

Materials prepared
by the German group

Sources on the Quest for "Living Space" ("Lebensraum")

Hitler Speaks to the Generals

At a dinner party Hitler outlines his goals and the role of the military (3 February 1933):

The sole aim of general policy: the regaining of political power. The whole State administration must be geared to this end (all departments!).

1. Domestic policy: Complete reversal of the present domestic political situation in Germany. Refusal to tolerate any attitude contrary to this aim (pacifism!). Those who will not be converted must be broken. Extermination of Marxism root and branch. Adjustment of youth and of the whole people to the idea that only a struggle can save us, and that everything else must be subordinated to this idea. (Realised in the millions of the Nazi movement. It will grow.) Training of youth and strengthening of the will to fight with all means. Death penalty for high treason. Toughest authoritarian State leadership. Removal of the cancer of Democracy!

2. Foreign policy: Battle against Versailles. Equality of rights in Geneva, but useless if people do not have the will to fight. Concern for allies.

3. Economics: The farmer must be saved! Settlement policy! Further increase of exports useless. The capacity of the world is limited and production is forced up everywhere. The only possibility of re-employing part of the army of unemployed lies in settlement. But time is needed and radical improvement not to be expected since living space too small for German people.

4. Building up of the armed forces: Most important prerequisite for achieving the goal of regaining

political power. National Service must be reintroduced. But beforehand the State leadership must ensure that the men subject to military service are not, even before their entry, poisoned by pacifism, Marxism, Bolshevism or do not fall victim to this poison after their service.

How should political power be used when it has been gained? That is impossible to say yet. Perhaps fighting for new export possibilities, perhaps – and probably better – the conquest of new living space in the east and its ruthless Germanisation. Certain that only through political power and struggle can the present economic circumstances be changed. The only things that can happen now – settlement – stopgap measures.

Armed forces most important and most Socialist institution of the State. It must stay apolitical and impartial. The internal struggle not their affair but that of the Nazi organizations. As opposed to Italy no fusion of Army and SA intended – most dangerous time is during the reconstruction of the Army. It will show whether or not France has statesmen: if so, she will not leave us time but will attack us (presumably with eastern satellites).

General Liebmann, an infantry commander, took notes at the meeting. Translation from J. Noakes and G. Pridham, eds., *Nazism, A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts, 1919–1945*, Vol. 2 (New York, 1988), pp. 628–29.

ruthless: pitiless

stopgap measure: temporary solution



Station 2:**Nazi Ideology in the first practical use**

Read the text and describe the photo. Identify the first steps taken by the regime against the Jews in 1933.

After the Nazis Came to Power (1933)

Although anti-Semitism in Germany and Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries was common, the Nazi treatment of Jews was far more extreme. Under the Nazis anti-Semitism became state doctrine and a central element of policy. Unlike the older anti-Semitism within German and European societies which made Jews the scapegoats of economic or social trouble, Nazi propaganda portrayed Jews as racially and nationally inferior. As the Nazis saw it, the superior Aryan German was being tested in a struggle against Jewish evil.

- 1) Anti-Jewish actions began shortly after Hitler came to power. In the spring and summer of 1933 violence and outbreaks were directed against Jews and their property by local Nazi groups and SA units. For example, in Berlin Eastern European Jews were seized and physically abused, as happened in Breslau, Straubing or Mannheim, where the SA also closed Jewish shops. These local actions were largely uncoordinated until the Nazis organized a nationwide boycott of Jewish businesses on 1 April, 1933. Nazi propaganda presented these activities as disciplined and peaceful; however, they were far from it. Jews were attacked, harassed or arrested. When the police did not intervene it was clear that Jews were losing legal protection.

"Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service" (7 April 1933)

"Aryan-Aryan", a coded term for Jews, and those whose political loyalty to the regime was questionable could be dismissed as civil servants or public employees. Exceptions were possible for those who were civil servants before 1918, who had been soldiers during the war, or whose fathers or sons had died in military action during the war.

"Aryan-Aryan" was defined in a separate document on 11 April 1933 as a person who had one Jewish parent or grandparent. From this point on, official documents relating to a person's "Aryan status" ("Arienzugehörigkeit") were required by law.



Station 3:**Law and order in Nazi Germany?**

- a) One of the advantages of the constitution of the Weimar Republik had been the existence of basic rights and liberties for all citizens independent of race, gender and religious beliefs. Compare the following Nazi laws with those of Weimar.
- b) Imagine you would be a Jewish citizen at that time. Which parts of your daily life would be influenced by the racial laws?
- c) Since the age of Enlightenment the modern state had the duty to protect his citizens. To what extent did the Nazi regime change this traditional function of the state.

"Nuremberg Laws"
(15 September 1935)

- ✓ The "Reich Citizenship Law" distinguished between those of Aryan blood, who were full citizens, and "non-Aryans", who were non-citizens and had fewer rights. A differentiated definition of "Jew" distinguished between "full Jews" and "mixed" racial identities. Three Jewish grandparents, membership in a Jewish synagogue or marriage to a "full Jew" made one a "full Jew".
- ✗ The "Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour" prohibited marriage and sexual relations between Jews and persons of "German or kindred blood". Jews were not allowed to employ female Aryan household servants under the age of 45.

"Law for the Protection of the Hereditary Health of the German People"
(* 8 October 1935)

- ✗ The law forbade Germans to marry if they could infect their spouses or children with a genetic disorder. Couples had to be licensed by the health authorities in order to marry. The law continued a concern with racial hygiene that had begun with the "Law for the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring" (14 July 1933).

"First Regulation to the Reich Citizenship Law"
(14 November 1935)

- ✗ "Mixed" racial Jews (one-quarter and one-half Jews) continued to be citizens. Jews had no right to vote or to hold public office.
- ✗ The exceptions set out in the "Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service" in July 1933 allowing some Jewish civil servants and public employees to remain in their jobs were removed. All Jewish officials were to retire by the end of 1935.

Station 4:**„The Night of broken Glass“**

("Crystal Night" or "Night of the Broken Glass"). Pogrom (massacre or riot against Jews) carried out by the Nazis throughout Germany and Austria on November 9-10, 1938. The name *Kristallnacht* refers to the glass of the shop windows smashed by the rioters. Officially, *Kristallnacht* was launched in retaliation for the assassination on November 7 of a German embassy official in Paris - named Ernst vom Rath - by a young Jewish refugee named Herschel Grynszpan. On November 9 vom Rath died of his injuries.

That same night, a group of Nazi leaders gathered in Munich to commemorate the anniversary of Hitler's (failed) attempt to take over the Bavarian Government in 1923. The Nazi Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, told the other participants that the time had come to strike at the Jews. The Nazi leaders then sent instructions to their men all over the country - they were not supposed to act as if they had launched the pogrom, but were to participate all the same. Within hours, crazed rioting erupted. The shop windows of Jewish businesses were smashed, the stores looted, hundreds of synagogues and Jewish homes were burnt down and many Jews were physically assaulted. Some 30,000 Jews, many of them wealthy and prominent members of their communities, were arrested and deported to the concentration camps at Dachau, Sachsenhausen, and Buchenwald, where they were subjected to inhumane and brutal treatment and many died. During the pogrom itself, some 90 Jews were murdered.

After the pogrom was over, the Nazis continued with severe anti-Jewish measures. The aryanization process of seizing Jewish property was intensified; the Jewish community was forced to pay a fine of one billion reichsmarks, ostensibly as a payback for the death of vom Rath; and the Germans set up a Central Office for Jewish Emigration (Zentralstelle fuer Juedische Auswanderung) to "encourage" the Jews to leave the country.

Station 5:**The Way into the Great War and the Holocaust**

a) Before Adolf Hitler unleashed the Second World War he addressed the coordinated German Reichstag (parliament) on the 30th of January 1939. In his speech the German dictator gave a lecture on the causes for a potentially upcoming World War. Check the text and discuss the validity (truth) of his statements.

b) In 1935 there were 79 mio. inhabitants living in Germany. 500.000 of them were Jewish. Evaluate the Nazi-Propaganda which said the Jews are a menace to the German society.

**Extract from the Speech by Hitler, January 30, 1939**

...In connection with the Jewish question I have this to say: It is a shameful spectacle to see how the whole democratic world is oozing sympathy for the poor tormented Jewish people, but remains hard-hearted and obdurate when it comes to helping them which is surely, in view of its attitude, an obvious duty.

One thing I should like to say on this day which may be memorable for others as well as for us Germans: In the course of my life I have very often been a prophet, and have usually been ridiculed for it. During the time of my struggle for power it was in the first instance the Jewish race which only received my prophecies with laughter when I said that I would one day take over the leadership of the State, and with it that of the whole nation, and that I would then among many other things settle the Jewish problem. Their laughter was uproarious, but I think that for some time now they have been laughing on the other side of their face. Today I will once more be a prophet: If the international Jewish financiers in and outside Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more into a world war, then the result will not be the Bolshevization of the earth, and thus the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe!

Module (1)- expected answers

Station 1:

- a) Racism, anti-Semitism ("superiority of the Aryans), (perverted) Social Darwinism (necessity of permanent struggle for survival), blood and soil-policy, NS-community (based on racial aspects), leadership principle, Jewish capitalism caused defeat of Germany in WW I

Nazi-policy was totally based on ideology, Jews were not accepted as citizens and members of the NS-Volksgemeinschaft and were even seen as enemies, war was considered to be the normal means of politics, idea that Aryan have to fight permanently, Judaism was connected to the Bolshevik movement

- b) Jewish companionship with the Bolsheviks and capitalism, the misrepresented person is shown like an enemy, he seems to be greedy for money
- c) Hitler demands the Lebensraum, he wants to conquer huge areas in the East (Czech Republic, Poland, Soviet Union) and kill the Jews

Station 2:

The photo shows a SA-soldier in front of a Jewish shop; signs on the window (written by German Nazis) demand not to buy anything in Jewish shops and ask the Germans to defend themselves against the so called Jewish threat

Anti-Jewish actions: Boycott of Jewish shops, violence against Jews and their property (no help for the Jews by police), Jewish people were excluded from the civil service

Station 3:

- a) Denial of all civilian rights (=property rights) and human rights for all Jewish people; classification of people into Aryan and non-Aryan; prohibition of sexual intercourse between Jews and so called Aryans
- b) Discrimination in job, relationships and marriages, possible attacks by Aryans were not inquired by the police, ...
- c) Protection was only guaranteed for so called Aryans, Jews had been forced to live like lazars

Station 4:

- a) A lot of windows had been smashed by the Nazi-mob; H. Grynszpan murdered the ambassador E.v. Rath; afterwards J. Goebbels gave the order to agitate against the Jewish people of Germany
- rioting erupted
 - Jewish shops were destroyed
 - synagogues and homes were burned down and looted
 - 30.000 Jews arrested and sent to concentration camps
 - 90 Jews murdered
 - Jewish communities were forced to pay for the damage
- b) This was the first large scale physical attack against Jewish people in Germany. It was organized by prominent Nazi leaders like Goebbels.

Station 5:

a)

- Jewish people laughed at Hitler when he stated that he will be leader of the German nation
- Jewish people (capitalists/ Bolsheviks) caused WW I
- all Jews will be killed if they start a new world war
- the statements are all lies

b) Jews had been only a little percentage of the German population, moreover the Jews had been deeply rooted in German society for several centuries and they were loyal citizens.