

Name _____

Date _____

Hitler Into Power

A. Origins of the Nazi Party

The Nazi Party was formed in January 1919 by Anton Drexler. Originally it was named the German Workers Party (DAP). Hitler joined in Autumn of 1919 as a spy for the army. He quickly rose to become the leader of the party. The party was transformed by Hitler and became a **fascist** political party rather than a **socialist** discussion group that it had been when he joined. The SA (Brownshirts) was formed to protect Hitler and other party leaders at meetings. It also disrupted the meetings of the Nazi's political opponents.

B. Hitler Takes Power

- By 1932 Germany's unemployment reached 6 million. This was proportionately greater than unemployment in the USA.

- People were desperate- existing government seemed unable to deal with the problem. People turn to more extreme parties for solutions; the Communists, and even more to the Nazis.

- Hitler came to power legally. After Hitler's appointment to the Chancellorship (Jan. 30, 1933), Hitler insisted that new elections be called

- Conveniently, the Reichstag building burned down (Feb. 27) Hitler blamed the Communist Party, though probable that Nazi's set the fire.

- Hitler persuades President Hindenburg to pass a decree for the Protection of the People and State... **Emergency Decree** - suspended civil liberties, never restored by the Nazi's...citizens could be arrested and imprisoned without trial

 - Hitler outlaws Communist party by decree, 4000 communists arrested

- Election March 3 , 1933, very violent, Nazi's get 44% of vote

- March 23, 1933 - Hitler alters the Weimar Constitution needs 2/3 majority of Reichstag to do this. Gets support of Nationalists and of the Catholic Center Party (Hitler promised to support church). 81 communist deputies had been banned from the Reichstag, also some Social Democrats in prison or in hiding. Only the 94 remaining Social Democrats voted against the **Enabling Act** - "Law for Removing the Distress of the People and the Reich" which gave the government the power to act without the consent of the Reichstag. This law makes Hitler a dictator.

- May 1933 - Socialists and trade unions banned- German Labour Front set up in place of unions, both workers and employers forced to join

- By July 14, 1933 Nazi's were the only legal party, It takes only 6 months to become a dictatorship.

- Nov. 1933. Hitler put his policies to the test of public opinion...96% approved of what he had done

- June 30, 1934 - **Night of the Long Knives** - Hitler gets rid of potential opposition from within the Nazi party from the SA **Stormtroopers (Brownshirts)** who wanted some socialism in the form of limitations on large scale capitalism. **Ernst Roehm**, leader of the SA, also wanted to use the SA to take over the regular army. p. 95 EX. 2

- Roehm and other leaders of the SA are eliminated, plus some enemies of Hitler, all murdered on the night of June 30, 1934 by the **SS**, Hitler's personal bodyguard. The SS becomes a major element of control in Nazi Germany, runs the Gestapo. This is the first act of legalized murder in Nazi Germany. How similar is this to Mussolini?

- Through this action, Hitler not only gets rid of a threat from the **SA** but also earns the gratitude of the army leadership. see p.96 cartoon in DeMarco

Aug. 1934 President Hindenburg dies...the office of the Presidency was abolished

Hitler becomes:

Head of State

Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces - all officers and men to swear an oath of personal loyalty to Hitler

Hitler takes title of **Fuhrer** (Leader) and Reich Chancellor

C. The Nazi State is a Totalitarian State: These states are characterized by:

Totalitarianism

- all social, political, economic, intellectual, cultural and spiritual activities are subordinated to the purposes of the ruler
- utterly dependent on the wishes and whims of party and its leader
- ruled by dictator who controls party

The Party and Its Tools

- members of ruling party are elite of nation
- entire society is organized hierarchical with each level answerable to the level above it except for leader
- total subjugation of the individual through advanced science and technology:
 - monopoly of mass communications
 - terror use of secret police
 - monopoly of all weapons
 - centrally controlled economy

Control of Mass Communications

- By virtue of the monopoly of mass communications the ruling party and the government are in possession of all channels through which people receive information, guidance, and direction.
- All newspaper, magazine, and book publishing, as well as radio and television broadcasting, theater productions, and motion pictures, is centrally controlled and directed.
- All writers, speakers, actors, composers, and poets are enrolled in party-controlled organizations, and they are licensed by the government. Usually they are required to be members of the party.

- The party line, that is, the party's interpretation of policy, is imposed on all mass media through censorship.

The Secret Police

- Employs the theories and techniques of scientific crime detection and modern psychology
- terrorizes the population in ways radically different from and much crueler than those of the police systems of earlier autocracies
- employs institutions and devices such as the concentration camp, predetermined trials, and public confessions

Control of Armament

- The monopoly of all effective weapons of destruction to prevent revolution
- provide no legal means of effecting a change of government,

Control of the Economy

- The centrally controlled economy enables the totalitarian dictatorship to exploit its population for foreign conquest and world revolution.
- Usually the economy is controlled to promote self-sufficiency
- For example, all resources can be concentrated on a single important military project.
- The totalitarian type of economy enables the dictator to control the workers and make them dependent on the government.
- Without a work permit none can work. Work permits may be withdrawn for offenses such as objecting to foul working conditions.
- Unions are either outlawed or there is one union to which everyone's belongs: both employees and employers

Control of Education

- History is rewritten to benefit the party.
- Children and youth are indoctrinated in party ideology and raised to not question why.
- From birth, "citizens" are raised to believe in party goals and be willing to defend them with violence.
- Family exists to produce new party members, typically soldiers

Recommended Study:

Compare and contrast the totalitarian dictatorships of Stalin (Communist), Mussolini (Fascist) and Hitler (Fascist). This could be an essay question!