

The Nazis: A Warning From History

Episode 4 - The Wild East

Nearly one in five Poles died in World War II. (4:5)
They suffered brutal acts of ethnic cleansing by the Nazis.

Pictures, film and sounds of execution. (1:10)

One of the chief architects of the ethnic cleansing of Poland was a Nazi named Arthur Greiser. At the end of the war, when Greiser was charged with war crimes, he claimed that he too was a victim of Hitler's policies, and that he was being used as a scapegoat. He insisted he wasn't at fault because he was only following orders. Greiser lied. In reality, he had great independence and power over his section of Poland.

This episode is the story of the first twenty months of Nazi occupation, when they tried to turn Poland into a model Nazi state.

title page (3:10)

invasion shots (3:20)

The Nazi invasion of Poland started on September 1, 1939. It was quick and brutal. Within five weeks the Polish army had been crushed.

With this victory, Hitler's popularity soared. Germans loved him because had regained territory they had lost after the peace treaty of World War I. For the German people, Hitler was the man to thank now that Germany was a world superpower. (4:20)

Soon, Hitler's vision for Poland was revealed: a fundamental reordering of the country based on Nazi racial theory. (4:58)

In August 1939, Hitler and Stalin agreed to share Poland between them in a secret part of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Agression Pact.

Germany decided to divide its section into three parts: the largest was located in the southeast, known as the General Government. This was where undesirables were shipped and where much of the Final Solution was carried out.

The northern section, known as Danzig-West Prussia, was run by Albert Forster, and the southwestern section known as the Warthegau was run by Arthur Greiser. These sections were to be ethnically cleansed and incorporated into Germany. Hitler wanted these areas *germanized*, and told Forster and Greiser that "he would ask no questions about their methods".

A crucial part of the germanization was grading the population according to how German they were, based on looks, language and attitude.

One group could be germanized instantly. They were the ethnic Germans that lived in the parts of Poland that had been German before World War I. They welcomed the German army as their saviors - they were happy to be brought back under German control. (6:00)

As for the ordinary population of Poland, they were regarded as being dirty and without any culture whatsoever. (7:30)

The Nazis believed they were racially superior to the Poles. Poles that were not thought German risked being arrested and deported. Poles that were permitted to stay in the Germanized areas were treated as slaves. (7:49)

The Nazis encouraged ethnic Germans to settle old scores with their former neighbors. People were denounced to the Nazis and shot. (8:14)

Greiser strove to make as many Poles as possible suffer by taking away their hope that things might change. (9:15)

In the Nazi kingdom of Poland, the SS could do anything it liked. Public executions were common, and were tortuous and long drawn out. (9:34)

People would say, "the great and glorious Adolf Hitler must be unaware of what his people are up to here, because he would never allow this." (11:03)

Hitler's reaction to a general's complaint about brutality against civilians in Poland was, "One can't fight a war with salvation army methods." (11:20)

Hitler thought that men like Greiser should run their domains as they saw fit, and that meant that they all ran them differently. Forster did not believe completely in Nazi racial theory. To get the germanization done more quickly, he simply declared large groups of Poles to be ethnically German without bothering to check. Greiser was furious because he took the ethnic cleansing much more seriously, and was very stringent in his decision-making about who was German and who wasn't. He complained to the head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, that it looked like Forster was doing a better job when in fact he was being quite sloppy. (11:50)

Himmler, like Greiser, was fanatical about race. He believed, "that just one drop of false blood that comes into an individual's veins can never be removed". (15:05)

Greiser had another problem. In the autumn of 1939, hundreds of thousands of ethnic Germans started to arrive in Nazi-controlled Poland. Greiser had to find homes for most of these in his Warthegau. (16:21)

The ethnic Germans that came into the Warthegau arrived from all over Soviet-controlled Europe (as part of the deal between Hitler and Stalin). At first they were crowded into transit camps with terribly crowded, unsanitary conditions. Eventually, they were given homes of Poles that had been deported to the General Government, and were allowed to take stores and restaurants from any Pole that was still there.

Germans deported Poles in a scary, chaotic way forcing them into the back of trucks without telling them where they were going, without their possessions, and not necessarily with their families.

The Nazis distributed the property they had stolen from the Poles to the incoming ethnic Germans. (22:25)

To evict people from a village, Nazis screamed, kicked, beat, and loaded people onto carts in the middle of the night.

In Greiser's Warthegau, in little over a year, 700,000 people were evicted from their homes. (28:46)

The "racial dustbin" to the east, the General Government, was run by Nazi Hans Frank. (29:38)

Transportation to the General Government was terrible - it was crowded, dark and dirty. People were hungry and they had nothing to eat. It was dark, with only one little window for air, and people were screaming. The trip took eight to ten days. (29:49)

People were thrown from the train, more than fifteen-thousand per month, and no one cared about them. There was no food or shelter for them. (30:48)

Hans Frank was so concerned about how he appeared to other people that he was mockingly called, the "king of Poland". (32:40)

Poland continued to be the scene of terrible upheaval, and even the ethnic Germans did not escape cruel treatment. Some were even sent to concentration camps. (35:05)

The group that suffered the most at the hands of the Nazis in Poland was the Jews, over three million. In the first months of the occupation, Nazis gathered together Polish Jews and forced them into ghettos within the major towns. The Nazis had not yet decided what the final fate of the Jews would be. (37:25)

The biggest ghetto in Arthur Greiser's district was in the city of Lodz. In the spring of 1940, 140,000 Polish Jews were ordered to congregate in a ghetto area of less than two square miles. (38:13)

People waited and waited to be given a room to live in as their family lived in the crowded streets. *(a flat is an apartment)*

Within weeks of the ghetto being opened, the Nazis sealed it, imprisoning the Jews behind barbed wire. In order to escape starvation, the Jewish people had to buy food at inflated prices, either from the Nazis or the locals outside the ghetto. (39:30)

The food rations were starvation rations. The people in the ghetto first bought food with money, when that ran out they sold jewelry, and when they had nothing left they could sell, they began to starve. (41:31)

Hans Bleibow was the Nazi director of the Lodz ghetto. He realized he could do anything he wanted with impunity. He made himself rich off of the desperation of the Jews. Bleibow wanted to keep it open so he could continue to exploit them. His solution was to turn the ghetto into a slave labor ghetto, making goods that could be exchanged for more food. Arthur Greiser and other Nazi officials became wealthy from Bleibow's bribes and their own exploitation and thievery.

Far from being the victim he claimed he was, Greiser was the Nazi's greatest beneficiary. Far from acting under orders, he interpreted the vague instructions he had been given from Hitler in a way that brought greatest profit to himself. Far from being a scapegoat, he chose to be a thief and a murderer. (46:20)

In the first twenty months of their occupation of Poland, the Nazis had shown they were amongst the cruelest conquerors the world has ever seen. (47:10)

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1. Nearly one in _____ Poles died in World War II.
2. They suffered brutal acts of _____ cleansing by the Nazis.
3. One of the chief architects of the ethnic cleansing of Poland was a Nazi named Arthur Greiser. At the end of the war, when Greiser was charged with war crimes, he claimed that he too was a _____ of Hitler's policies, and that he was being used as a _____. He insisted he wasn't at fault because he was only _____. Greiser _____. In reality, he had great independence and _____ over his section of Poland.
4. This episode is the story of the first _____ months of Nazi occupation, when they tried to turn Poland into a _____ Nazi state.
5. The Nazi invasion of Poland started on _____. It was quick and brutal. Within _____ weeks the Polish army had been crushed.
6. With this victory, Hitler's _____ soared. Germans loved him because he had regained territory they had lost after the peace treaty of World War I. For the German people, Hitler was the man to thank now that Germany was a world _____.
7. Hitler's vision for Poland was revealed: a fundamental reordering of the country based on Nazi _____ theory.
8. In August 1939, Hitler and _____ agreed to share Poland between them in a secret part of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Agression Pact.
9. Germany decided to divide its section into _____ parts: the largest was located in the southeast, known as the General Government. This was where undesirables were shipped and where much of the Final Solution was carried out.
10. The northern section, known as Danzig-West Prussia, was run by Albert Forster, and the southwestern section known as the Warthegau was run by Arthur Greiser. These sections were to be ethnically cleansed and incorporated into Germany. Hitler wanted these areas _____, and told Forster and Greiser that "he would _____ about their methods".
11. A crucial part of the germanization was grading the population according to how German they were, based on _____, _____ and _____.
12. One group could be germanized instantly. They were the ethnic Germans that lived in the parts of Poland that had been German before World War I. They welcomed the German army as their _____; they were happy to be brought back under German control.
13. As for the ordinary population of Poland, they were regarded as being _____, and without any _____ whatsoever.
14. The Nazis believed they were _____ to the Poles. Poles that were not thought German risked being arrested and deported. Poles that were permitted to stay in the germanized areas were treated as _____.
15. The Nazis encouraged ethnic Germans to settle old _____ with their former neighbors. People were denounced to the Nazis and shot.
16. Greiser strove to make as many Poles as possible _____ by taking away their hope that things might change.
17. In the Nazi kingdom of Poland, the _____ could do anything it liked. Public _____ were common, and were tortuous and long drawn out.
18. People would say, "the great and glorious _____ of what his people are up to here, because he would never allow this."
19. Hitler's reaction to a general's complaint about brutality against civilians in Poland was, "One can't fight a war with _____ methods."
20. Hitler thought that men like Greiser should run their domains as they saw fit, and that meant that they all ran them _____. Forster did not believe completely in Nazi racial theory. To get the germanization done more quickly, he simply declared large groups of Poles to be ethnically German without bothering to check. Greiser was furious because he took the ethnic cleansing much more seriously, and was very stringent in his decision-making about who was German and who wasn't. He complained to the head of the SS, Heinrich _____, that it looked like Forster was doing a better job when in fact he was being quite sloppy.

21. Himmler, like Greiser, was fanatical about race. He believed, "that just one drop of false _____ that comes into an individual's veins can never be removed".
22. Greiser had another problem. In the autumn of _____, hundreds of thousands of ethnic Germans started to arrive in Nazi-controlled Poland. Greiser had to find _____ for most of these in his Warthegau territory.
23. The ethnic Germans that came into the Warthegau arrived from all over Soviet-controlled Europe (as part of the deal between Hitler and Stalin). At first they were crowded into _____ camps with terribly crowded, unsanitary conditions. Eventually, they were given homes of Poles that had been deported to the General Government, and were allowed to take stores and restaurants from any Pole that was still there.
24. Germans _____ Poles in a scary, chaotic way forcing them into the back of trucks without telling them where they were going, without their possessions, and not necessarily with their families.
25. The Nazis distributed the property they had stolen from the Poles to the incoming _____.
26. To evict people from a village, Nazis _____, _____, _____, and loaded people onto carts in the middle of the night.
27. In Greiser's Warthegau, in little over a year, _____ people were evicted from their homes.
28. The "racial _____" to the east, the General Government, was run by Nazi Hans Frank.
29. Transportation to the General Government was terrible - it was crowded, dark and dirty. People were hungry and they had nothing to eat. It was dark, with only one little window for air, and people were screaming. The trip took _____ to _____ days.
30. People were thrown off the train, more than _____ per month, and no one cared about them. There was no food or shelter for them.
31. Hans Frank was so concerned about how he appeared to other people that he was mockingly called, the "_____".
32. Poland continued to be the scene of terrible upheaval, and even the ethnic Germans did not escape cruel treatment. Some were even sent to _____.
33. The group that suffered the most at the hands of the Nazis in Poland was the Jews, over _____ million. In the first months of the occupation, Nazis gathered together Polish Jews and forced them into _____ within the major towns. The Nazis had not yet decided what the final fate of the Jews would be.
34. The biggest ghetto in Arthur Greiser's district was in the city of Lodz. In the spring of 1940, _____ Polish Jews were ordered to congregate in a ghetto area of less than _____ square miles.
35. People waited and waited to be given a _____ to live in as their family lived in the crowded streets. (*a flat is an apartment*)
36. Within weeks of the ghetto being opened, the Nazis sealed it, imprisoning the Jews behind _____. In order to escape starvation, the Jewish people had to buy food at inflated prices, either from the Nazis or the locals outside the ghetto.
37. The food rations were _____ rations. The people in the ghetto first bought food with _____, when that ran out they sold _____, and when they had nothing left they could sell, they began to _____.
38. Hans Biebow was the Nazi director of the Lodz ghetto. He realized he could do anything he wanted with impunity. He made himself rich off of the desperation of the Jews. Biebow wanted to keep it open so he could continue to exploit them. His solution was to turn the ghetto into a _____ labor ghetto, making goods that could be exchanged for more food. Arthur Greiser and other Nazi officials became wealthy from Biebow's bribes and their own exploitation and thievery.
39. Far from being the victim he claimed he was, Greiser was the Nazi's greatest beneficiary. Far from acting under orders, he _____ the vague instructions he had been given from Hitler in a way that brought greatest _____ to himself. Far from being a _____, he chose to be a thief and a murderer.
40. In the first twenty months of their occupation of Poland, the Nazis had shown they were amongst the _____ conquerors the world has ever seen.

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