

National Socialist Ideology and persecution of minorities

Racial ideology:

Aryan-masterrace

- national Socialists believed, people could be divided in races
- Germans = superior master race → Aryans
- fair skin, blond hair, fittest (in Germany and northern Europe)
- women should give birth to Aryan children → state introduced 'Ehstandsdarlehen'
- 1000 Mark for every married couple
- bottom of racist categories: Jews, Sinti and Roma, Slavs, Africans
- to keep race clean → 'Volksgemeinschaft' with same aims and (only pure Aryans)
- minorities and handicapped people → persecuted, arrested, (excluded from the 'VG')

Lebensraum-ideology:

- central foreign policy
- German Aryans needed Lebensraum to expand and develop
- meant: breaking Treaty of Versailles to gain former German territories (Austria, Sudetenland and further more expansion to Poland and Russia)
- get materials to become a world power again
- Slav population = slave labour worker
- Lebensraum → fully Aryan → expelling all Jews from Germany (later Europe)
- 1941 more radical: Jews and minorities should be killed (plan)

Antisemitism and hate against minorities:

- Jews seen as different → creepy, corrupt liars
- after Nazis gained power → life hard for Jews (no systematic violence yet, but boycotts of Jewish shops since 01.04.1933 → beginning of a large scale persecution)
- Nuremberg laws: excluded Jews from the 'VG' and made them second class citizens
- Jews no longer allowed to work as lawyers, doctors, journalists
- migration difficult → one third able to leave Germany
- systematic violence since 1938 after the 'Reichspogromnacht'
- similar to the 'Euthanasia'

Euthanasia:

- secret programme to eliminate sick and handicapped (since September 1st 1939)
- doctors had right to kill incurably ill ones
- children and babies should starve
- adults outside of hospitals → brought to centres and gassed in chambers
- secret exposed by mistakes
- kids called busses 'killing crates' and citizens saw thick smoke from burning corpses
- official ending in 1941, but still going on in smaller numbers

To make these eliminations work, tactics were needed.

Persecution and Deportation:

SA-Troops and the 'Reichspogromnacht':

- SA = Sturmabteilung (Stormtroops)
- strong-arm men of the NSDAP
- organized boycotts and eliminated opponents by spreading violence and fear
- later replaced by the SS
- first years → boycotts of Jewish shops
- November 7th of 1938 a Jew killed a German diplomat in Paris
- National Socialists used it as excuse for attack on Jewish shops, houses and synagogues
- members of SS and HJ (Hitler Youth) smashed windows, plundered houses, burned 1400 synagogues
- 26000 Jewish men were arrested or sent to concentration camps
- caused, that many Jews sold their business and migrated
- ALSO some measures were taken, such as
- Jews had to sell their houses
- state took over their businesses
- not allowed to own cars, bicycles, telephones or radios

Ghettos and concentration camps:

- from 1941 deportation notices to Jews
- gathered at train stations, were sent somewhere without information
- ending up in ghettos (mostly in Poland) (secured/fenced areas in city boroughs)
- living conditions terrible (starvation rate high, overcrowded)
- when Ghettos full → 'final solution' → all Jews should be killed!
- means: Wehrmacht advances: Jews get killed instantly
- Extermination camps were built to kill Jews (1943 all Ghettos dissolved)
- Ghettos were cleared
- largest extermination camp was Auschwitz, which included concentration-, extermination- and worker-camps
- also regime-opponents, POWs, war-opponents, other minorities (Sinti and Roma, etc...)

Sources:

Spotlight on history 2015
National Socialism 2011