



1

The Rise of Adolf Hitler

Dr. Tod Worner

2

Childhood



- Adolf Hitler was born in Braunau-am-inn, Austria on April 20, 1889
- Doted upon by his mother, Klara Polzl
- Abused by his authoritarian father, Alois Hitler (actually, Schicklgruber)

3

It was especially my brother Adolf who challenged my father to extreme harshness & who got his sound thrashing every day. . . How often on the other hand did my mother caress him & try to obtain with her kindness what the father could not succeed [in obtaining] with harshness!

- Paula Hitler, Adolf's younger sister

4

He alone knows Hitler the Führer who knows Hitler the boy.

- Franz Jetzinger

5

“Parasitic Idleness”

Grew up in Braunau-Am-Inn, Austria under an oppressive father who wanted him to be a customs official.

Father dies when he is 13, Adolf leaves school at 16.

“Stubborn, high-handed, dogmatic, & hot-tempered.”
– Teacher evaluation of Adolf Hitler

“A willful, indulgent child with strong opinions.”
– Jackson Spielvogel, historian

A dreamer, he spent his father’s pension on Wagner operas, reading, painting, and poetry.

“He lived a life of parasitic idleness.”
– Ian Kershaw, historian



6

- Adolf Hitler, rejecting his father's demands that he become a customs official. . . He wanted to become an artist.

I yawned and grew sick to my stomach at the thought of sitting in an office, deprived of my liberty; ceasing to be master of my own time.

–Adolf Hitler, rejecting his stepfather's demands that he become a customs official. . . He wanted to become an artist.

7

Hitler was always up against something & at odds with the world. I never saw him take anything lightly.

– August Kubizek, childhood friend

8

Impatient, moody, irritable if contradicted & prone to outbursts of temper. He disdained regular work. . .He was a compulsive talker, inclined to giving dramatic speeches in which he was carried away by his own emotions.

–Jackson Spielvogel, historian

9

The Crucible of Vienna

In 1907, Hitler was determined to be an artist and applied and was rejected twice from the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts.

Penniless, he would live in a homeless shelter and take on odd jobs (shoveling snow, drawing/selling postcards)

- “Hunger was then my faithful bodyguard...”
- “The saddest period of my life.”

– Adolf Hitler



10

Choking with his catalogue of hates, he would pour his fury over everything, against mankind in general who did not understand him, who did not appreciate him, and by whom he was persecuted and cheated.

– August Kubizek, Hitler's friend

11

Vienna was the hardest, most thorough school of my life. . . In this period there took shape within me a world picture and a philosophy which became the granite foundation of all my acts. In addition to what I then created, I had to learn little, & I have had to alter nothing.

– Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*

12

I owe it to that period that I grew hard.

– Adolf Hitler

13

Altogether, in these early days in Vienna, I had the impression that Adolf had become unbalanced.

– August Kubizek, Hitler's friend

14

During his failures and trials in Vienna, Hitler read and admired various politicians, philosophers, and composers (George von Schonerer, Karl Lueger, Adolf Lanz, and Richard Wagner) and drank deep from the draughts of Volkisch nationalism, anti-Semitism, and anti-Bolshevism.

“Only now did I become thoroughly acquainted with the seducer of my people.”

– Adolf Hitler



15

World War I

- Fleeing military service in Vienna and eager to become a German, he enlisted once the Great War broke out in 1914.
- Wounded twice, awarded the Iron Cross for bravery, and promoted to Corporal, he was dismayed by poor morale among German soldiers and talk of revolution.
- Considered the 1918 German surrender a “stab in the back” by Jews and Bolsheviks within Germany



16

And so [the War] had all been in vain. . . Did it all happen only so that a gang of wretched criminals could lay hands on the fatherland? . . . In these nights hatred grew in me, hatred for those responsible for this deed.

– Adolf Hitler

17

[Hitler] came to the conclusion that Marxism and Jewry are the German people's worst enemies. From personal experience, it had become a certainty for him that wherever misfortune or harm befell the German nation, a Jew was the culprit behind it.

– Ralph Binion, historian



18

State of Unrest

In the wake of Germany's capitulation, political unrest ensued.

- Social Democrats seize military power
- Jewish Socialist leader Kurt Eisner is assassinated
- 4/19 - Communist takeover of Munich
- German Army and Freikorps (paramilitary) liberate Munich and ex-military (like Hitler) are recruited to infiltrate and report on fledgling radical parties
- Hitler took speaking, instructing, and anti-Bolshevik courses
- Hitler attended meetings of the German Workers Party



19

The German Workers Party

On September 12, 1919, Adolf Hitler first attends the German Workers Party meeting in a Munich beer hall.

- Only 41 in attendance
- Attends as *a spy* for the army
- Engages vigorously and eloquently on topics of Volkisch nationalism, anti-Semitism, anti-Bolshevism (MAKES AN IMPRESSION)
- JOINS the party two days later



20



All at once I was offered an opportunity of speaking before a larger audience; and the thing that I had always presumed from pure feeling without knowing it was now corroborated; *I could 'speak.'*

– Adolf Hitler

21

[Hitler] revealed himself to be an excellent & passionate speaker & captured the attention of all the listeners with his comments.

Herr Hitler especially is, I might say, a born popular speaker who, through his fanaticism & his populist style in a meeting, absolutely compels his audience to take note & share his views.

– Gunner Hans Knoden & Lorenz Frank, participants in Hitler's lectures

22

The power which has always started the greatest religious & political avalanches in history has been, from time immemorial, none but the magic power of the word.

– Adolf Hitler



23

My own fate became known to me. I decided to go into politics.

– Adolf Hitler

The First World War made Hitler possible.

– Ian Kershaw, historian (p. 73)



24

[The central elements of Völkisch nationalism were formed by] ideas of an organic Volk (“people or nation”), resting on purity of blood and race forming a national community that transcended each individual within it. . . [Each individual would be bound to serve]that community through subordination to leaders of notable ability, wisdom, and substance.

– Ian Kershaw, historian. . . The German Workers’ Party was one of seventy-three such parties that had formed since the end of WWI.

25

All the warped ideas which had been bubbling in his strange mind since the lonesome days of hunger in Vienna now found an outlet.

– William Shirer, historian

26

Everything men strive after as a higher goal, be it religion, socialism, democracy, is to the Jew only means to an end, the way to satisfy his lust for gold and domination.

In his effects and consequences he is like a racial tuberculosis of the nations.

The deduction from all this is the following: an antisemitism based on purely *emotional* grounds will find its ultimate expression in the form of the pogrom. An antisemitism based on *reason*, however, must lead to systematic legal combating and elimination of the privileges of the Jews, that which distinguishes the Jews from the other aliens who live among us (an Aliens Law). The ultimate objective [of such legislation] must, however, be the irrevocable removal of the Jews in general.

– Adolf Hitler, in a 1919 letter to his friend Adolf Gemlich answering him what to do about “The Jewish Question.” This is considered the first written state on systematic anti-Semitism.

27

If I am ever really in power, the destruction of the Jews will be my first and most important job. As soon as I have power, I shall have gallows after gallows erected, for example, in Munich on the Marienplatz – as many of them as traffic allows. Then the Jews will be hanged one after another, and they will stay hanging until they stink. They will stay hanging as long as hygienically possible. As soon as they are untied, then the next group will follow and that will continue until the last Jew in Munich is exterminated. Exactly the same procedure will be followed in other cities until Germany is cleansed of the last Jew!

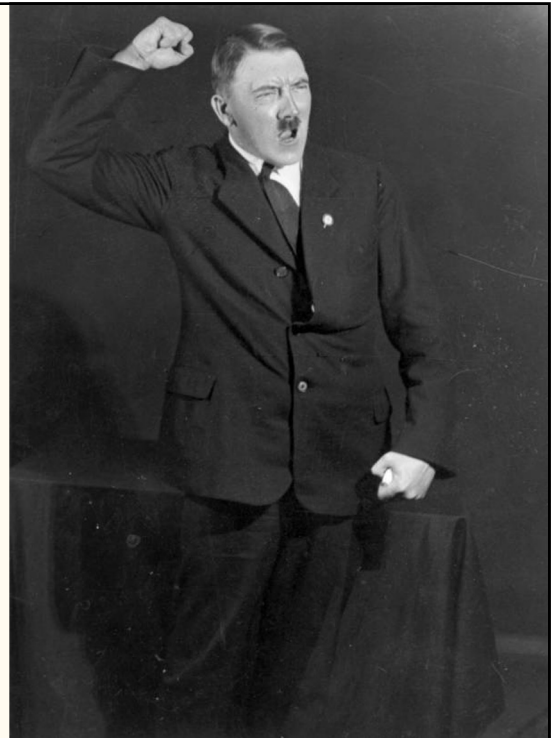
– Adolf Hitler, in a 1922 interview with a German journalist, Josef Hell

28

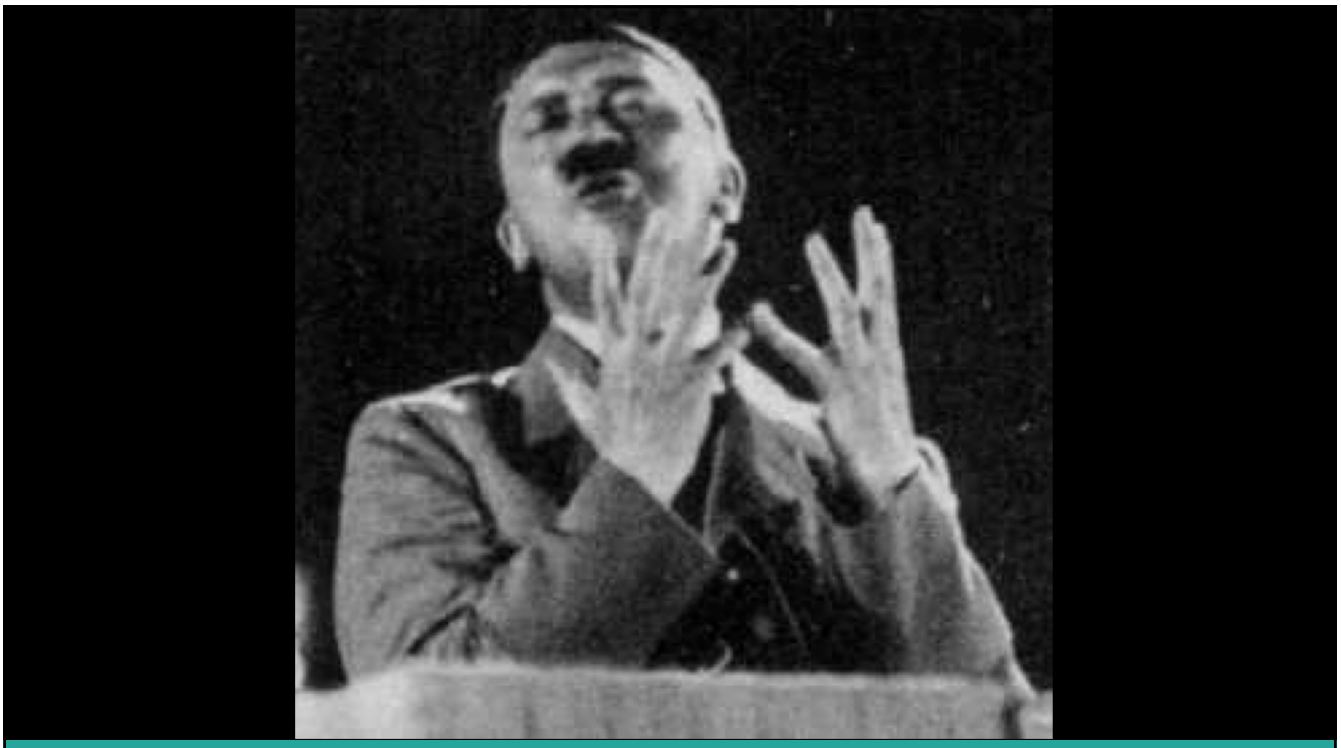
What Hitler did was to advertise unoriginal ideas in an original way. . . It was less *what* he said than *how* he said it that counted. . .

Simplicity and repetition were two ingredients in his speaking armory. . . the nationalization of the masses, the reversal of the great “betrayal” of 1918, the destruction of Germany’s internal enemies (above all the “removal” of the Jews), and material and psychological rebuilding as the prerequisite for external struggle and the attainment of a position of world power.

– Ian Kershaw, historian



29



30

At that time, I adopted the standpoint:
It makes no difference whatever,
whenever they laugh at us or revile us,
whether they represent us as clowns
or criminal; the main thing is that they
mention us, that they concern
themselves with us again & again.

– Adolf Hitler, on the value of
propaganda



31

Hitler observed the dull, lifeless meetings of the bourgeois parties, the deadening effect of speeches read out like academic lectures by dignified elderly gentlemen. Nazi meeting, he recorded with pride, were, by contrast NOT peaceful. H learned from the organization of meetings by the Left, how they were orchestrated, the value of intimidation of opponents, techniques of disruption, and how to deal with disturbances. The [Nazis'] meetings aimed to attract confrontation, and as a result to make the party noticed.

– Ian Kershaw, historian

32

I am nothing but a drummer and rallier.

–Adolf Hitler, claiming he was the *forerunner* of the savior of the German Fatherland



33

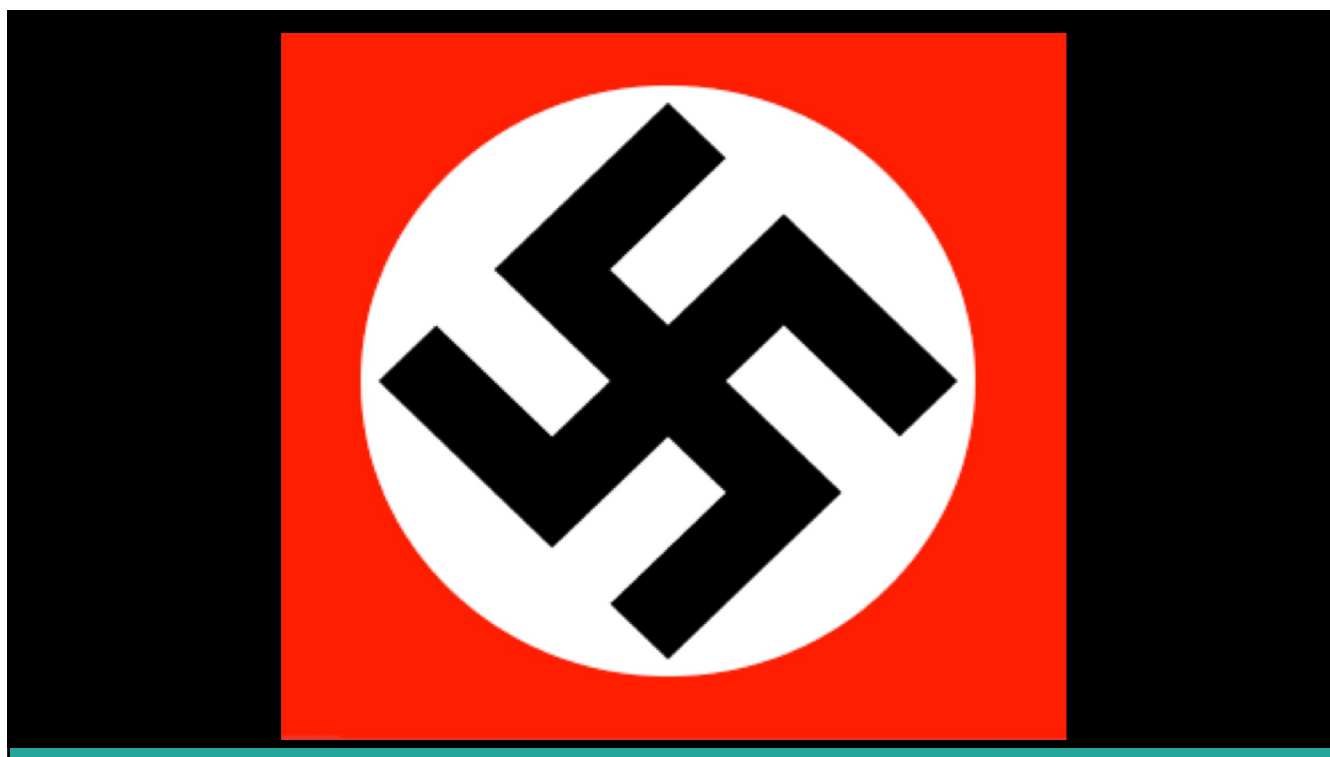
Hitler Ascendant

But. . . in short order, Hitler dominates party

- Devises swastika flag
- Forms paramilitary SA (the “brownshirts”)
- Speaks relentlessly
- Generates enthusiasm among the masses as well as business, publishers, & industrialists



34



35

Where he comes from no one can say. From a prince's palace, perhaps, or a day laborer's cottage. But everyone knows: He is the Führer, everyone cheers him and thus he will one day announce himself, he for whom all of us are waiting, full of longing, who feel Germany's present distress deep in our hearts, so that thousands and hundreds of thousands of brains picture him, millions of voices call for him, one single German soul seeks him.

– Kurt Hesse, German scholar, 1922 (NOT specifically about Hitler)

36

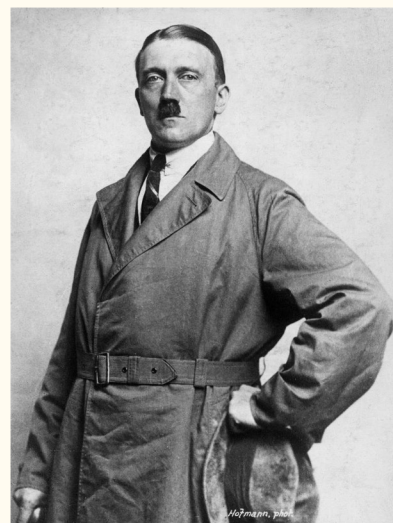
In chaotic Europe, not merely in Germany, there is today a growing belief in the Dictator as Messiah.

– Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, German newspaper, November, 1923

37

The Beer Hall Putsch

- Inspired by Benito Mussolini's successful 1922 "March on Rome," and frustrated with German government's capitulation to reparations and the French takeover of the industry-rich Ruhr.
- Hitler and his Nazi "storm troopers" raid government meeting at Burgerbraukeller beer hall and seek to take over the government.
- Plot fails, 16 Nazis die, Hitler flees, gets arrested, and convicted in trial



38

From our bones, from our graves will sound the voice of that tribunal which alone has the right to sit in judgment upon us. For, gentlemen, it is not you who pronounce judgment upon us, it is the Eternal Court of History which will make its pronouncement upon the charge which is brought against us. . . You may declare us guilty a thousand times, but the Goddess who presides over the Eternal Court of History will with a smile tear in pieces the charge of the Public.

– Adolf Hitler, at his trial

39

Prison and *Mein Kampf*

Bavarian region (and judge) are
sympathetic to Hitler's cause

The Nazi Party is dissolved, but. . .

- Give him free-rein to expound, stir, and persuade on the stand
- Give him cushy sentence (only serving 8.5 months of 5 year HIGH TREASON conviction)
- Luxurious accommodations and secretary to dictate autobiography, *Mein Kampf*



40

“My Struggle”

2 volumes (1924 – in prison, 1928)

- 240,000 sold from 1925-34
- 10 million by war’s end
- #2 not until 1958
- Dictated to Rudolf Hess, Nazi loyalist & future deputy to Hitler
- Rants against:
 - Jews (social Darwinism)
 - Communists
 - Parliamentary democracy
- Mythologized Beer Hall Putsch & commemorated “martyrs” of 11/9/23
- Outlines plan to
 - Rearm
 - Destroy Versailles treaty
 - Destroy France with English/Italian alliance
 - Attack Soviet Union to eradicate “Jewish Bolsheviks” & get more land (Lebensraum)
 - U.S. conflict for world domination



41

The personification of the devil as the symbol of all evil assumes the living shape of the Jew.

The problem of how the future of the German nation can be secured is the problem of how Marxism can be eliminated.

All who are not of good race in this world are chaff.

Germany will be a world power or will not be at all.

– Adolf Hitler, excerpts from Mein Kampf



42

That others failed to take Hitler and his ideas seriously was one of the greatest advantages over his opponents.

–Jackson Spielvogel, historian

43

I used to wonder why the world was so surprised at this tyrant doing exactly what he had said in his book he would do.

– William Shirer, CBS correspondent & historian. Hitler wrote that he would: destroy the German Republic, abolish democracy, abolish trade unions, establish himself as supreme dictator, & “settle” with the Jews.

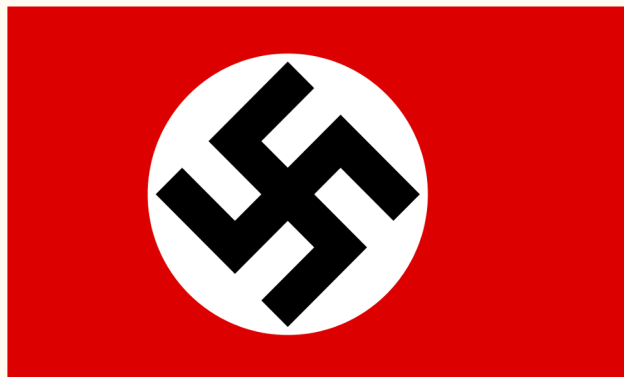
44

Nazi Party Resurrection

Hitler gives government peaceful assurances and Nazi Party re-founded

- We shall have to hold our noses and enter the Reichstag
- Adolf Hitler

Hitler no longer sees himself as forerunner, but as the Führer.



45

Nazi Orchestration

Nazis orchestrated aggressive reach into all areas of society

- Social organizations
 - Hitler Youth, Student League, Pupil's League, Women's League
 - Professional societies for teachers, doctors, & lawyers
- "Shadow government"
 - Administrative "Directorate" overseeing departments of foreign policy, press, ag, justice, culture, economy
 - Bureaucracy with appointed leaders of regions, districts, & chapters
- "SA" aka "Brownshirts (1926 reorg)"
 - Functioned through terror & propaganda against Jews, Marxists, & dissenters
 - Always impatient with the "legal route" &



46

Young people were especially attracted to Nazism. It offered a politics of activism, clear cut lines of authority, & opportunity for leadership at an early age.

– Jackson Spielvogel,
historian



47



48

When an opponent declares, “I will not come over to your side,” I calmly say, “Your child belongs to us already. You will pass on. Your descendants, however, now stand in the new camp. In a short time they will know nothing else but this new community.”

– Adolf Hitler

49



50

Nazi Propaganda

The most brilliant propagandist technique will yield no success unless one fundamental principle is borne in mind constantly - it must confine itself to a few points and repeat them over and over.

– Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's Chief of Propaganda

The great masses of the people. . . will more easily fall victims to a big lie than to a small one.

– Adolf Hitler



51

Nazi Fortunes Catapult

Whenever the international or economic tensions eased, Nazi fortunes worsened (radicalism fueled on fear and chaos).

3 factors that catapulted the Nazis in and after 1929

- The Stock Market Crash
- Opposition to the Young (reparations) Plan
- Weimar Republic inching toward totalitarianism

Multiple elections in 1932-33 (along with political chaos) lead the Nazis to the largest party in the Reichstag & Hitler being appointed Chancellor on January 30, 1933 (read Tim Ryback's *Takeover*)



52

The one-time Vienna tramp & self-styled revolutionary had become Chancellor of the German Republic he had sworn to destroy.

– William Shirer, historian

53

“You’re mistaken. *We’ve* hired *him*.”
– Fritz von Papen, when warned that he was Hitler’s pawn.



54

“We’re boxing Hitler in.”
– Alfred Hugenberg, German Nationalist Party leader



55

“Hitler is Reich Chancellor. Just like a fairy tale.”
– Joseph Goebbels



56

“You have delivered up our holy German Fatherland to one of the greatest demagogues of all time. I solemnly prophesy that this accursed man will cast our Reich into the abyss and bring our nation to inconceivable misery. Future generations will damn you in your grave for what you have done.”

– Erich Ludendorff, WWI German war hero to President Hindenburg on appointing Adolf Hitler as Chancellor



57

“A leap into the dark.”
– German Catholic newspaper



58

Politicians. . .who naively believed they could use Hitler, soon found out that he was a considerably more accomplished and infinitely more ruthless politician.

– Jackson Spielvogel, historian

59

Hitler's Consolidation of Power

February, 1933

- Weimar Republic declared a failure → Advent of the Third Reich
- Reichstag dissolved with elections in 5 weeks
- Civil liberties restricted
 - Freedom of press, speech, assembly, search/seizure curtailed
- Political parties (Catholic, Communist, Social Democrats targeted)
- Violence unleashed (SA and emerging SS)



60

I thought that all men and women of the Western world valued personal freedom above all else in life. To my surprise I found that few Germans seemed to mind that their individual liberties had been taken away.

– William Shirer, historian

61

Hitler's Dark Plans

Three days into Chancellorship, Hitler meets with Generals

- Need to eliminate democracy
- Need to eliminate Marxism
- Need to consolidate support, rearm, and conquer East for Lebensraum

Meanwhile, public narrative is that Germany wants peace.



62

The Reichstag Fire

February 27, 1933

- Reichstag set on fire (ostensibly by a lone Communist)
 - Fear (or telegraphing fear) of another Communist revolution
- Indefinite suspension of:
 - Freedom of speech
 - Freedom of press
 - Freedom of assembly
 - Phone/postal privacy rights
 - Habeas corpus
 - Suppression of Communist & “enemy” parties
- First concentration camp (Dachau) opens one month later



63

“Dear God, make me dumb, that I may not to Dachau come.”
 – Popular saying among the German underground



64

The Enabling Act

March 5, 1933

- Nazis win plurality in Reichstag elections
- With coalition, they are the dominant power

March 24, 1933 - "The Enabling Act"

- Hitler convinces Reichstag to amend Constitution and empower him as Führer to issue law (effectively eliminating the Reichstag)
- Hitler's government is a *legally approved* totalitarian dictatorship



65

The authority of the Führer has now been wholly established. Votes are no longer taken. The Führer decides. All this is going much faster than we had dared to hope.

– Joseph Goebbels

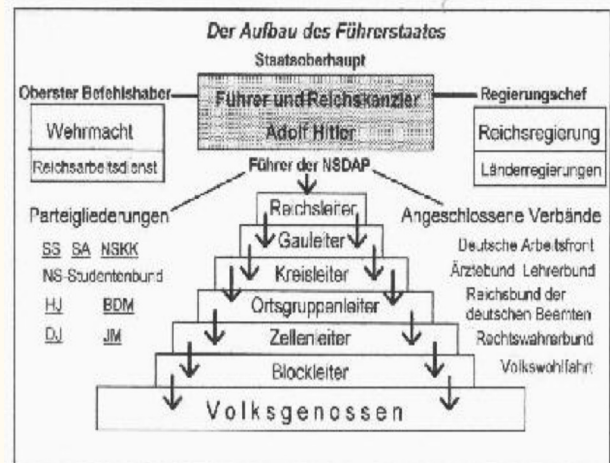


66

Gleichshaltung & “Flipping the Switch”

“Bringing into line” (1933-1934)

- Hitler reorganizes state governments
 - Hitler’s “bloodless” Revolution/Seizure of Power
 - Elevates local Nazi leader to “Reich Governor”
 - “Frees” states from being beholden to their legislatures
- Hitler bans Communist party
- Nazis co-opt trade union parades & celebrations, raid offices, arrest leaders, disband and replace organizations with Nazified version
- Nazis purge Jews, “leftists”, & democracy proponents from universities, courts, & civil service
- Officially Nazified social/professional clubs



67

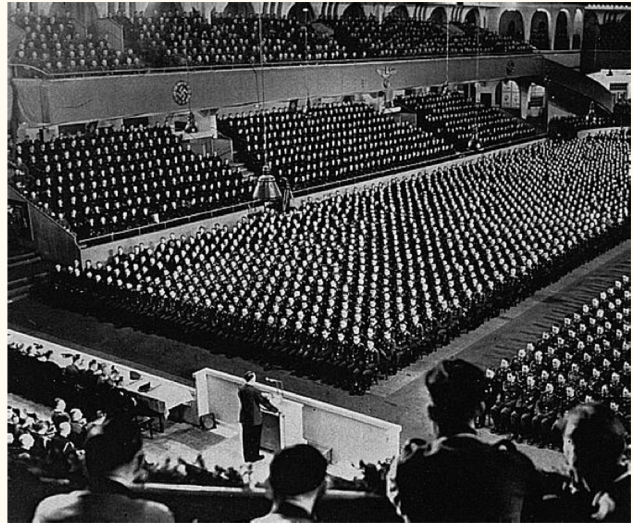
“Working toward the Führer.”

– Slogan within the Nazi bureaucracy

68

That is the miracle of our age, that you have found me, that you have found me among so many millions. And that I have found you, that is Germany's great fortune!

– Adolf Hitler



69

When National Socialism has ruled long enough, it will no longer be possible to conceive of a form of life different from ours. In the long run, National Socialism and religion will no longer be able to exist together.

– Adolf Hitler



70

A violently active, dominating, intrepid, brutal youth – that is what I am after. . . I will have no use for intellectual training. Knowledge is ruin to my young men.

– Adolf Hitler

71



72



73

The Nazi Party constitutes the only political party in Germany.

- German Law, July 14, 1933. All other parties were banned within 6 months of Hitler's ascension to power.

74

It is right to let the new men, particularly the leaders of the National Socialists, go ahead and not put unnecessary obstacles in their way. There are a lot of dubious things in the National Socialist movement, particularly as principles are concerned. But that has to be put up with for the time being. Today, there is no point in being fussy about legal subtleties. What matters is first to let a strong, efficient government grow and then to support it wholeheartedly in order to suppress Bolshevism.

– Karl Bachem, member of the Catholic Center party. . . on his own party's dissolution

75

One would never have thought so miserable a collapse possible.

– Adolf Hitler



76

What could we do?
– Anonymous German, 1933

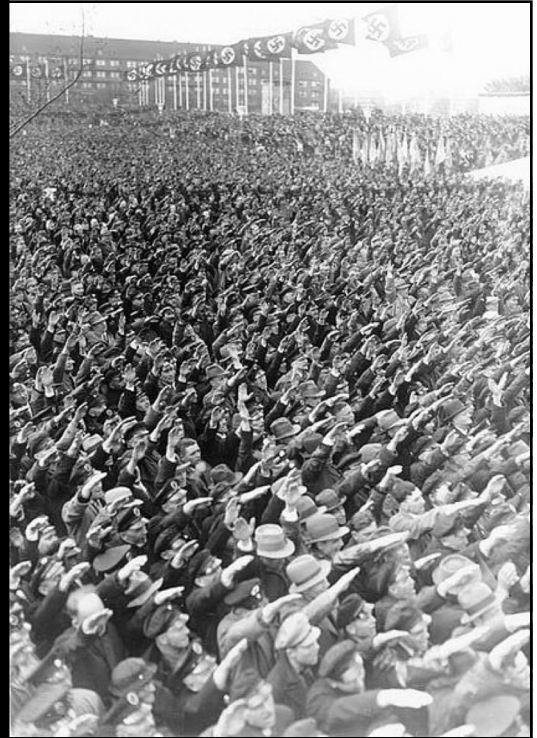
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78

To many Germans, the Nazis did offer a regeneration, a national awakening. “Germany Awake” was an effective call to a people who had been psychologically crushed by World War I. The Nazis presented a compelling image of a strong, virile, dynamic new Germany that was above parties, above classes.

– Jackson Spielvogel, historian



79



80



81



82

Hitler's Checklist

DOMESTIC AGENDA:

- Achieve political power “legally”
 - Convince populace, conservative political parties, & army that he is a reliable ally
 - Marginalize/Demonize domestic opposition (Marxist, Religious parties, Social Democrats, Nazi dissenters)
 - Consolidate power through constitutional manipulation & fear mongering

INTERNATIONAL AGENDA:

- Rebuild military in violation of Versailles restrictions
 - Reassure international community by giving false assurances, forming alliances of convenience, & playing one country off the other
- Bloodlessly “reunite” Reich
 - Rhineland, Austria, Czech
- Ally with England, Poland, Italy
- Smash France & USSR
 - Establish USSR as the “crown jewel” of the German Reich

83

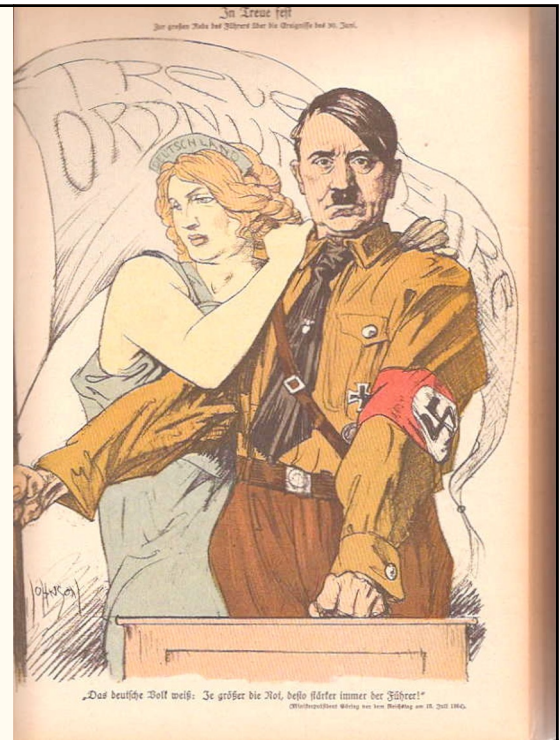
The Night of the Long Knives (“The Röhm Purge”)

- June 30-July 2, 1934
 - The 3 million strong power of the SA (“the Brownshirts”) under Ernst Röhm and their impatience for violent revolution (as opposed to Hitler’s courting the army and moneyed interests) was a threat to Hitler’s power.
 - SS (SA subdivision) & Gestapo (secret police)-led:
 - murder of 85 SA leaders including Röhm
 - arrest of > 1000 “threats”
 - assassination of many conservative associates of Papen, former Chancellor Schleicher, & former Nazi leader Gregor Strasser
 - Hitler (cut deal with army) personally arrested Röhm & approved killings
 - Publicly admitted his role defending Reich from a coup & clamping down on moral turpitude
 - Received wild praise from masses, approval from President Hindenburg, Defense/Justice Minister, and support from army & moderates

84

If anyone reproaches me & asks why I did not resort to the regular courts of justice, then all I can say is this: In this hour I was responsible for the fate of the German people. I became the Supreme Judge of the German People. I gave the order to shoot the ringleaders in this treason, and I further gave the order to cauterise down to the raw flesh the ulcers of this poisoning of the wells in our domestic life."

– Adolf Hitler, publicly taking responsibility for "The Röhm Purge" in Reichstag speech



85

Soldierly determination & exemplary courage.

– Defense Minister Blomberg

[Hitler] rescued the German people from a serious danger.

– President Hindenburg

The measures taken on 30 June & 1 & 2 July for the suppression of high treasonable & state treasonable attacks are, as emergency defense of the state, LEGAL.

– Justice Minister Gurtner



86



How fortunate for leaders that men do not think.
– Adolf Hitler