

### S3, Hitler and the Third Reich

By Scott Young [S3]

As S3 have been studying Hitler and the Third Reich, we went to Germany to visit Munich and Nuremberg in May. Unfortunately, courtesy of BA strikes, we had to travel to Heathrow by bus, leaving at 2.15 am, before catching a plane to Munich.

Dachau was the first and most memorable of our trips. We went through the gates with the misleading inscription “Arbeit macht frei” – “Work makes you free”. Through the gates we entered the roll call area. This was a huge open square and allowed over 50,000 prisoners to be registered. Prisoners had to stand for hours in this square and were not allowed to speak or help the ill. Then we went into the museum which was both factual and disturbing. It told us Dachau was set up on 22 March 1933 and was a model camp for other concentration camps. Over its 12 year existence it held around 200,000 prisoners. Up until 1938, it was mainly German political prisoners who were held there, and after 1938 it began to hold a significant number of Jewish prisoners. Different types of prisoners were distinguished by various triangular badges on their prison clothing. The museum also explained the horrific conditions prisoners faced, and the disgusting medical experiments that were inflicted on the unfortunate ones. Nazi scientists wanted to see how hypothermia affected the body, and which organs were affected first. They also wanted to find out how long the body could survive whilst only drinking salt water. These prisoners got little more respect than rats. The most shocking thing was the crematorium and gas chambers. Standing two feet away from giant ovens whose purpose was to incinerate the bodies of executed prisoners makes you think how cruel the human race can be, especially only 70 years ago. Dachau was liberated on 29 April 1945 by the 42<sup>nd</sup> Rainbow division and other American liberators.

After we left Dachau it was on to Munich. We were allowed a little free time and then we went on a guided walking tour of Hitler’s Munich. We learned Munich was rebuilt after the war to look as it did before the allied bombings. We then saw the first plaque to the victims of Nazi-Socialism in the town hall in Munich. After that, we walked to one of the beer halls where Hitler made speeches. We saw various other sites of historic interest, such as the House of Art and Hitler’s HQ buildings. We also saw the eternal flame which commemorated the deaths of Jewish victims. Our action-packed day ended with dinner and then a quiz.

The next day we went to Nuremberg which is a nice medieval town, mainly built of sandstone, 100 miles from Munich. We saw the castle, which was built in 1050, and then walked through the centre of Nuremberg where there was a market and traditional Bavarian restaurants. From one of these restaurants I had the most

delicious lunch ever, “drei um veckla” (“three to go”). This is three sausages grilled, then put in a roll. Delicious! And at only two Euros a real bargain.

After our lunch it was on to the Nuremberg Rally Grounds. As Nuremberg was the capital of the Holy Roman Empire, Hitler felt this was a good place to hold rallies as the town had historic ties. These rallies lasted eight days and the public had the opportunity to purchase tickets and attend the events, which were similar to modern festivals, with alcohol and music.

However, the Nazis were not always allowed to have their rallies at Nuremberg as at the 1927 Rally there was violence and two people died. The Nazis were then forbidden to have rallies in Nuremberg. The Nazis did not return to the rally grounds until 1932, just before Hitler became Chancellor in January 1933.

The rally grounds themselves were massive and allowed 100000 people to stand and witness Hitler’s speeches. Hitler would arrive late to hold tension and then come down the steps and stand and address the crowds. There were massive spotlights to make a “cathedral of light”, Wagnerian music, and huge banners with swastikas.

After we had seen the rally grounds we went round the Museum of Fascination and Terror. This explained the rise of Nazism and the design of the rally grounds whose chief architect was Albert Speer. There was also footage of the Nuremberg War trials which took place in 1945.

On the morning of our last day we visited a most impressive palace in Munich. Then after another sausage lunch, we went to the airport and made the long journey back home by plane and bus.

I would like to thank, on behalf of our group, the teachers who accompanied us on our trip. Mr Bagnall, Mrs Nobbs, Mrs Singerman, Dr Gaffney, Mrs Stewart and Miss Jakobsen.