Power and Persuasion

How the Nazi regime gained support and suppressed opposition

SS24.HOS.5 "Explain how the Nazi Party grew into a mass movement that gained and maintained power in Germany through totalitarian means from 1933 to 1945 under the leadership of Adolf Hitler.* 5a Describe how the Nazis utilized various forms of..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the passage. Underline two reasons people supported the Nazis, circle two ways the regime spread its ideas, and number two ways it used fear to keep power.

How Nazi Rule Took Hold

1. During the Great Depression, millions of Germans faced job loss and uncertainty. The Nazi Party promised work, national strength, and an end to political conflict. Its message attracted some voters who feared communism or resented the Treaty of Versailles. Others embraced its racist claim that Germans belonged to a superior racial community. Nazi organizers used rallies and local party groups to build support before Adolf Hitler became chancellor in January 1933. After the Reichstag fire, emergency decrees restricted civil liberties. The Enabling Act then let Hitler's government make laws without parliament's approval, turning electoral gains into dictatorship.

2. Once in power, the Nazis controlled newspapers, radio, and film, presenting Hitler as Germany's savior. Schools changed textbooks to teach Nazi racial ideas; the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls trained young people to obey and serve the regime. Propaganda drew on existing antisemitic prejudice, falsely blaming Jews for Germany's problems and encouraging their exclusion. For the 1936 Berlin Olympics, officials hid some antisemitic signs and presented Germany as peaceful and modern. Nazi leaders hoped sporting success would support their racist claims, but Black American runner Jesse Owens won four gold medals, contradicting claims that athletes classified as "Aryan" were naturally superior.

3. Propaganda did not persuade everyone. The Schutzstaffel (SS) ran concentration camps, where political opponents and others faced imprisonment and abuse. The Gestapo, the secret state police, investigated suspected opponents and used informants, denunciations, and arrests to disrupt resistance. In occupied territories, SS units helped carry out mass murder, including the killing of Jews, while German police forces hunted people who resisted Nazi rule. Neighbors could be afraid to speak openly because a denunciation might lead to questioning or detention. Even people who doubted Nazi claims had reasons to stay silent, while supporters could join rallies and party organizations.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did the Nazi Party's message attract some Germans before Hitler became chancellor? Explain two reasons from the passage.

2. How did schools and youth programs help the Nazis spread their ideas and encourage the exclusion of Jews?

3. What image did the Nazis try to create at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, and how did Jesse Owens's performance challenge their claims?

4. How did the SS and Gestapo use different methods to break resistance and create fear in Germany and occupied territories?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one museum label of 75 to 100 words responding to this claim: “Nazi rule lasted only because Germans feared the police.” Use details about voluntary support, propaganda, and the SS or Gestapo to explain how these forces worked together.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the passage. Underline two reasons people supported the Nazis, circle two ways the regime spread its ideas, and number two ways it used fear to keep power. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did the Nazi Party's message attract some Germans before Hitler became chancellor? Explain two reasons from the passage.	**Some people wanted work and national strength during the Depression. Others feared communism, resented the Treaty of Versailles, or accepted Nazi racism.**
2	How did schools and youth programs help the Nazis spread their ideas and encourage the exclusion of Jews?	**Textbooks taught Nazi racial ideas, while youth programs trained children to obey the regime. These efforts reinforced propaganda that falsely blamed Jews for Germany's problems.**
3	What image did the Nazis try to create at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, and how did Jesse Owens's performance challenge their claims?	**Officials presented Germany as peaceful and modern while hoping the Games would support Nazi racial claims. Owens's four gold medals contradicted claims of natural "Aryan" athletic superiority.**
4	How did the SS and Gestapo use different methods to break resistance and create fear in Germany and occupied territories?	**The SS ran concentration camps and helped carry out mass murder in occupied territories. The Gestapo used informants, denunciations, and arrests to investigate and disrupt opposition.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The claim is incomplete. Before Hitler became chancellor, Nazi promises of work and national strength attracted people facing hardship, while racism appealed to others. Once in power, schools and youth groups spread Nazi ideas. The Berlin Olympics helped the regime project a peaceful image abroad, although Jesse Owens's four gold medals challenged its racial claims. Fear also mattered: the Gestapo used denunciations to find opponents, and the SS imprisoned people in concentration camps. Support and propaganda drew some people toward the regime, while violence made disagreement dangerous.

Accept other passage-based explanations of Nazi appeal, propaganda, and coercion. Strong museum labels explain how these methods reinforced one another rather than simply listing them.