The Third Reich is associated with some of the most oppressive regimes in history. Under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, the Nazi Party was responsible for inciting World War II, as well as committing one of the most atrocious genocides known to man. The NSDAP (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei) spread antisemitic and radically nationalist ideals throughout Europe, not just Germany. One of the biggest questions regarding the time is how a nation known for philosophers, writers, and artists allow a party as vile as the Nazis come to power?

The purpose of this essay is to clarify how the Third Reich was ever possible. We’ll examine the global pressures that Germany was under that allowed radical nationalism to grow, the fear tactics that Hitler used to convince gather German support to his cause, and the historical significance of the few German citizens who dared to stand against the NSDAP. By understanding the historical background surrounding Hitler’s rise to power, we can better understand how rapidly fear and propaganda can change a nation.