Hitler and the Rise of Nazi Germany

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English 2
Why the Nazis could rise to power in Germany

- Defeat in World War I
- Versailles Treaty—England and France “Stabbed Germany in the Back”
- Great Depression: High Employment, Low Profits, People Lose Savings
- German Military Tradition: Frederick the Great—Prussia; Otto Von Bismarck—Unified Germany; Luddendorf; Hindenburg
- Anti-Semitism—Jews as Scapegoats: “Had all the jobs”; “Controlled Politics”; “Had all the money” (None of the above was true but it didn’t matter)
Adolph Hitler

Emblematic of German Problem:
- Only success came in war—won a minor medal
- Believed that Germany “stabbed in the back”
- Germany should have won the war
- Unemployed after the war—no jobs
- Couldn’t get into art school—claimed only Jews got in. He had no artistic talent
- Formed a paramilitary group to substitute for Germany Army—National Socialists
Adolph Hitler (continued)

- Hitler promised Germans:
  - Stability
  - Jobs
  - To be Proud Again
  - To Reverse the Versailles Treaty
  - To End “Weak” Democracy
  - To “Get Rid of” the Jews
  - Lebenstraum—“Living Space for Germans”
Fascism

- Nation comes first
- Against Liberalism and Liberal Institutions
- Irrational Politics—Emphasize Street Fighting
  - SA Storm Troopers (Ernst Rohm)—they wanted to get rid of Nazi’s enemies. They were called the “Brown shirts”
  - SS—Schutzstaffel (Heinrich Himmler)—they were called the black shirts.
Key Dates

- October 1929—Great Depression
- Summer-Fall 1932 – German Elections: Nazis win a majority: 230; Socialists 133, Center 97, Communists 89
  - The main points: Nazis won 42% of the vote; no center; Nazi’s powerful but can’t form government.
Key Dates Continued

- President Hindenburg Names Hitler Chancellor in January 30, 1933.
- Street Violence
- February 27 Reichstag Fire—Legislature Building Burns Down
- March 5 New Elections: Nazis 288; Nationalists 52; Center 74; Socialists 120; Communists 81; Others 23—Nazis win only 44% of vote
- March 23, 1933—Reichstag passes (with huge majority) the **Enabling Act** which made Hitler **dictator** until April 1, 1937

- July 14, 1933—Nazi Party was made only legal party
- November 12, 1933 Nazis win 92% of the vote

**Main Point:**
- Only at this date does Hitler behave illegally
- July 1934-SS and Army purge the SA and they begin to secretly arm the army
- 1935 Denounces Versailles Treaty
- 1936 Remilitarizes the Rhineland
The Nazi Revolution

- June 30 “Night of the long knives” – Nazis kill 77 people, mostly high ranking SA members—Ernst Roehm, Gregor Strasser
- August 1 Law combining President and Chancellor
- August 2 Death of President von Hindenburg
- August 19 Plebiscite approves Hitler as President with 88% voting yes
1936-1937 Four Year Plan

- War materials
- Industrialization
- Autobahn
- VW
- Daimler-Benz
- General Motors
- Ford
Racism in Nazi Germany

- Belief German “Aryan” Race
  - Master Race
  - Jews inferior
  - Slavs inferior
  - Gypsies inferior
  - Eugenics-Social Darwinism run amok

- 1935 Nuremberg Laws
  - Identify Jews (with Yellow Star
  - Deprive Jews of Citizenship
  - Allows only so many Jews in specific jobs
  - Outlaw marriage and sex between Jews and non-Jews
9 of November 1938

Night of Broken Glass or Kristallnacht

- In response to assassination of German diplomat in Paris:
  - Nazis set synagogues on fire
  - Broke Jewish shop windows
  - Beat up Jews—91 killed; thousands injured
  - Confiscated Jewish property
  - Jews forbidden to collect insurance
  - 20,000+ Jews sent to concentration camp
Why Hitler?

- War Vets—Hated Government for Losing the War
- Middle Class—Ruined by Inflation, Depression
- Workers—Unemployed
- Industrialists—Hated Socialist Labor Struggle

More than economy/defeat:
- Emphasized a cult of war, physical danger, sexuality, future, speed, a “new life”
- Airplanes, car, radio
Goebbels and Riefenstahl

- Goebbels was the Chief Propaganda Officer. He promoted radios. By 1942, Germany had 23 million radios.
- Leni Riefenstahl was Hitler’s filmmaker. “Triumph of Will” and “Olympiad”
Hitler’s Road to War

- March 1938—Annexed Austria
- 1938 German minority in Sudetenland (Czechoslovakia)
- September 1938—“Munich Crisis”
  - Appeasement
  - Chamberlain—“There will be peace in our Time”
- Spring 1939 Annexed all of Czechoslovakia
- Summer 1939—Nazi-Soviet “Non Aggression Pact”
World War II in Europe

- 1 September 1939 Nazis invade Poland
- 3 of September 1939 England, France declare war on Germany
- Hitler defeats Poland in a month
- “Phony War” (September 1939 - May 1940)
- May 1940 Germany invades the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France
- “Battle of Britain”
- 22 of June 1941 Germany invades Soviet Union.
- 1941 First Extermination Camp Created