HITLER AND THE NUREMBERG LAWS

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HITLER’S WELTANSAHUNG

- “That nobody from Bohemia”
- Alois Schickelgruber
- Klara Pozl
- Hutler → Hitler
- Family and school background
- Death of both parents while in his teens → inheritance
Vienna

- Academy of Arts
- Cosmopolitanism and culture
  - opera
- Presence of Galician Jews → anti-Semitism
- Street artist
- Homeless shelters
- Politicization
  - Karl Lueger
  - Elements of mystical German nationalism
    - Aryan ideal
    - Swastika
Munich – on the run for A-H authorities
June 28, 1914
Enlisted in German army
• Wartime service
  – Bicycle messenger
  – Promoted to corporal
  – Awarded Iron Cross

• 1918 surrender…

• Weimar Republic ➔ “November Criminals”
• 1919-1923

• Many Germans were disillusioned after the defeat in the First World war. Ex-soldiers felt that they had been ‘stabbed in the back’ and felt that they had not been defeated on the battlefield. Many of them joined right wing groups such as the Freikorps or the Nazi party.

• The Spartacist rising, amongst others, led to many people fearing a Communist revolution in Germany. People looked to right wing groups to act against this, the Freikorps in particular.

• Economic hardship was coupled with humiliation as a result of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Right wing groups gained popularity by saying that they would not adhere to its terms.
• Military uniforms demonstrated strength at a time when the government was weak
• Use of force against communists and trade unionists was popular with business
• Populist policies and rhetoric were employed to discredit opponents and develop support
• References to traditional values and reminders of “who was to blame” for the economic crisis built support…
• Post-WW1 – Hitler remained in the Ger. army; acted as a “mole” and spied on various communist organizations

• One group he spied on – German Workers Party → became the National Socialist (Nazi) Party in 1919 (NSDAP), w/ Hitler as the leader

• Munich – Beer Hall Putsch (1923)

• The failure of the Beer Hall Putsch demonstrates that power needs to be taken through legal means
• Hitler on trial – sedition
• A political circus – sympathetic judge, minimal sentence...
• Landsberg Prison
• *Mein Kampf*
  - Lebensraum
  - Biological/Racial anti-Semitism
A new approach – NSDAP as a “leader party” → the focus was shifted to propaganda and electoral success and winning the support of big business

“First power, then politics”

The “Germany Flights”
• 1924-1929
  – Focus on traditional values
  – Built on fear of left wing groups
  – Continued use of military imagery
  – Lack of electoral support due to relative prosperity in Germany at the time

• 1929-1932 - A Change in Fortunes
  – Wall Street Crash leads to end of effective financial assistance from USA
  – Unemployment rises rapidly
  – Hyperinflation recurs
  – Threat of Communism increases
  – Coalition government fails to address problems successfully
• Nazis used force to prevent uprisings
• Their rhetoric played on people’s fears
• Big business won over through revised economic plans
• Emphasis placed on military power won support of many soldiers and traditionalists.
• Weak coalition governments enabled Nazis to gain political strength
• Propaganda and shows of might impressed the masses
• Seats won in the Reichstag → 1932 saw a NSDAP plurality
• Rohm’s Brown Shirts in the streets...
• In 1933 the push for total power began: at this point, the Reichstag burned down, creating an opportunity for Hitler
  – Blame was placed on the comms. and an auth. crackdown began…
• the Nazis still failed to gain a majority in subsequent elections, but they w/ their supporters pushed thru the Enabling Law
• Hindenburg was forced to appoint Hitler as Chancellor (other politicians believed that Hitler can be manipulated easily) = Day of Potsdam
• (President Hindenburg’s eventual death allowed Hitler to assume presidential powers)
• Mar 21, 1933 – staged photo of Hindenburg and Hitler (after Hitler had won the Mar 5 elecs.) –
• Potsdam church – where Pr. kings had been crowned
  – So Hindenburg in full uniform (= mil. tradition)
  – Hitler in civilian clothes and bowing (thus not a mil. coup)
• Goebbels wanted this to create continuity and more pop. support – the fact that all this was in a church further legitimized it – and the image showed that the army was ready to accept Hitler – the army was what worried him the most
  – So given the symbolism, there was little resistance – legitimacy instead of a rev!
• after 1933, the Nazi dictatorship began:
  – other pol. parties were outlawed
  – a *Reich Church* was organized (a combo of Nazism and Protestantism and Paganism)
  – trade unions and other social orgs. were disbanded…
  – the *Gestapo* was est. and given unlimited powers; concentration camps were est., inc. *Dachau*
  • one of their 1st actions, along w/ Himmler’s SS, was to take out the now problematic Brown Shirts and their leader *Ernst Rohm* (“Night of the Long Knives”)
– a massive state propaganda program was implemented, inc. Nuremberg Rallies

- *Goebbels*, as Min. of Truth and Enlightenment, created the “Big Lie”
- Unacceptable ideas were stamped out – the “Burning of the Books”
– the Weimar constitution and civil rights were suspended and the **Nuremberg Laws** enacted later in the 1930s

– These included the **Civil Service Law** and the **Preservation of Blood and Honour Laws**
  
  • **ARTICLE 2**
    – A citizen of the Reich may be only one who is of German or kindred blood, and who, through his behavior, shows that he is both desirous and personally fit to serve loyally the German people and the Reich.

– German Jews were systematically denied their rights of citizenship and pushed out of the German **nation**
• Nazi racial thinking – Ger. natl community drew its strength from pure blood and sacred Ger. earth
  – So the bureaucracy grew – the 1933 and later laws sought to exclude Jews from this utopian vision: the Civil Service Law, the physicians law, the disbarring of lawyers, the Law against Overcrowding of Ger. Schools, the Law for Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring (sterilization program/T4), the Reich Flag Law (swastika as symbol), the Citizenship Law, the Law for the Defense of Ger. Blood and Honour, Law for the Protection of the Hereditary Health of the German People (the last outlawed Hebrew and any kind of sexual contact b/n Aryans and no-Aryans), etc…
  – Goebbels ran the Aryanization campaign – Jews were pushed out of the arts; he decided the fates of individual composers and tunes
– Jews allowed their own culture but only in exclusion (*Kulturbund*)
– For most Gers. the eco. was the issue – Hitler had to be pragmatic: Jewish doctors were allowed to practice until enough Aryan doctors could be guaranteed...so the eco. boycott varied
– Hitler moderated eco. actions – didn’t want to turn Jews into an eco burden – he aimed to assimilate *mischlinge* thru several generations – he did not want to weaken war potential
– Similarly, anti-Jewish actions decreased during the Olympics
– (*Mischlinge of the 1st degree* – ¼ Jewish, thus 1 grandparent (*volljuden* had 3 Jewish grandparentps) – complex and changing laws – there was also the Q of “race” after temporary contact w/ Jews – if a Ger. converted to Judaism but then left, he was Ger. again – but his children were considered *mischlinge* ...
The Nazis had to figure out a way to implement the Nur. Laws… the layers of fault/blame in implementation of Nur. Laws can be portrayed in a bull’s eye pattern… (D. Bankier)

**Innermost layer – Hitler/Nazi core** …

**Next – the idealists/careerists - SS/Gestapo**

Next, someone in the Min. of Welfare who makes the rule that Jews can’t redeem vouchers for glasses, so Jewish opticians end up with a ltd. customer base (these “micro” details don’t come from the top but instead come from a bureaucrat who is working for promotion)

At the next level, an opera director is fired because he is a Jew, and his replacement takes the job, even if thinks that it might not be fair…

The racial laws, inc. the Civil Service Law, have the effect of *tranquilizing* the situation (the law is not the fault of the bureaucrats – the gov’t passed it – but it is the role of the bureaucrats to implement it)
- The late 30s was a period of stabilization, except for the radicals who expected more...
- 1938 was a fateful year as the concept of Greater Ger. (w/ Aus. and Czech.) and a “Jewish Solution” were closer
- Hard-core Nazis were confronting avg. people’s “complacency”; they worried that Jewish values had penetrated the bourgeoisie and that people’s enthusiasm for Nazi values was merely perfunctory
- The fact that Jews were criticized and ostracized was not enough; they were still there and paralyzing the mind of the avg. German – anti-Semitic policy thus had to be radicalized
  - **KRISTALLNACHT** - the violence was followed by a 1 billion DM indemnity...
- The Nazis wanted the avg. to play a greater role in the anti-Semitic policies; the Nazis thus shared Jewish wealth w/ the avg. (they appealed to the common stereotype of the wealthy Jew)
• The Nazis let the “laws” of the market go after Jews
• the Nazis would go to companies and offer to buy “x” amt. and go on to ask if was it “fair” that the co. should sell to Jews as well…
• the Nazi boycott led cos. to deny sales to Jews
• then the Nazis would go to and extort individual merchants → this forced Jews into bankruptcy – they had to sell at low prices
• and even the 5% the Jewish merchant would get he wouldn’t be able to take if he emigrated (and emigration had been a major goal of the Nazis, inc. the 1930s Madagascar scheme and the Havarah Agreement) → most Jews realistically faced the restrictions of the Evian Conference…
• this eco shift was key to the Aryanization of the eco.
  • maybe 40% of the buyers were unscrupulous profiteers, 40% were the sleeping partners, 20% were the well-meaning and sympathetic business owners who tried to be fair…
  • so on average 80% took advantage not b/c they were anti-Semitic but b/c they wanted to get richer → and thus the Nuremberg Laws were sold and the Holocaust set in motion…
  • Hitler did this to eliminate the Jews; and the redistribution of property appeased people…the Holocaust can thus for Bankier be traced to eco. determinism…
– Hitler was lionized as “der Fuehrer”, and the 3rd Reich born
– His pol. popularity grew b/c of ongoing propaganda, eco. growth (autobahn), foreign policy “successes”…
Germany Invades the Rhineland
March 7, 1936
The Austrian Anschluss, 1936
The "Problem" of the Sudetenland

- **SUDETENLAND**: Czech Territory ceded to Germany at Munich, September 30, 1938
- Czech Territory given to Hungary by Germany and Italy at Vienna, October 2, 1938
- Czech Territory annexed by Poland, November 1, 1938
The Spanish Civil War: 1936 - 1939

Francisco Franco
The Spanish Civil War: A Dress Rehearsal for WW II?

Italian troops in Madrid
"Guernica" by Pablo Picasso
Appeasement: The Munich Agreement, 1938

Now we have “peace in our time!” Herr Hitler is a man we can do business with.

British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain
The Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, 1939

Foreign Ministers von Ribbentrop & Molotov
THE SCUM OF THE EARTH, I BELIEVE

THE BLOODY ASSASSIN OF THE WORKERS I PRESUME?