had total power.

One party state

- Hitler dreamed up the grand schemes
- Paper work and details were left to a group of trusted advisors.

LAW AND ORDER

- Abolished right to a fair trial before imprisonment
- Justice system became part of Nazi State.
- Judges were replaced by Nazis supporters
- People's court set up in 1934 to try 'crimes against the state'

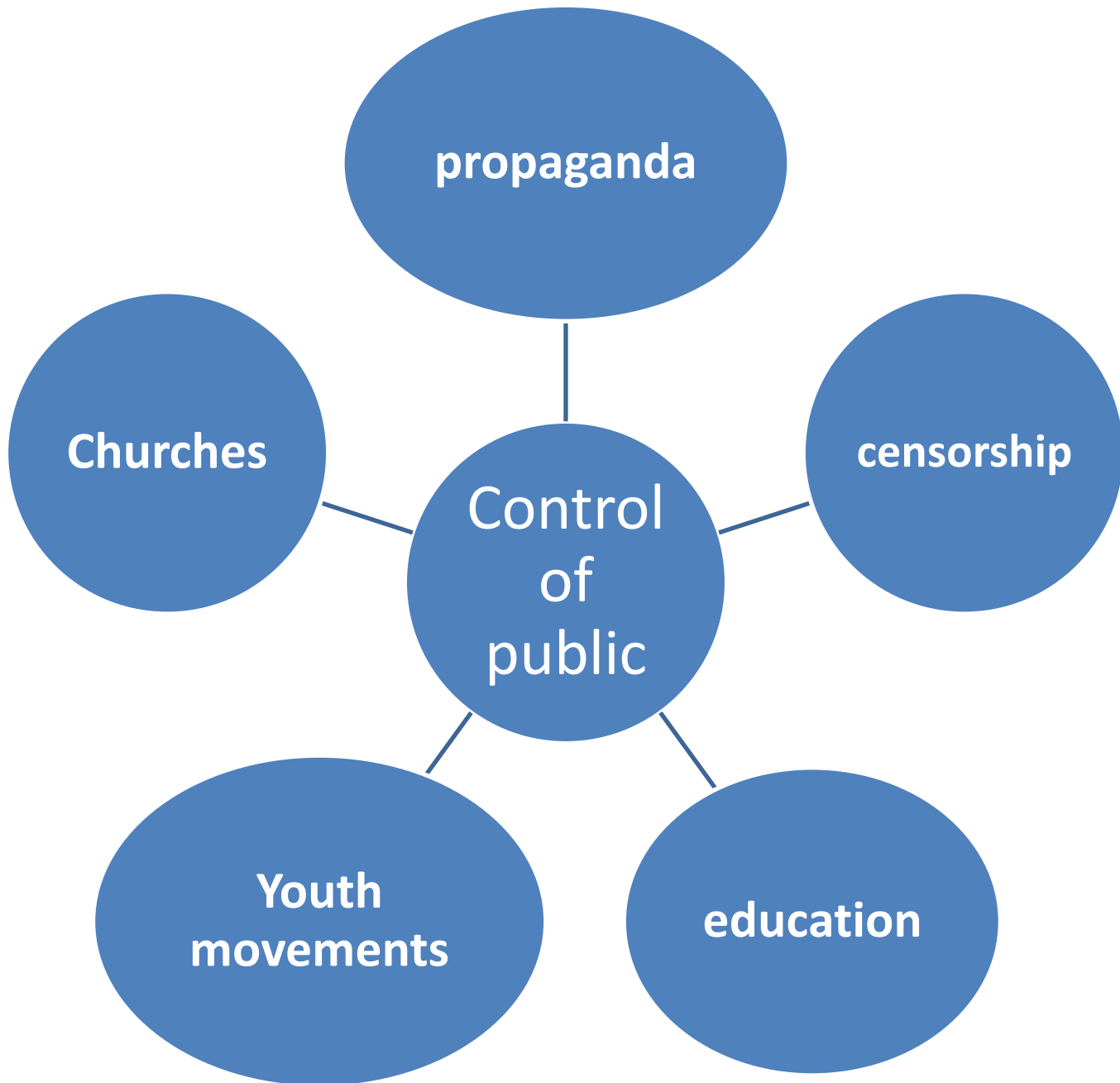
One party state cont.

SS and the Gestapo

- Formed in 1925.
- Hitler's personal bodyguard & later party police force
- Led by Heinrich Himmler
- Its job was to search out Nazi opponents
- Had powers to imprison & arrest without trial
- Used informers & torture to get confessions

Concentration Camps

- Set up in 1933
- Hold people in 'protective custody indefinitely
- Over 100,000 prisoners in first year, mainly political
- Controlled by SS guards – Death Head Units
- Ruthless & cruel.
- Beatings for minor offences
- Major offences – execution , no trial



propaganda

- Masterminded by Josef Goebbels
- Simple ideas & short slogans
- Repetition of same message
- Huge rallies (NUREMBURG) and marches to show power
- 1936 Olympics

censorship

- Hitler made sure that the people only saw what he wanted them to see in the media
- How great the Nazis were or how evil the Jews were etc...
- Radios under state control from 1934
- 6000 loud speakers in public places
- Cheap radios so all could listen
- State press agency controlled by Nazis
- Daily press conferences to tell papers what to say
- Cinema & radio mixture of entertainment and politics
- Book burnings

Control of Education

- Nazi beliefs
- History = Nazis version of past e.g. stabbed in back in WW1 by Jews and Weimar politicians
- Boys taught military skills
- Girls taught housekeeping and child care
- Eugenics – selective breeding
- Jewish teachers sacked
- 1935 Jewish children banned from German schools
- Teachers swear oath of loyalty to Hitler

Youth Movements

- Hitler Youth 6-10, 10-14, 14-18 year olds
- Compulsory after 1936
- Nazis beliefs
- Lots of physical exercise
- Military discipline for boys
- Good mothers for girls
- Lots of camping weekends / weeks to get away from parents influence

Control of churches

- No respect for Christianity but kept ideas vague to keep Christian supporters.
- 'Positive Christianity' – appealed to Catholics and Protestants by disagreeing with atheist communism
- Catholic Church signed concordat in 1933 with Hitler promising to leave Catholics alone.
- He did interfere with curriculum of some Catholic schools
- Late 1930's 100's priests and nuns arrested on vague charges.
- Protestants grouped together under Reich Church
- Pastor Martin Niemoller set up own Protestant church – placed in concentration camp.

Exam question

‘Hitler was able to set up a Nazi Dictatorship in Germany because of the role of the SS and concentration camps.’

- Do you agree? Explain your answer 12 marks
- **Target: Analysis of key features and causation**

Level 1: Simple descriptive comment and/or identifies one reason.

- **Target: Analysis of key features and causation (AOs 1 and 2)**
- Candidates either submit no evidence or fail to address the question. **0**
- e.g. the Nazis benefited from the fear of concentration camps because many people were too scared to speak out
- E.g. people could be imprisoned without trial
- E.g. SS were ruthless
- E.g. SS used torture to gather information
- The answer demonstrates simple understanding of the rules of spelling,
- punctuation and grammar. It is generally coherent but basic in development.
- **1-3**

Level 2:

- **EITHER Identifies several reasons**
- e.g. effect of concentration camps in keeping 'undesirables' out of general circulation
- Used it first to get rid of political opposition
- Fear of just disappearing due to imprisonment without trial
- No one returned from concentration camps before the end of the war
- SS were ruthless and could arrest anyone based on flimsy evidence or suspicion which led to fear
- Also created a dictatorship through any of following: enabling law, Night of Long Knives, death of Hindenburg, propaganda, censorship, controlling young through education & youth movements & controlling church
- **OR**
- **Explains one reason using knowledge and understanding**
- e.g. detailed explanation of one of the above items.
- The answer demonstrates developed understanding of the rules of spelling,
- punctuation and grammar. It is reasonably well organised and presented in a
- clear and effective manner.
- **4-6**

Level 3:

- **Explains more than one reason**
- e.g. details on more than one aspect (as above). This may follow a narrative
- framework, but it must include some explicit details and/or arguments on the period 1933-34, probably including references to Reichstag Fire, March Elections & the Enabling Law, One Party State and Education/ Churches
- It may include agreements and disagreements, but not necessarily.
- The answer demonstrates developed understanding of the rules of spelling,
- punctuation and grammar. It is well organised with an appropriate form and
- style of writing. Some specialist vocabulary is used.
- **7-10**

Level 4:

- An analytical, linked, multi-causal answer clearly focused on the
- question
- e.g. in addition to Level 3, answer argues contains a **detailed, balanced judgement(s) regarding the interpretation**. The judgement(s) may **support or reject** the interpretation after considering both points of view, or **partially support and partially accept the interpretation**.
- The answer demonstrates highly developed/ complex understanding of the
- rules of spelling, punctuation and grammar. It is well structured, with an
- appropriate form and style of writing. Specialist vocabulary is used effectively.
- **11-12**