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Working Together

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not choose to act alone but rather chose twelve apostles to be with him, taught and empowered them, to preach the gospel to all nations.

In other words, our Lord did not act alone but rather chose to form a stable group (a college), each endowed with their own set of gifts, to make him known and loved
(*Lumen Gentium* 11).

3

Working Together

Adolf Hitler could not have acted alone. Instead, his rise to power and the atrocities of the Nazi regime, including the Holocaust, required a team – individuals and institutions in Germany and across Europe.

Hitler may have been the supreme authority and ideological leader (symbol), but his vision of a pure Aryan race required a complex network of collaborators.

4

Heinrich Himmler

- The man with the cruel little eyes was one of the vilest men in human history.
- He is mild-mannered and an intellectual.
- Few names are more associated with Nazi atrocities than Heinrich Himmler.
- He is as close as any human being has been to true evil.



5

Heinrich Himmler

- He is from a traditional middle class family brought up with traditional German rural values.
- He loves nature, community, tradition, etc.
- He is very interested in “blood and soil” – a rallying cry for German ethnic identity and racial purity, often to the exclusion of minorities.
- He is a rural conservative – traditional moral values.



6

Heinrich Himmler

- Germany's cities are expanding and in his mind, pose a moral threat to traditional moral values.
- They are the product of capitalism, which is the result of the Jews. They ran 80% of the department stores.
- The Jews lived in cities and worked in businesses.
- The Jews are linked to capitalism and modernity – all the things the National Socialists oppose.



7

Heinrich Himmler

- In 1922, Himmler works as an assistant clerk in a fertilizer factory. He is poor, unattractive, and bitter.
- His social life revolves around his parents and their friends.
- He is as far from the ideal of an Aryan specimen as you can get. He looks for meaning and direction.
- Key: We are created for a purpose – to participate in something bigger than ourselves in a meaningful way.



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Heinrich Himmler

- He encounters a small political party in Munich – National Socialist German Workers Party or Nazi Party. It opposes German capitalism and promises to take Germany back to traditional moral values.
- He signs up for the paramilitary organization (SA) or brownshirts. However, he is wimpy.
- **Key:** Himmler is not tough, but clever and zealous.
- He graduates with a small, elite unit within the SA formed in 1925 as Hitler's personal bodyguard (*Schutzstaffel* - SS).



9

Heinrich Himmler

- Himmler takes charge of the SS in 1929 when it has about 280 officers. He will use his extraordinary organizational skills to grow the SS into an elite paramilitary force based on strict ideology, discipline, and Nazi racial ideology.
 - **1933:** 50,000
 - **1939:** 250,000
 - **1944:** 800,000



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Heinrich Himmler

- Himmler takes what he learned from the Technical University Munich on breeding and evolution of plants and animals and applies it in a social-political context.
- To join the SS required a rigorous background – tall, blond hair and blue eyes – they were to embody the Aryan heritage and be their champions.
- They were to be “super breed” which included their wives (breeder animals).
- The SS were a ”genetic snobbery”
 - Best mental and physical health



12

Heinrich Himmler

- The SS were modeled on the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), which was the elite guard of the Catholic Church in terms of intellectual formation, obedience to superiors, discipline, and a willingness to sacrifice.
- They were taught that they were the “sons of light” in a fight against the power of darkness.
- These model guardians of the Nazi party swore an oath of total obedience to Adolf Hitler, which Himmler administered.
- The SS was not a place for men with soft hearts
 - **Emblem:** Skull with loaded guns



13

Heinrich Himmler

- The SS have two aspects:
 - Pragmatism in running the death camps
 - Quasi-religious mysticism – a religion of Aryanism – reawaken German warlike spirit and festivals before soft Christianity and Jews
- Himmler takes over Gestapo (secret police) in 1934 and consolidates power over all German police forces in 1936.
- By late 1930s, Himmler becomes second most powerful man in the Nazi regime – head of the gestapo, police, SS, and SD (intelligence and security agency of the Nazi party). Himmler almost makes himself bullet proof.

14

Heinrich Himmler

Himmler's goal is to turn back the clock – peasants working the land, bringing masses back to the countryside; to create a racial segregated and racially pure Germany to make it stronger.

He has terrifying plans of changing the racial landscape of Europe. The goal is to reunite the German people into a greater Reich (empire/realm).

To do so, the Germans will need Lebensraum (“living space”) or territorial expansion and conquest to acquire resources and land for the German people.

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Joseph Goebbels

- He is the master propagandist for the Nazi party.
- "He fought with words, not guns. He used psychology, not tanks to defeat his enemy."
- Goebbels studied philosophy where he learned rhetoric, dramatic structure, and psychological manipulation.
- He was also *very clever*. For example, he shipped cheap radio equipment, people's receivers, to the German people.



16

Joseph Goebbels

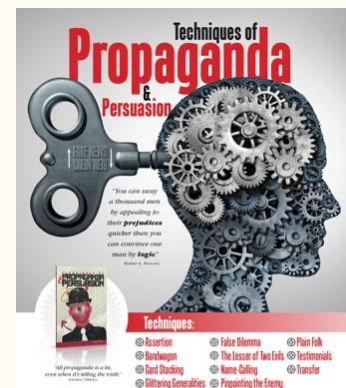
- Goebbels helped develop Hitler's tactics how to give persuasive speeches.
- “My Fuhrer, we must appeal to people's emotions, not their intellect because people are driven by their emotion and not logic, translate their complex ideas into simple words and use your body language.”
- Goebbels was a master manipulator. He convinced millions of Germans to become faithful Nazis.
- Reich Minister of Propaganda from 1933 to 1945.



17

Joseph Goebbels

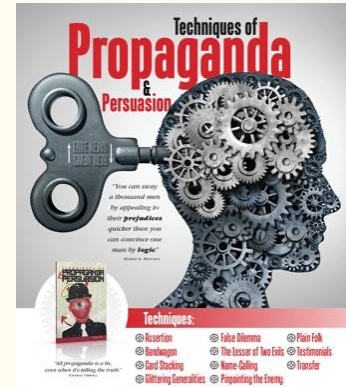
- **Used new techniques** such as radio and film to disseminate Nazi propaganda to the Masses. One of the most famous films was *Triumph of the Will* (1934).
- **Repetition of lies:** Often repeated a lie so often that the public would eventually believe it.
- **Target Specific Groups:** Vilify certain groups such as Jews and Slaves (*Untermensch*) as well as form impressionable groups with Nazi ideology (Hitler Youth – met on Sunday mornings!).



18

Joseph Goebbels

- **Control Information:** Suppress dissent and control information (e.g., burning books), recognizing that the truth is a threat to lies and the state itself.
- **Widespread Media Control:** Influence newspapers, books, posters, photography, and even fine art as a way to spread Nazi propaganda.
- **Spin Events:** Turn negative events into positive ones – Stalingrad becomes a great *sacrifice* for Germany.
- **Total War:** Conscript children, older men, women for war; eliminate all non-essential business for war.



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Joseph Goebbels



Hitler Youth



German League of Girls

20

Joseph Goebbels

- Goebbels was a master at demonizing the Jews.
- He presented them as subhuman (filmed them with sunken faces, wearing rags, and generally dirty and sick). In reality, the Jewish people suffered from German inhumane living conditions. They were animals choosing to live that way.
- The Jews were a threat, a parasite, a cancer, an enemy of the German people and more broadly, the human race.



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Joseph Goebbels

Speaking about the plight of the Jews in concentration camps, Goebbels said, “It may be barbaric, but they truly deserve it.”

– Joseph Goebbels

22

Joseph Goebbels

- Joseph Goebbels was "all in" in embodying and promoting the Nazi ideology.
- He descended the entire German country into madness by declaring total war - all ready to die for the motherland.
- After Hitler killed himself, he and his wife, Magda, poisoned their six children before ending their lives as well.



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Reinhard Heydrich

- To his friends, he was the blonde beast. To his enemies, he was the hangman or the Butcher of Prague.
- To the men he devoted his life to, he was the man with the iron heart.
- Reinhard Heydrich is the poster child for the ideal Aryan man! He was 6'3", blonde hair, and golden eyes.



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Reinhard Heydrich

- Reinhard was raised in a Catholic family. His parents were devout Catholics.
- Note that the following were raised in Catholic settings:
 - **Adolf Hitler** (attended monastery school)
 - **Heinrich Himmler** (devout Catholics)
 - **Joseph Goebbels** (parents wanted him to become a priest)



25

Reinhard Heydrich

- He left the Catholic Church in 1936. Himmler was encouraging SS members to leave the Church as they developed a Germanic religion (neo-paganism rooted in ancestor worship and pure blood lines)
- He is a man of mystery – cultured boy who loved classical music (Wagner) who grew up to be a “genocidal maniac.” He became one of history’s most brutal killers.



26

Reinhard Heydrich

- Under his watch, the famous *Einsatzgruppen* were formed. There were about 3,000 personnel responsible for one million murders.
- This was the “mobile death squad” responsible for mass murders primarily by shooting. One-third of Jews died by mass shootings.
- They followed the German army into occupied territories, systematically killing Jewish people, Roma, Soviet officials, and others considered enemies of the Nazi regime.



27

Reinhard Heydrich

- Many of the Nazi atrocities can be traced back to Heydrich. In 1936, the SD (intelligence/security agency), criminal police, and gestapo merged into a single unit and given to Heydrich – Reich Security Main Office (1939).
- Summoned Nazi leaders to Berlin suburb of Wannsee for a conference to solve the “Jewish question.”



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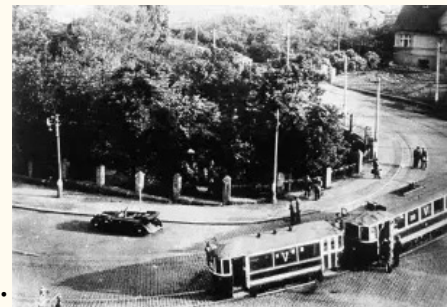
Reinhard Heydrich

Nazi Organization	Description
SA	First Nazi paramilitary force known as the "brown force." Intimidated and attacked political opponents. After the Night of the Long Knives in 1934, the SS replaced the SA.
SS	The elite guard and personal bodyguard unit of Adolf Hitler. It became the most powerful security and police force of Nazi Germany, overseeing the Gestapo, SD, and the concentration and extermination camps.
SD	The intelligence-gathering agency of the SS. Their purpose was to gather information on enemies of the Nazi regime, including political opponents, Jews, and other groups.
Gestapo	Nazi Germany's secret police, which transferred control to the SS in 1936. They operated outside the law, using brutal methods to suppress dissent and arrest political opponents and other enemies of the state.

29

Reinhard Heydrich

- Operation Anthropoid (resembling a human) was the plan to assassinate Heydrich.
- Two Czechoslovakia assassins tried to assassinate Heydrich on a hairpin corner.
- Heydrich was mortally wounded from a bomb thrown under the car. He died eight days later.
- Hitler demanded the heads of 10,000 Czechs.



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Reinhard Heydrich

Heydrich was the only high-ranking Nazi to be assassinated in the whole of WWII. Naturally, the Nazis made him a martyr in a calculated political display.

He was the man who outlined the blueprint for the holocaust.

Of the 6 million Jews killed, 1.7 killed in Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka under the operation named Operation Reinhard.



31

Hermann Göring

- One of the most eccentric officers in the Nazi Regime.
- He moved from being a famous WWI combat pilot, a national hero to being reviled as a monster with the blood of millions on his hands by the time of his death less than 30 years later.
- His life was one of soaring highs and crashing lows.



32

Hermann Göring

- He was wounded in his thigh in the 1923 Beer Hall Putsch. The wound became badly infected and given morphine in Austria (lifelong addiction).
- Helped execute the Knight of the Long Knives in 1934 with great skills and no moral scruples.
- Built up the Airforce (*Luftwaffe*) in secret to prepare for WWII. For Göring, politics was about personal power and gaining enormous wealth.



33

Hermann Göring

- In 1937, he became addicted to drugs again. His drug abuse compounded his weaknesses as a military leader.
- He tended to overestimate his *Luftwaffe's* ability and tended to retreat from reality and not face bad news.
- He underestimated Britain's resolve in the Battle of Britain and overestimated his ability to save the 6th Army (*Wehrmacht*) in the Battle of Stalingrad.



34

Hermann Göring

- Toward the end of the war, Göring lost Hitler's trust and plunged to new lows.
- Spent most of his time at Carinhall collecting works of art, hunting, and consuming ever greater quantities of drugs.
- At the Nuremburg trials, Göring enjoyed the limelight and argued that he did not want the war and did not know about the Holocaust. He was found guilty and took his life by a cyanide capsule.



- Told psychologists in 50 years there would be statues of him in every town.

35

Rudolf Hess

- Possibly the strangest man in the Nazi inner circle. He becomes the deputy Führer of the Nazi Party.
- Helped write and edit *Mein Kampf* and organized and presented Hitler to the crowds.
- His office drafted the Nuremburg laws that ultimately led to the deportation of the Jews to concentration camps.



36

Rudolf Hess

- By 1941, he becomes third in line behind Hitler and Goring.
- Feeling squeezed out of Hitler's inner circle, boarded a plane to Scotland to speak with the Duke of Hamilton to vie for peace.
- Plane crashes and Hess is arrested. Kept as a prisoner for remainder of the war.



37

Rudolf Hess

- Tries to kill himself twice by throwing himself over a banister (1942) and then with a bread knife (1945).
- Tried at Nuremberg and found guilty and sentenced to life in prison at Spandau Prison in Berlin.
- Built to house 600 prisoners, Hess would spend over 40 years in the prison, eventually the lone prisoner. Killed himself at age 93 in 1987 with a lamp cord.



38

Rudolf Hess

Rudolf Hess was proud of his work and loyalty to Germany as a German and to the Fuhrer.

“I do not regret anything. If I were to begin all over again, I would act just as I have acted, even if I knew in the end I should meet a fiery death at the stake.”

-Rudolf Hess

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Other Notable Nazis



Albert Speer

Hitler's Chief Architect
Minister of Armaments



Josef Mengele

“Angel of Death”
Experimented on twins



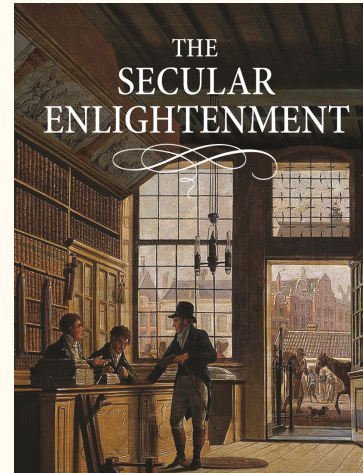
Adolf Eichmann

Major Organizer of Holocaust
Managed logistics of
mass deportation

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Catholic Reflections

- Adolf Hitler and the Nazis did not come out of nowhere. The Third Reich arose out of the seedbed of Age of Enlightenment, the 17th and 18th century movement that attempted to structure human society on reason, science, and individualism apart from God.
- Pope John Paul II said of the Enlightenment: *The entire drama of salvation history had disappeared as far as the Enlightenment was concerned. Man remained alone: Alone as creator of his own history and his own civilization; alone as one who decides what is good and what is bad; as one who would exist and operate even if there were no God.* (Memory and Identity)



41

Catholic Reflection

- **Marxists:** The Bolsheviks attempted create a utopian society with no class distinctions, no private property, all equal. The perfect society is a classless society with common ownership under a one-party rule. The perfect world would simply emerge once inequalities of the social system were eliminated.
- **Fascists:** Mussolini and the Nazis that followed, attempted to build the perfect society with pure bloodlines of an Aryan master race combined with Great German Nationalism or imperialism. The goal was to create a purified Great German Empire far beyond the borders of the German nation. The perfect society would come about when the right people were ordering things. Christianity needed to be replaced by ideology (religion) of nationalism.

42

Catholic Reflection

- Hitler and the Nazis were taken by Fredrich Nietzsche's view that the great man, the noble man, is not bound by any transcendent value or morals. Instead, the great man creates them out of his own greatness.
- Remember that Nietzsche advocated for the removal of God ("God is dead") and all religious belief from society. We create our own meaning and values. He was drawing out the Enlightenment position to its logical conclusion.
- If there is no God, as the Enlighteners effectively said, then it is up to *us* create the world. For the Nazis, the only way to do this was through aggressive violence.

43

Catholic Reflection

- The Nazis were involved in building a new world, on the ashes of Christianity. For the Nazis, the Third Reich was the grand historical design.
 - The first had been the **Roman Empire**, which had lasted for 1,000 years (Roman Republic 509 BC – Roman Empire demise in AD 476).
 - The second was the **Holy Roman Empire**, which had lasted for 1,000 years (962 – 1806).
 - The Third Reich was to be the great and final German Reich, that would also last a thousand years, and be more glorious than the first two.

44

Catholic Reflection

- In this great and final German Reich, the “Untermensch” (“subhuman”) would be done away with, leaving the more sophisticated and noble people left. Hence, the Nazi Youth displayed very attractive, young, and happy people living a noble life.
- As we know, the Nazis attempted to exterminate the Jews. They went to extraordinary lengths to do this secretly, not because they were embarrassed or ashamed but rather because the world would not understand.
- When they completed their task, the world would be amazed and congratulate them for their noble work in creating a perfect society.

45

Catholic Reflection

- The Nazis simply crystallized the prevailing thought that a utopian society could be built without God, wherein for them, the perfect society was pure bloodlines of an Aryan master race combined with Great German Nationalism or imperialism. The goal was to create a Great German Empire far beyond the borders of the German nation. A purified Great Germany is the perfect society.
- As we will see, while the Nazis and the Communists seemed far apart ideologically, they ended up being very similar in creating a utopian society – Nazis (Nationalism – Blood and Soil) and Soviets (classless society ruled by the Communists (Bolsheviks). Devoid of God, both evil ideologies turned on human beings and caused unimaginable suffering and the death of millions.

46

Catholic Reflection

- Creating a utopian society requires savviness of many talented individuals, buying into the belief system, and working together to realize the ideology's high ideals.
- **Vladimir Lenin**: "Give me just one generation of youth, and I'll transform the whole world." For Lenin and later Hitler, total submission and obedience were critical.
- **Jesus Christ**: In choosing 12 Apostles, even though quite flawed, I will redeem and transform the fallen and broken world through freedom and self-sacrificial love.
- **Key**: Whereas the Nazi party's tactics used fear, intimidation, control, and relied heavily upon lies, Jesus Christ's tactics via His Church are humility, self-sacrificial love, generosity, and truth.

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Future Classes

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| ● Hitler's Expansion into Western Territory | October 7 |
| ● The Eastern Front Battles | October 21 |
| ● The Jewish Question | November 4 |
| ● The Holocaust | November 18 |
| ● D-Day & the Atomic Bomb | December 2 |
| ● Ending the War & Lessons Learned | December 9 |

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