

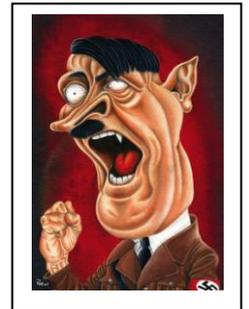
Changing life for the German people,

1933 - 1939



In this topic we will focus upon three key questions:

- i) How did Nazi economic and social policy affect life in Germany?
- ii) How did Nazi political policy affect life in Germany?
- iii) How did Nazi racial and religious policy affect life in Germany?



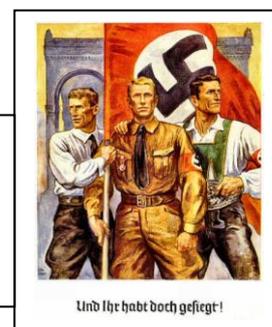
The Nazis tackle the economy

Just as with any new government that enters office makes its promises and pledges to improve the country's economic and social problems, the Nazis were of no exception. When they came to power in 1933 they assured the population a better deal from the economy. Hitler set himself three targets.

- 👍 Reduce unemployment.
- 👍 Undertake rearmament to create jobs, avenge the Treaty of Versailles and to prepare for expansion of Germany.
- 👍 Bring about economic self-sufficiency so that Germany was not reliant on importing goods.

Hitler wanted to target these areas so he could take Germany away from the Great Depression and reduce unemployment. However, he also intended for Germany to once again become a military power capable of taking control in Europe.

Hitler promised a strong Germany under the Nazis.





Powerful Nazis - Hermann Goering: sets up Luftwaffe and Gestapo. Opened Germany's first concentration camp. Took control of German economy in 1936. Not a very nice bloke who was sentenced to death in the Nuremberg trials, but committed suicide before he could be hanged. He took cyanide.

In 1933 Hitler appointed Hjalmar Schacht to look after the German economy. He was President of the Reichsbank and took a cautious approach to Hitler's desire to rearm quickly. By 1935, Hitler had lost patience with Schacht and replaced him with Hermann Goering.

Goering immediately introduced the **Four-Year Plan** (1936 - 1940) that aimed at speeding up the rearmament process. In 1936 Hitler issued a secret memorandum stating the Four-year Plan's intentions.

(Source A) The extent of the military development of our resources cannot be too large, nor its pace too swift. If we do not succeed in bringing the German army as rapidly as possible to the rank of premier army in the world, then Germany will be lost!

I thus set the following tasks:

- i) The German armed forces must be operational within four years.**
- ii) The German economy must be fit for war within four years.**

(Hitler, 1936)

Hitler believed that it was possible to convert Germany into a war machine and this could be achieved through the method of Blitzkrieg. This literally meant 'lightning war'. Germany, Hitler believed, could conquer other countries in a succession of rapid attacks. It could then take control of the defeated nation's economy and also achieve Lebensraum (living space) for the German people.

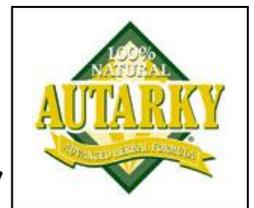


Hitler's decision to rearm transformed the economy and created hundreds of new jobs in armaments production and the provision of raw materials. Further jobs were created in the building of **Autobahns** (roads/motorways), planting of trees and the construction of schools and houses.



(Source B) 'We are not building roads [Autobahns] just for aeroplanes to look at,' one man said. 'Of course they can rush military supplies and troops to the frontiers in times of need.' It is easy to see why. They point arrow-wise towards the heart of Poland. Two roads lead into Holland, two into Belgium, and two into Austria.

Stephen Roberts, *The House that Hitler Built* (1939)



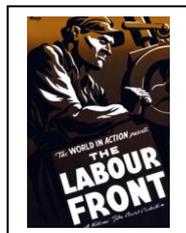
Hitler believed that Germany should strive for **autarky**, a policy designed to make a country self-sufficient. He said that Germany was too reliant upon foreign imports and needed to produce its own raw materials. Although the Nazis never achieved a self-sufficient state there were many jobs created in the process of trying to achieve one.



Trade Unions, what Trade Unions?

Trade Unions exist today in countries as a body that represents the work force and looks out for the interests its members. Hitler saw Trade Unions as the breeding grounds for socialism and communism. He subsequently banned them in May 1933. The monies raised by the unions were confiscated and the leaders arrested.

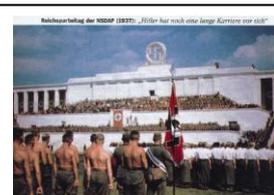
The Trade Unions were replaced by the **German Labour Front (DAF)** which had total control over the discipline of workers, regulated levels of pay and hours of work. Under this new system, working hours increased and wages were frozen. Moreover, without the support of the Trade Unions it became impossible to complain about working conditions.



Together with the DAF, the Nazis set up the **National Labour Service (RAD)**. The Nazis pumped large sums of public money (money raised by taxes) into the RAD which put men to work on public works, like the Autobahns. In July 1935 a law was passed which made it compulsory for all German men aged 18-25 to do six months training in the RAD. During the period they lived in camps and wore military uniforms.

Although some opposition from communist and socialist groups continued, most workers adjusted to the new arrangements and accepted that the days of bargaining for improved conditions were

A National Labour Service camp rally (1938).



over. Furthermore, by 1939 unemployment figures had fallen dramatically with the figure standing at less than 350,000.

Source C

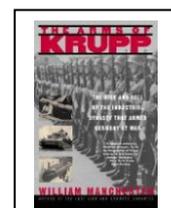
However, the figures were misleading. The figure of less than 350,000 people did not take into consideration Jews and women, as neither were allowed to work under the Nazis. Also, Hitler had re-introduced military conscription, taking many men out of unemployment and into the army. Hitler's intentions were clear, he was determined to break free from the Treaty of Versailles and make Germany strong enough to compete in Europe once again, militarily and economically.

Unemployment in Germany	Total
January 1933	6 million
January 1934	3.3 million
January 1935	2.9 million
January 1936	2.5 million
January 1937	1.8 million
January 1938	1.0 million
January 1939	302,000

Did German people benefit from Nazi policy?

As already mentioned, most German workers accepted the policies of the Nazis. Not only did they create jobs, they created stable regular work, that under Weimar, they did not have. Big business profited from the Nazi desire to restore the German economy and this in turn led to more jobs for workers. Smaller businesses however, did not do so well. Farmers obtained help from the government but in return they were told what to grow.

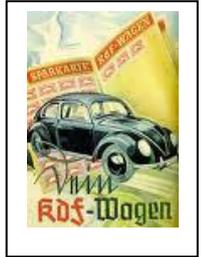
This was the theme of Nazi control in Germany. As long as workers and the people did what the Nazis said, then they would do well. In bringing economic stability, jobs, money and food, German people lost their personal freedom. Germany became a police state, a country where every aspect of their lives was controlled by the government. Any opposition was contained and eventually eliminated. The Nazis were preparing for war; the German people either became part of the process or they were removed from it.



Weapons maker Krupp benefitted

Control of Leisure time, Strength through Joy (or I'll tell you what you can do)

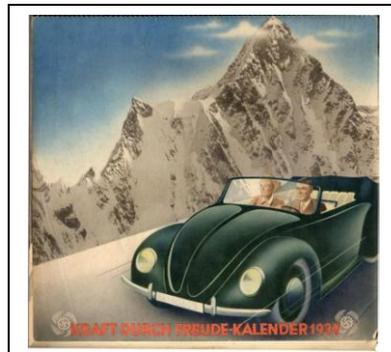
The Nazis had been successful in providing jobs for the German people and they also set about providing the German people with things to do during their free time. The **Strength through Joy** (Kraft durch Freude - KdF) organisation was designed to keep the workforce happy by filling people's leisure time with a variety of leisure activities that took place outside working time. Loyal and hardworking employees could even qualify for a reduced price holiday onboard a cruise liner.



(Source D) Leisure activities organised by the KdF included:

Concerts, operas, theatre, variety cabaret, evening variety shows, films, exhibitions, guided tours, gymnastics, light athletics, swimming, boxing, wrestling, games, water sports, winter sports, vacation journeys, short trips, cruises, hikes.

However, critics of the regime exclaimed it was just another example of the Nazis exercising control over the people of Germany. German people were expected to spend their free time participating in events run by the Nazi party, they took holidays arranged by the Nazi party and if they did not participate, then the Nazi party asked them why.



A KdF poster from 1939



The Nazis encouraged people to save up and buy a Volkswagen (People's car). Hitler was driven around in a Beetle.

The role of Women under Nazi control

During the Weimar period women had made considerable advances in German society. They had achieved equal voting rights, had been encouraged to obtain a good education and many women had subsequently obtained high ranking professional jobs. Under the Third Reich, these advances were reversed. The Nazis saw men as the decision makers and the educators, men should therefore

possess the top roles in German society. Women were seen to be responsible for the home and bringing up children.



Nazi women looked after the kids and home.

As early as 1921, the Nazis had banned women from holding any position of authority in the party or from standing as candidates in elections. After entering government in 1933, the Nazis promoted this sexist attitude throughout German society. Hitler banned women from professional jobs; they could no longer become judges, lawyers, doctors or teachers.

The Nazis believed that women were different to men, not inferior. They had a specific role to play in Nazi society: to bring as many young Nazis into the world that they could and to care for them. Hitler's and Goebbels' views of women confirm this.

(Source E) Equal rights for women means that they receive the esteem they deserve in the area nature gave to them.

Hitler's view on 'equality' for women.

(Source F) Woman has the task of being beautiful and bringing children into the world... The female bird tidys herself for her mate and hatches her eggs for him.

Goebbels' views on the role of women.

The 3 Ks - Kinder, Kirche, Kuche (Children, Church, Kitchen)

Women were expected to concentrate upon the **3 Ks, Kinder, Kirche and Kuche** - children, church and the kitchen. Women were encouraged to have large families, abortion was made illegal and contraception was discouraged. In 1938 the Motherhood Cross was introduced and awarded medals to women who had given birth to large numbers of children. The award was on the 12th August, which was Hitler's mother's birthday.

Consequently, the German population rose sharply between 1933 and 1939, as did the number of marriages. Women were discouraged from smoking in public places as it was seen as unattractive.

If Germany was to be strong and Hitler was to achieve his aim of a master race, there had to be a large population, full of strong well cared for German people. In 1936 'maternity homes' were set up which matched unmarried Aryan mothers with racially pure SS officers, with the aim of producing more pure Aryan children.

How did women react?

Women reacted in different ways to the Nazis policies towards them. Some had always believed that the role of the woman was indeed in the home, while others were simply horrified that the progression that women had made in German society had been taken away so quickly. Some women were quickly converted to the new role given to them, while others, although angry, accepted their new role. What choice did they have?

Nazi propaganda posters:
showing the importance of the
mother and the Aryan family.

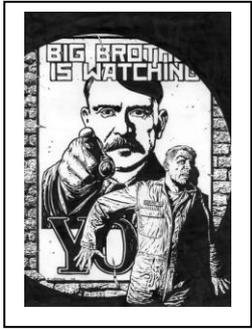


'The whole purpose of education is to create Nazis'

Education, education, education - well, as long as it's all about the Nazis. Children in Nazi Germany were constantly exposed to Hitler's ideas through their schooling. The Nazis laid down strict rules about what was to be taught and all subjects focused upon the Nazi point of view. History lessons told of German military glory and how the Jews and Communists were to blame for the defeat of WWI. Biology studied racial theory and the importance of the master race. Even mathematics was used to encourage an acceptance of killing the insane.

(Source G) A Nazi Maths puzzle from a 1930s textbook

The construction of a lunatic asylum costs 6 million marks. How many houses at 15,000 marks each could be built for Germans if we did not build the asylum?



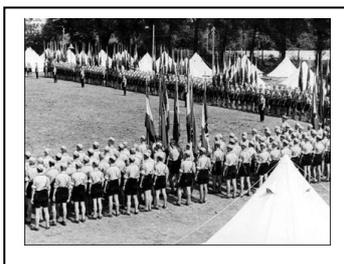
Teachers had to belong to the **Nazi Teachers League**, and students were encouraged to inform upon any teacher that did not deliver the new curriculum. The curriculum focused upon the Nazi ideology of military and sporting skills for boys, domestic skills for girls and blaming the Jews and communists for anything that had gone wrong.

For the Nazis, education was seen as another means of **indoctrinating** (brainwashing) young people. By teaching children from a young age about the importance of the Third Reich, about a strong Germany and about Hitler, the Nazis were aiming to alter the entire German populations' views. They would all grow up believing that the Nazi way of life was the only way of life.

Hitler Youth

In 1907 Robert Baden-Powell held the first Scouting encampment at Brownsea in England. His aim was to create a youth movement that supported young people in their physical, mental and spiritual development. The Scouts and Guides movement had begun. Some 20 years later in Germany, Adolph Hitler had a similar idea, only with a Nazi twist.

Hitler realised how important it was to indoctrinate young people in Nazi ideology. To influence the young of today was to control the adults of tomorrow. Hitler wanted to make sure that the young people living in Germany would become enthusiastic supporters of the Third Reich. Therefore, Hitler set about creating the **Hitler Youth Movement**.



Much like the Scouts or Guides movement, the Hitler Youth originally encouraged young people to participate in out-of-school leisure activities, such as hiking and camping. However, two Hitler Youth Laws in 1936 and

1939 granted the movement equal status with school and later on made membership compulsory for 6-18 year olds.

The movement was organised into a variety of levels depending upon the age of the child. Boys between 6 and 10 joined the *Pimpfen* (Little Fellows) and were involved in hiking and camping. At 10 they moved into the *Jungvolk* (Young Folk) where they learned more about Nazi ideology and military matters. Then between 14 and 18 they were enrolled into the *Hitlerjugend* (Hitler Youth) where they learned about military discipline and training and developed skills in map reading, shooting and drill.

A Hitler Youth Knife



Girls were involved from 10 in the *Jungmadel* (Young girls) which focused upon home and cooking skills and from 14 in the *Bund Deutsche Madchen* (German Girls League) which prepared girls for motherhood. Girls received physical training also.

The movement grew rapidly from 108,000 in 1932 to 8 million by 1939. The Hitler Youth Laws made the movement difficult to avoid and parents would be prevented from promotion in their jobs if their children were not participating in the Nazi movement. Overall the Hitler Youth movement became another cog in the wheel of Nazi Germany. Many of the boys that learned about camping and soldiering and the girls who learned about rationing and motherhood would put those skills into effect during World War II. I bet your outlook of Brownies has altered slightly.



Powerful Nazis - Heinrich Himmler: Himmler was one of the most feared men of the Third Reich. He gained real power after the Night of the Long Knives and controlled the Nazi machinery of terror, which included the Gestapo and the SS. He was also responsible for organising the extermination camps. He was captured by British Forces in 1945. He committed suicide before he could be tried as a war criminal.



Nazi political policy and its effects on German life.

The SS and the Gestapo

State security in Nazi Germany consisted of two main sections - The **SS** (*Schutzstaffel*) and the **Gestapo**. Together, they used a combination of terror and intimidation to keep the people of Germany in line.

The **SS** was set up in 1925 as a bodyguard for Hitler and was initially a part of the SA. However, they were more disciplined than the SA and wore black uniforms to distinguish them from their brown shirted comrades of the SA. Remember! SS - Black / SA - Brown.

In 1929, the SS was put under the control of **Heinrich Himmler** and after the Night of the Long Knives the SS replaced the SA as the main military group in Germany. Over time the SS was split into three sections. One section controlled security. Another controlled the Waffen SS, the most committed and dependable unit in the German army. The third was the 'death's head unit', which controlled the concentration camps in the Second World War. The SS were ruthless.

In 1936 the SS took control of the police force and with it the secret police also known as the **Gestapo**. The Gestapo's full name was *Geheime Staatspolizei* (Secret State Police) - which as you can see, is where the name comes from. Set up by Goering in 1933, by 1936 Himmler had taken control and put **Reinhard Heydrich** in charge (another ruthless Nazi).



The purpose of the Gestapo was to root out any persons thought to be enemies of the state, monitor their activities and then eliminate them. Whilst most Germans conformed to the Nazi way of life, those who did not or were thought not to have were sent to **concentration camps**. The first such camp opened at Dachau, Germany in April 1933. Gestapo officials were also instructed to use torture to extract information and confessions.



Between 1934 and 1939, 534 people were executed for being convicted of political opposition. In 1939 alone 160,000 people were arrested for political offences. Those who committed these 'so called offences' were mostly, intellectuals, communists, homosexuals and Jews. They were rounded up and either executed or sent to the concentration camps.



(Source F) Any attempt to gain recognition for, or even uphold different ideas will be ruthlessly dealt with as the symptoms of an illness which threatens the healthy unity of the state. To discover the enemies of the state, watch them and render them harmless at the right moment, is the duty of a political police.

Instructions to the Gestapo from their Deputy Chief, Werner Best

Control of the Legal System

In a democratic state the people are protected by the law. The law is above politics and serves to provide fairness and justice for all. In Nazi Germany however, the laws were bent and justice was 'Nazified'. The Nazis took control of the courts and any judge who did not adopt new Nazi codes of practice was replaced.

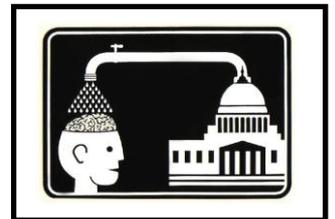


In 1934 the People's Court was set up to try enemies of the state. Between 1934 and 1939 over 500 people had been sentenced to death and sent many others to the camps. Amazingly, the number of crimes punishable by death rose from three in 1933 to 46 in 1943 and included offences such as listening to a foreign radio station and publishing anti-government leaflets.

Furthermore, the law did nothing to protect people from the clutches of the Gestapo and SS, many judges were appointed because they were loyal to the Nazi party and not because of their legal knowledge. Anyone who wished to practice law had to belong to the National Socialist League for the Maintenance of Law and Order and in October 1933, 10,000 lawyers swore an oath of loyalty to the Fuhrer.

More control - this time central and regional government

Central Government



Hitler was the central source of all power within the Third Reich.

Germany was governed by 'the will of the Fuhrer'. Any orders the Fuhrer issued were to be followed, without question. Furthermore, Hitler had the power to make laws without the consent of anyone.

Government policies were carried out by an elite group of powerful Nazi leaders, including Hermann Goring, Joseph Goebbels, Heinrich Himmler, Rudolph Hess, Martin Bormann, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Robert Ley and Albert Speer.

Regional and Local Government

In 1934, Hitler abolished all individual states and brought them under central control. He divided the country into regions or *Gau*,

each headed by a Reich Governor (*Gauleiter*). They were often loyal party officials and were directly appointed by the Fuhrer and given wide ranging powers. At local level Nazi officials could appoint or dismiss the town mayor and local councillors. By putting Nazi officials in charge, Hitler maintained a tight grip on what was going on around the country both at regional and local level.

Propaganda and Censorship

The Nazis made propaganda and indoctrination a top priority. In 1933 the Ministry for People's Enlightenment and Propaganda was set up. It was put under the control of Dr. Joseph **Goebbels**. The aim of the ministry was to brainwash people into accepting and believing Nazis beliefs, values and ideas. Goebbels constantly reinforced the Nazi messages of racial purity, national greatness and the cult of the leadership of the Fuhrer.

Hitler's speeches became a massive attraction for Nazi followers; huge crowds of people would go to watch him speak at events like the annual **Nuremberg Party Rally**.

Goebbels quickly took control of the media and newspapers were censored and journalists were told what to write and print. Books that had been written by 'unreliable' authors were destroyed, over 2500 writers were banned and their works were publicly burned.



SA squad's burn banned books (1933).

Goebbels believed strongly in the use of the radio to broadcast Nazi views and ideology. The Nazis organised the mass production of cheap radio sets which resulted in 70% of German homes owning a radio. However, rather than tuning in to Radio 1 or Bridge FM, the Nazis monitored what was broadcast on the radio. The music played was censored and listeners were treated regularly to broadcasts





from both Hitler and Goebbels (the breakfast show, with DJ Goebbels and MC Adolph - well maybe not).

The Nazis also used the cinema and the power of the film industry to put the Nazi message across. Documentaries of Nazi achievements such the 1936 Olympics were made and shown to the cinema-going German public and before each film a newsreel detailing Nazi triumphs would also be shown.

However, the Nazis did not only use new mediums like the cinema and radio to get the Nazi message across, they also used the arts. Depicted in Arthur Kampf's *Venus and Adonis* (1939) is an Aryan man and a strong looking woman. The man is like a Nazi SS soldier, while the woman portrays Germany, fit and healthy.

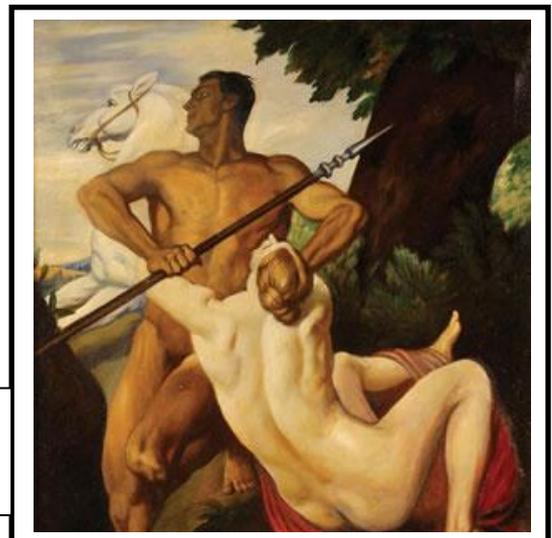
The Nazi propaganda machine encouraged its media, artists and citizens to participate in the making of material that showed how proud they felt to be a Nazi. However, not all agreed and many talented musicians, artists and writers left Germany for fear of persecution.

Essential to the effectiveness of Nazi propaganda was its simplicity. By keeping it simple all the German people could understand, by repeating that simple message over and over again the people of Germany not only understood but gradually came to believe in the message. This was Nazi indoctrination at its absolute best!

(Source G) I consider radio to be the most modern and the most crucial instrument that exists for influencing the masses...

J. Goebbels (March 1933)

Arthur Kampf, *Venus and Adonis* (1939)



Nazi Racial and Religious Policy



Treatment of Jews in Germany before WW2

Hitler had put his ideas on race in his book *Mein Kampf*. In it, he argued that Aryans were the superior race and should not breed with people **inferior** to them. This meant stopping certain groups from having children with other groups, Germans could not marry Jews.

The Nazis began preventing inferior groups from having children altogether and in extreme cases began eliminating them. Homosexuals, black people and gypsies came under attack and once in power the Nazis began to **sterilise** people from these groups. Then they began to sterilise the mentally ill and physically disabled people and, after 1939, began to kill them.

Persecution of Jews was widespread in Europe prior to the Nazi's rise. Hitler played upon this existing hatred of Jews and used the racial tension to gain political support. Once the Nazis were in power they increased the persecution of Jewish people. In 1933 there were 550,000 Jews in Germany; by 1939 280,000 had left Germany - many of which fled to the USA. Albert Einstein was one of those who left.

In 1935 the **Nuremberg Laws** made life extremely difficult for Jews. They were no longer classed as German citizens and were not protected by the law. They could be attacked on the street and their property could be destroyed without any legal right of protection. Signs began to appear stating that Jews were not welcome in public places such as restaurants.



In 1938 a Nazi official was murdered by a young Polish Jew. In response Goebbels organised a **pogrom** - a nationwide attack on Jewish property by the SA. The event took place on the 9-10 of November and became known as *Kristallnacht* (**Night of Broken Glass**) because of the number of windows smashed.

Over 7500 Jewish shops were destroyed, 400 synagogues burnt down and many Jews killed. More than 30,000 Jews were arrested and taken to **concentration camps**, like Sachsenhausen. After war broke out in 1939 the Nazis forced Jews to live in Ghettos and later moved them to the Death camps in Eastern Europe to be exterminated or worked to death.



Chart to describe Nuremberg Laws, 1935. The "Nuremberg Laws" established a pseudo-scientific basis for racial identification. Only people with four German grandparents (four white circles in top row left) were of "German blood". A Jew is someone who descends from three or four Jewish grandparents (black circles in top row right). In the middle stood people of "mixed blood" of the "first or second degree." A Jewish grandparent was defined as a person who is or was a member of a Jewish religious community. Also includes a list of allowed marriages ("Ehe gestattet") and forbidden marriages ("Ehe verboten").

Treatment of the Church

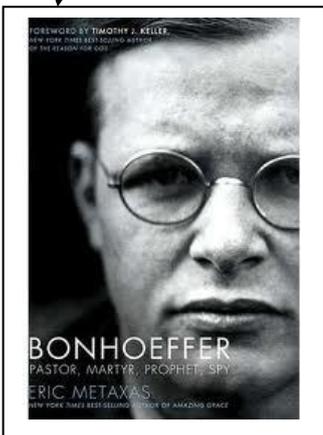
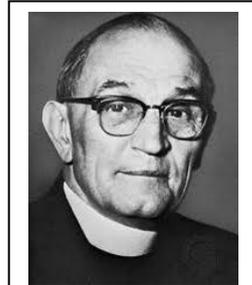
Hitler saw the church as a real threat to Nazi power and control. One third of the population were Catholic and two-thirds were protestant. At first Hitler worked with the Church and in July 1933 signed a **Concordat** (agreement) with the Pope. Hitler would stay out of religious affairs so long as the Church kept out of politics.

However, in 1936 the **National Reich Church** was set up to 'nazify' the church. The bible and cross were replaced with a swastika, a

copy of *Mein Kampf* and a sword. Sunday schools and Christian youth groups were closed - Germany's young must attend the Hitler Youth. In protest Pope Pius XI spoke out against the Nazis - the Nazis retaliated by arrested 400 Catholic priests and sent them to Dachau concentration camp.

Protestant protest came in the form of **Martin Niemoller** who spoke out against the Nazis; he was also arrested and sent to Dachau.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer also spoke out against the Nazis - he was imprisoned and executed in 1943 by the Gestapo. Nevertheless, the Nazis never succeeded in destroying the church in Germany, but they did manage to keep it quiet.



First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak for me.

Pastor Martin Niemöller