

Control by propaganda?

In 1924 Hitler laid out his beliefs and his plans for successful propaganda in his book, *Mein Kampf* (see Source 4). In 1928 he chose Josef Goebbels to run the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda.

Goebbels put Hitler's approach to propaganda into practice brilliantly. He took control of all the mass media. He made sure newspapers and posters carried the strong, simple, repeated slogans of the Nazis. Through censorship he prevented the German people from hearing any conflicting messages.

▼ **SOURCE 4** From *Mein Kampf*, by Adolf Hitler

The powers of understanding of the masses are feeble. And they quickly forget. So effective propaganda has to be limited to a few bare essentials and these must be as simple as possible. These slogans should be repeated until the very last person has come to grasp the idea.

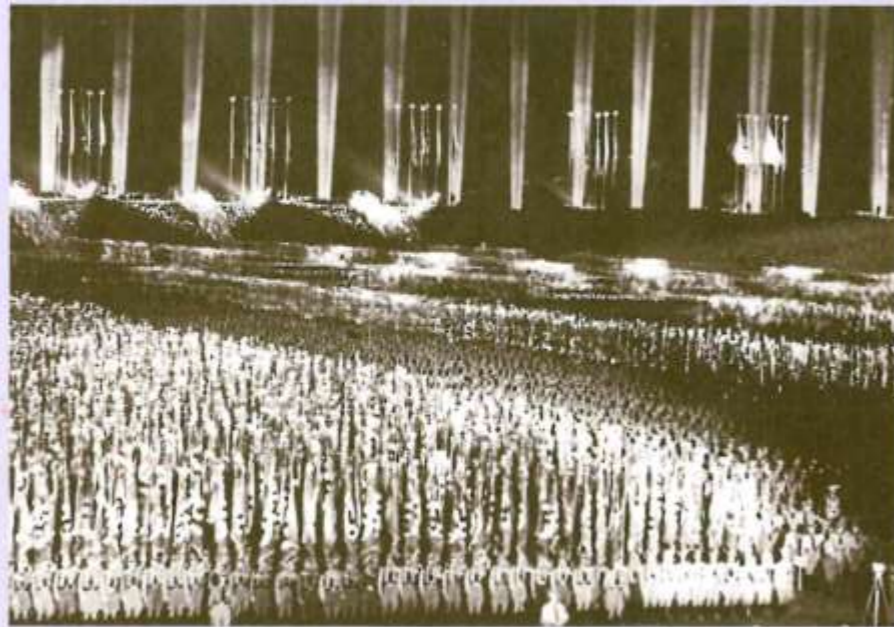


Newspapers

Anti-Nazi newspapers were shut down. Jews were banned from owning or working for newspapers. Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda sent out daily instructions to all remaining newspapers telling them what to print, what kind of pictures should be published and what angle they should take on the news. Display boards were set up in public places so that everyone could read these newspapers.

Rallies

▼ **SOURCE 5** Nuremberg rally, 1937. There are 100,000 Nazis here, with 32,000 flags. Around the edge of the stadium, 150 searchlights create a spectacular effect



The Nazis always presented an image of order and control to the German people, with their uniforms, meetings, torchlight processions and rallies. Once they were in power, they made their rallies even more impressive. A huge stadium at Nuremberg was specially built for them (see Source 5). Goebbels stage-managed these rallies to give a dramatic impression of overwhelming power and unity.

ACTIVITY

Use the information on these two pages to fill out your table for Goebbels.

Books

As soon as they came to power, the Nazis organised official book-burnings – books were burned in public on massive bonfires. The Nazis burned:

- books by Communists and Socialists
- books by Jews
- books by anyone they disapproved of
- books containing ideas they disapproved of.

By burning books the Nazis were preventing German people from reading and thinking beyond the Nazi message. All new books published had to be censored by Goebbels' Ministry.

▼ **SOURCE 6** Book-burning, 1933



Radio

Goebbels took over control of all radio broadcasting. Regular programmes included Hitler's speeches, German music and German history – foreign programmes could not be picked up. Cheap radios were made so that as many Germans as possible could listen to Nazi propaganda. By 1939 70 per cent of Germans owned a radio. Loudspeakers were set up in public squares all over Germany and people were encouraged to listen to important radio programmes and announcements.

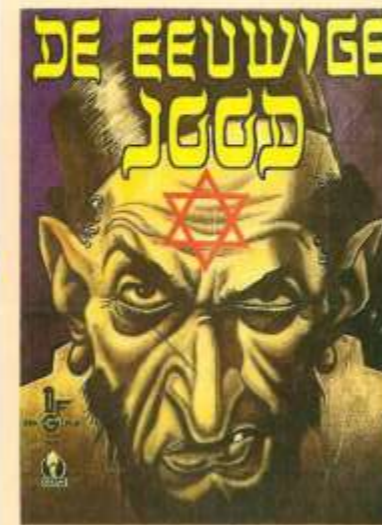
▼ **SOURCE 7** Newspaper advertisement, 1934

Attention! The FÜHRER is speaking on the radio! On Wednesday 21 March, the Führer is speaking on all German stations from 11.00 a.m. to 11.50 a.m. Nazi Party headquarters have ordered that all factory-owners, department stores, offices, shops, pubs and blocks of flats put up loudspeakers an hour before the broadcast so that the whole workforce can participate fully in the broadcast.

Films

The cinema was very popular in most countries in the 1930s. Goebbels controlled all of the films made in Germany. Most were adventure stories, comedies or love stories, but there was always a newsreel film, *News of the Week*. The newsreels were made by Goebbels' film-makers and shown before the main film.

Some openly pro-Nazi films were made on Goebbels' orders and with strict control of the scripts. Source 8 is a poster for *The Eternal Jew*, an anti-Semitic film made by the Nazis.



◀ **SOURCE 8** A Dutch poster for *The Eternal Jew* (*Der ewige Jude*), 1940

Control by terror?

The Nazis tried to make the German people feel too afraid to express any kind of criticism or opposition. At the centre of this network of terror was Himmler.

The SS

SS stands for 'Schutz Staffel', which means protection squad. The black-uniformed SS was originally Hitler's personal bodyguard. Himmler built it up and by 1939 it had 240,000 members. All recruits had to be recognisably 'Aryan' – blond, blue-eyed and physically fit. Himmler imposed high physical standards: even having a filled tooth was enough to disqualify you. Himmler trained the SS to be ruthless and fiercely loyal to Hitler. They could arrest people without trial and could search houses.

ACTIVITY

Use the information on these two pages to fill out your table for Himmler.



Concentration camps

As soon as the Nazi Party came to power the SS arrested many Nazi opponents and put them in temporary prisons. Then special concentration camps were constructed, usually in remote rural areas.

At first, inmates were held in the camps for short periods of questioning, torture, hard labour and forced instruction in Nazi ideas. By the late 1930s concentration camps were being run by a section of the SS called Death's Head units, as forced labour camps. Some prisoners were used to work for Nazi-owned businesses. Himmler controlled over 150 companies who used slave labour to make all kinds of goods, including weapons.

The camps held Jews, Communists, Socialists, trade unionists, church leaders – anyone who criticised the Nazis.

SOURCE 1 Nazi opponents being questioned in a concentration camp, 1933



The Gestapo

This was the state secret police. They could tap telephones, open mail and collect information from a huge network of informers. Informers reported on local people who they believed were 'anti-Nazi'. The Gestapo arrested people without trial, tortured them and imprisoned them in concentration camps.

SOURCE 2 A teletype room in Gestapo headquarters, where information was received from informers



The police and courts

The ordinary **police** continued with their regular work, but their bosses were all Nazis. This meant that the police became part of the network of informers, collecting information on everyone, whilst ignoring crimes committed by Nazis.

The **courts** were under Nazi control as well. Nazis were appointed as judges so a fair trial was impossible. The number of offences carrying the death penalty went up from three in 1933 to 46 by 1943. These included: listening to foreign radio stations; telling an anti-Nazi joke; having a sexual relationship with a Jew; and being a habitual criminal.

SOURCE 3 German judges give the Nazi salute as they swear loyalty to Hitler



Informers

The Nazi Party had a strong local structure. Every town was divided into small units, called blocks. The Block Warden, a local Nazi, visited every home in the block each week, collecting donations to the Nazi Party and checking up on everyone. As a Socialist opponent of Hitler said, 'Every staircase has an informer.' The Block Warden wrote a report on everyone in their block. This report could affect whether or not you got a job. The Warden noted any signs of independent thinking, for example, not flying the Nazi flag on celebration days, or not being enthusiastic enough about Hitler and his achievements.