ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:
“How did Adolf Hitler gain power in Weimar Germany?”
“What happened to allow Adolf Hitler to become Fuhrer of Nazi Germany in 1930’s?”

Germany After WWI:
• 1918 – End of WWI
  • “October Revolution” – Kaiser Wilhelm forced out of power – new German Republic established
  • Weimar Republic
  • Armistice signed, November 1918
  • Germans blamed their defeat on “stab in the back”
    • Belief that outside influences controlled Central Powers – DELUSIONAL!
    • “November Criminals” – betrayed the German Nation in WWI
    • Believed Jews also helped to bring down the mighty German military in WWI
  • Adolf Hitler was recovering from gas attack when WWI Armistice was declared – Distraught over the defeat!
• 1919 – Treaty of Versailles signed
  • German people outraged!
  • War Guilt Clause, Reparation Payments, German lands confiscated, German military reduced.

Weimar Republic: 1918-1933:
• After its defeat in World War I, Germany adopted a democratic form of government with a constitution and free elections.
  • The German Reichstag (legislature) assumed the responsibility of signing the Versailles Treaty.
• Led to mutinies by sailors, soldiers, and workers all over Germany
  • Labor strikes, political violence, etc...
    • Many Socialist groups set up local governing councils and called for communism.
      • The German army and marauding bands of right-wing soldiers broke up these governing councils – political chaos and violence.
        • Adolf Hitler was sent to spy on one such Socialist group: The German Worker’s Party (DAP).
  • Reparation payments caused hyperinflation in the newly formed Democracy.
    • The government began to pay for these loans by printing more marks, the German paper currency.
      • Allies complained – Germans were paying their reparations with increasingly worthless currency.
      • The German people also suffered as prices spiraled upward.
• 1923 – Germany was late in making reparation deliveries of coal and other products to France.
  • Led to French and Belgian troops occupying Germany’s Ruhr Valley, a major coal-mining and industrial region.
    • The German government ordered miners and railroad workers to stop digging coal and transporting it to France.
  • German government again printed more paper money – led to hyperinflation.
    July 1914: 4 marks = $1
    Jan. 1923: 353,000 marks = $1
    Nov. 1923: 4 trillion marks = $1
Hitler After World War I:
• July, 1919 – After World War I, the German Army (Reichswehr) employed Adolf Hitler as a confidential informant (spy).
  • Job was to go around to the obscure political groups and attend meetings – bring info back to military authorities
    • It was in his capacity as a spy that Hitler attended a beer hall meeting of the German Workers’ Party on September 12, 1919.
  • Adolf Hitler finds a political group full of individuals who believe the same as him.
    • He gives a speech at the same meeting denouncing Germany’s enemies and secretly joins as the 55th member of the German Worker’s Party.

National Socialist German Worker’s Party:
• German Worker’s Party (DAP) - (1919)
  • Nationalist
  • Anti-Semitic (hates Jews)
  • Anti-Communist
  • Anti-Capitalist
  • BIGGEST emphasis was on German Nationalism the promotion of the Aryan Race (“true Germans”)
    • Purity and expansion of the Aryan Race
    • 1920 – DAP renames itself NSDAP
• National Socialist German Worker’s Party
  • Swastika chosen as the symbol of the new “Nazi” party
    ******more on the symbol of the Nazis later!******
  • 1921 – Hitler is named Chairman of the Nazi Party
  • His charisma and natural speaking ability gives him a lot of influence within the party.
• Under Hitler’s leadership, Nazi Party grows.
  • Hitler views the Nazi Party as the perfect vehicle to further his political goals.
    • Many speeches
    • Many rallies
• Nazi Party grew using the strategy of:
  • Adolf Hitler’s unique charisma and ability to speak in public.
  • Intimidation and terror - 15,000 Sturmabteilung (SA, "Storm Detachment"), the paramilitary wing of the NSDAP, fought in the streets with rival political groups and Nazi enemies
  • Weimar authorities looked past this political violence, for the most part.
  • Propaganda – every image of the Nazi Party was carefully crafted to appeal to the public.

The Beer Hall Putsch – November 8-9, 1923:
• A failed coup d’état by the Nazi Party (NSDAP) leader Adolf Hitler
  • Nazis attempted to violently seize power in Munich, Bavaria
  • Approx. 2,000 Nazis were marching to the Feldherrnhalle, in the city center, when they were confronted by police
    • Resulted in the death of 16 Nazis and four police officers
  • Hitler was wounded during the clash
    • Escaped immediate arrest and fled to safety in the countryside
    • After two days, he was arrested and charged with treason.

Hitler on Trial:
• The putsch brought Hitler to the attention of the German nation – made front page headlines in newspapers around the world.
• His arrest was followed by a 24-day trial
  • Trial was widely publicized – gave him a platform to speak about his beliefs and the Nazi party
    • HUGE opportunity - Spoke for hours at the trial.
  • Hitler was found guilty of treason and sentenced to five years in Landsberg Prison.
    • This is where he dictated Mein Kampf to his fellow prisoners Emil Maurice and Rudolf Hess.

Mein Kampf
• Mein Kampf (“My Struggle”) – 1925
  • Part autobiography/Part overview of Nazi philosophy:
    1. Hitler’s Anti-Semitic beliefs.
    2. German’s need for Lebensraum (“Living Space”) – German territorial expansion.
    3. Totalitarian Government – Hitler’s political ideology (Fascism).
    4. Describes Hitler’s future plans for Germany.
5. Racial superiority of Germanic peoples.
   • The book was edited by Hitler's deputy Rudolf Hess
   • Hitler devoted himself entirely to the book while imprisoned.
   • Was a bestseller in Germany during the 1930s.
   • After Hitler's death, copyright of Mein Kampf passed to the state government of Bavaria, which refused to allow any copying or printing of the book in Germany.
   • In 2016, Mein Kampf was republished in Germany for the first time since 1945, which prompted public debate and protest from Jewish groups.

Hitler: 1924 – 1927:
   • Hitler was released on December 20, 1924
     • Only served nine months
     • Weimar government put extreme restrictions on the Nazis and Adolf Hitler
       • Hitler was forbidden to speak publically until 1927
   • Hitler and the Nazis now saw that the path to power was through legal and political means rather than revolution or force.
     • Once he began speaking publically again, Hitler and the Nazis threw themselves full force into using politics to take over Germany.

Hitler the Politician:
What did Hitler offer to the German people as a politician?
   • Promises:
     • Nationalists – promise to restore Germany to greatness
     • Wealthy Industrialists – promise to stop Communism
     • Workers – promise to end unemployment
   • Blamed others for Germany's problems:
     • “Undesirables”
     • Jews
     • “November Criminals”
     • Weimar Republic

How does Hitler rise to power?
   • Brownshirts (SA)
     • Use terror tactics to eliminate opposition and critics
     • Used speaking ability – speeches & rallies – to reach the average citizen
   • Hitler’s charisma
     • He was a charismatic leader and speaker
   • Propaganda – (Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels)
     • Public opinion begins to slowly sway toward Nazi support

Nazi Political Victories:
How does Hitler gain complete power in Germany?
   • At the end of 1928, Nazi Party membership was recorded at 130,000.
   • The SA was very active during this period (1925-1930)
     • The battles on the streets grew increasingly violent – pistol, bats, bricks, etc... - Many deaths.
   • Hitler's Nazi Party gained increasing victories in the Reichstag
     • Nazi’s held 107 seats (18.35 of the vote) in 1930.
       • The Nazis were 2nd largest party in Germany.
     • 1932 = 37% of the vote in the Reichstag.
   • The Nazi Brownshirts were incredibly violent during this period (1928-1932)
     • 1931 - Ernst Röhm and the SA suffered 47 deaths and the Nazi political enemies saw 80 deaths in 1931 alone.
       • Street fights and beer hall battles throughout 1932 as well.
     • Adolf Hitler ran in the 1932 presidential election against the monumentally popular WWI hero, von Hindenburg.
     • Lost the Presidential election,
       • HOWEVER... the Nazis began applying pressure on Hindenburg to appoint Nazis to Cabinet posts.

Hitler Appointed Chancellor:
How does Hitler gain complete power in Germany?
   • January 30, 1933 - Franz von Papen, Chancellor of Germany resigned when Nazi governmental power grows.
     • Supported the appointment of Adolf Hitler as the new Chancellor of Germany.
• Hindenburg reluctantly agreed to appoint Hitler as Chancellor.
• There is a belief among German politicians that they could “tame” Hitler.
  • Hitler and the new Nazi Cabinet sworn in during a private ceremony in Berlin.
  • The SA and SS led torchlit parades throughout Berlin to celebrate Hitler’s Chancellorship.
    • Hitler’s *Machtergreifung* (“seizure of power”)

**Reichstag Burns – February 27, 1933**

*How does Hitler gain complete power in Germany?*

- February 27, 1933 - The Reichstag fire was an arson attack on the Reichstag building (home of the German parliament) in Berlin
  - Occurred one month after Adolf Hitler was sworn in as Chancellor of Germany.
  - The Nazi party stated that Marinus van der Lubbe, a Dutch council communist, was found near the building – Stated that he set the fire, along with communist conspirators
    • 1933 - a German court decided that van der Lubbe had acted alone

*Why does this matter?*

- After the fire, the *Reichstag Fire Decree* was passed.
  - 1933 - The *Reichstag Fire Decree* suspended most civil liberties in Germany
    • habeas corpus
    • freedom of expression
    • freedom of the press
    • the right of free association and public assembly
    • the secrecy of the post and telephone
  - The Nazi Party used the fire as evidence that communists were plotting against the German government.
    • The Nazis were able to increase their share of the vote March 5, 1933, Reichstag elections from 33% to 44%
  - March 23, 1933 - *The Enabling Act* was passed - gave Hitler the right to rule by decree.

**The Night of the Long Knives (1934)**

- “The Night of the Long Knives” (also known as the Röhm Purge)
  - A purge of SA and Nazi leaders that took place in Nazi Germany from June 30 to July 2, 1934
  - Adolf Hitler carried out a series of *political extrajudicial executions* intended to consolidate his hold on power in Germany
    • Hundreds of Nazis killed
  - Also alleviated the concerns of the German military about the role of Ernst Röhm and the *Sturmabteilung* (SA)
  - Nazi propaganda presented the murders as a preventive measure - Was there an imminent coup by the SA under Röhm?
    • Röhm Putsch?