

The Nazis and Racism: The Nazis were racists. They

believed that some 'races' were better than others. Racism is a type of hatred. Hatred can easily lead to violence. When the Nazis gained power in 1933 their racist beliefs were well known but few people expected them to use violence against the people they ruled. Before WWII broke out, however, the first steps towards the Holocaust had been taken.

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Source A: Letter from Hitler to Josef Hell, 1922

If I am ever in power the destruction of the Jews will be my first and most important job. As soon as I have the power I shall have gallows after gallows erected. Then Jews will be hanged one after another and will stay hanging until they stink.

Source B: The abhorrent pictures below are from a book published in 1938 called *Der Giftpilz*, the German word for toadstool. It was aimed particularly at children, and was sometimes used in schools. The caption under each picture is translated above each picture.

How a German Peasant was Driven from

House and Farm: "Daddy, someday

when I have my own farm, no Jew will enter my house..."

The Experience of Hans and Else with a

Strange Man: "Here, kids, I have some

candy for you. But you both have to come with me ..."



Source C: The Berlin Olympics 1936

Jesse Owens at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. The Nazis used the games as an opportunity to put the Third Reich on show. But when Jesse Owens, a black American athlete, won 4 gold medals, Hitler refused to congratulate him.



Jesse Owens and Team mate

Jews In Nazi Germany

The Jews were frequently referred to in "**Mein Kampf**" and Hitler had made plain his hatred for them. References to the "filthy Jew" litter the book. In one section, Hitler wrote about how the Jews planned to "contaminate" the blood of pure Germans:

"The Jewish youth lies in wait for hours on end.....spying on the unsuspecting German girl he plans to seduce.....He wants to contaminate her blood and remove her from the bosom of her own people. The Jew hates the white race and wants to lower its cultural

level so that the Jews might dominate."

Once in power, Hitler used his position to launch a campaign against the Jews that culminated in the **Holocaust**.

Hitler blamed the Jews for all the misfortunes that had befallen Germany

- the loss of the [First World War](#) was the result of a Jewish conspiracy
- the [Treaty of Versailles](#) was also a Jewish conspiracy designed to bring Germany to her knees
- the [hyperinflation of 1923](#) was the result of an international Jewish attempt to destroy Germany

During the time when Germany was seemingly recovering under **Stresseman**, what Hitler said about the Jews remained nonsense listened to by only the few. During the impact of the Great Depression, though, when people became unemployed and all looked helpless, Hitler's search for a scapegoat proved a lot more fruitful.

After January 1933, the Jews became the "Untermenschen" - the sub-humans. Nazi thugs stopped Germans from shopping in Jewish shops. By 1934, all Jewish shops were marked with the yellow Star of David or had the word "Juden" written on the window. SA men stood outside the shops to deter anyone from entering. This was not necessarily a violent approach to the Jews - that was to come later - but it was an attempt to economically bankrupt them and destroy what they had spent years building up.

On buses, trains and park benches, Jews had to sit on seats marked for them. Children at schools were taught specifically anti-Semitic ideas. Jewish school children were openly ridiculed by teachers and the bullying of Jews in the playground by other pupils went unpunished. If the Jewish children responded by not wanting to go to school, then that served a purpose in itself and it also gave the Nazi propagandists a reason to peddle the lie that Jewish children were inherently lazy and could not be bothered to go to school.

In 1935, the Nuremberg laws were passed. The Jews lost their right to be German citizens and marriage between Jews and non-Jews was forbidden. It was after this law that the violence against the Jew really openly started. Those that could pay a fine were allowed to leave the country. Many could not and many shops refused to sell food to those who remained. Medicines were also difficult to get hold of as chemists would not sell to Jews.

THE NUREMBERG LAWS 1935

1. Only a person of German or similar blood is a citizen of the Reich (Germany). A Jew is not a citizen of the Reich. He has no vote. He may not hold public office.
2. Marriage between Jews and citizens of German blood is forbidden.
3. Sexual relations outside marriage between Jews and German citizens are forbidden.
4. Jews are forbidden to display the national flag or the national colours.

The campaign against the Jews stopped for a short duration during the **Berlin Olympics** - but once the overseas press had gone, it started up again. It reached a pre-war peak in 1938 with **Kristallnacht - The Night of the Broken Glass**.

In November 1938, a Nazi 'diplomat' was shot dead by a Jew in Paris. Hitler ordered a seven day campaign of terror against the Jews in Germany to be organised by Himmler and the SS. On the 10th November, the campaign started. 10,000 shops owned by Jews were destroyed and their contents stolen. Homes and synagogues were set on fire and left to burn. The fire brigades showed their loyalty to Hitler by assuming that the buildings would burn down anyway, so why try to prevent it? A huge amount of damage was done to Jewish property but the Jewish community was ordered to pay a one billion mark fine to pay for the eventual clear-up. Jews were forced to scrub the streets clean.



A Jewish Synagogue burning after Kristallnacht, November 1938

The **Second World War** - and the chaos this brought - gave Hitler even more freedom to bring death and destruction to Jewish communities throughout Europe.

Historians are still divided over whether the Germans supported these Nazi actions or whether fear made them turn a blind eye. In the immediate aftermath of Krystalnacht, an anonymous German wrote to the British Consul in Cologne stating that

"The German people have nothing whatsoever to do with these riots and burnings." Christopher Isherwood, a British writer living in Germany, witnessed the arrest of a Jew in a cafe by the SA where everybody simply looked away - but to create a scene would have provoked a violent response from those doing the arresting. The fear of the concentration camps was such that most felt compelled to remain silent despite the fact that they did not approve of what was going on.

Activities

1. **What Does Source A tell us about Hitler's beliefs? Why is the date of this letter important?**
2. **Describe how the lives of German Jews were affected by measures taken by the Nazis in the 1930s. What evidence is there that they became second class citizens?**
3.
 - a) **'Jews were not the only target of Nazi racism in the 1930s.'** Explain this statement using Source C.
 - b) **What evidence is there on these pages to suggest that Jews were the main target?**