

# Nazi Rise to Power in Germany

## I. Adolf Hitler

### A. Hitler's Early Life

1. Born April 20, 1889 near Linz, Austria
2. Father Died January 3, 1903
3. Mother Died December 21, 1907
4. Could not enter art school; unemployed in Vienna, 1907-1913; moved to Bavaria

### B. Hitler Volunteered for WWI in Bavarian unit

1. Received Iron Cross for bravery
2. Wounded and gassed
3. Germany surrendered November 11, 1918
4. Still in army after war, Hitler assigned to investigate socialist movements

### C. 1919: Hitler Joined German Workers' Party (DAP)

## II. The Nazi Party, 1920-1933

### A. 1920: Nazi Party Formed from German Workers' Party (DAP)

1. Hitler took over struggling party's propaganda
2. 25-point program developed
3. New Name: *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* or **NSDAP** (Nazi)

### B. A Symbol: the Swastika

1. Chosen by Hitler, who realized the need for a symbol, in 1920
2. the *hakenkreuz*, an ancient symbol known from India, Greece, Egypt, China
3. Flag: red background, in the center a white disk and within it, a black hakenkreuz

### C. Hitler named head of Nazi party, July 29, 1921: title *Führer* used for the first time of Hitler

### D. The Beer Hall Putsch, November 9, 1923

1. Rapid party growth from 1920 (7 members) to 1923 (55,000 members)
2. Dissatisfaction fueled by rampant inflation in Germany caused by war reparations
3. Hitler determined to attempt takeover of government beginning in Bavaria
4. Bavarian leaders had scheduled meeting in a beer hall on November 9, 1923
5. Storm troopers surrounded the meeting, but takeover of army barracks failed
6. Hitler arrested; used trial as platform; sentenced to 5 years, with parole after 6 months
7. Nazi party banned

### E. *Mein Kampf*

1. First volume composed in prison, 1924; dictated to **Rudolph Hess**
2. First published 1925; sold poorly; major popularity after Hitler became Chancellor
3. Major ideas
  - a. Persons classified by race/physical appearance: Aryans are superior; Slavs, etc., are subhuman; Jews the worst of all
  - b. Superior Aryans deserve sufficient "Living Space" (*Liebensraum*), if at others' expense
  - c. German defeat in WWI was a "stab in the back" through political treachery by Jews

### F. Revitalization of the Party

1. February 26, 1925, Hitler: Nazi party would work within the democratic system

2. Two political organizations: 1 to topple democratic gov't; 1 to prepare gov't in waiting
3. Organizations within the party
  - a. The SA (*Sturmabteilung*): Storm Troopers
    - 1) originally street brawlers
    - 2) given a snappy uniform ("Brown Shirts"), paramilitary group
  - b. The SS (*Schutzstaffel*): "Staff Guard"
    - 1) Formed 1925 as part of SA as Hitler's personal bodyguard
    - 2) Originally led by Josef Berchtold; Heinrich Himmler was member #168
  - c. Hitler Youth
4. Great Depression Begins - October 29, 1929
5. Elections of 1930 - Nazis get 18% of vote, became 2<sup>nd</sup> largest party

G. 1931: Hitler's niece and love interest, Geli Raubal, committed suicide

#### H. Hitler's Rise to Power

1. 1932: Hitler defeated in bid for presidency, but Nazis gained power
2. President Von Hindenburg reelected; but Republic unstable
3. Internal intrigue and near anarchy (battles between Nazis and Communists) in the streets
4. July 30, 1932: election of new Reichstag gives Nazis largest number of seats
5. January 30, 1933: Hitler appointed Chancellor by Hindenburg
6. February 27, 1933: Burning of the Reichstag
  - a. Nazis participated in the burning; Communists blamed
  - b. Feb. 28: State of Emergency decree gave Nazis power to coerce local leaders, fix elections

#### I. Hitler: from Chancellor to Führer

1. March 23, 1933: Enabling Act made Hitler Dictator, ending Democracy in Germany
2. April 1, 1933: Nazis boycott of Jewish shops
3. The Gestapo
  - a. **Hermann Göring** named Minister of the Interior for Prussia after Hitler appointed Chancellor
  - b. SS and SA storm troops became auxiliary police force under Göring
  - c. April 26, 1933: Secret State Police created
  - d. **Geheime Staats Polizei** = Gestapo
  - e. 1934: Gestapo under SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler; his deputy, Reinhard Heydrich, director
  - f. 1939: Gestapo placed under newly created Reich Main Security Office (**RSHA**)
4. May 10, 1933: Public burning of "un-German" books; led by Propaganda Minister **Joseph Goebbels**
5. 1933: **Dachau** concentration camp opened
  - a. **Theodor Eicke**: father of the concentration camp system
  - b. for "enemies of the state," mainly political prisoners
6. June 30, 1934: Night of the Long Knives
  - a. purge of the SA
  - b. other political opponents killed
7. August 2, 1934: Hitler becomes "**Führer**" (supreme leader)
  - a. Death of Hindenburg
  - b. Reichstag (backdated to Aug 1): Upon death of Hindenburg, offices of Reich President and Reich Chancellor combined as Führer/Reich Chancellor under Hitler, who will select his deputy
  - c. Military and public officials swear allegiance to Hitler
8. February 1938: Hitler becomes Army commander

#### J. Propaganda

1. September 1934: Propaganda Movie, *Triumph of the Will*; scenes of Nazi party rallies and unity
2. Summer 1936: Berlin Olympics

K. September 15, 1935: The Nuremberg Laws