

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at www.LibraryVideo.com

- www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/imt/munich1.htm
Yale University provides the full text of the Munich Pact of 1938.
- history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/111hit1.html
Hanover College offers excerpts from a 1921 Hitler speech regarding the Nazi movement.
- www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/hitler1.htm
Calvin College has the full text of Hitler's 1937 speech, "On National Socialism and World Relations."

Suggested Print Resources

- Baynes, Norman Hepburn. *Speeches of Adolf Hitler: Early Speeches, 1922-1924, and Other Representative Passages*. H. Fertig, New York, NY; 2005.
- Domarus, Max. *Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations 1932-1945*. Bolchazy-Carducci, Wauconda, IL; 1990.
- Gellately, Robert. *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany*. Oxford University Press, Oxford; 2001.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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GREATEST SPEECHES
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Historical Overview

History is littered with dictators and despots, but the twentieth century gave rise to a new form of tyranny—the modern totalitarian state. Ruthless and methodical, Adolf Hitler dedicated himself to the elimination not only of all political opposition in Germany, but also of the very machinery of government itself. Hitler's frenzied and passionate speaking style played on the emotions of Germans longing for order and prosperity in a time of great economic uncertainty. While his skillful use of language and propaganda convinced rapt audiences that he was solely responsible for the future of the nation, Hitler's rise to power was merely a prelude to the destruction of Germany and the horrors of the Holocaust.

Time Line

1889 — Adolf Hitler is born in Austria.

1918 — World War I ends with Germany defeated.

1919 — The Versailles Treaty blames Germany for starting World War I.

1920 — The Nazi Party is formed.

1921 — Hitler is named leader of the Nazi Party.

1929 — The Great Depression begins.

1932 — The Nazis become the most powerful political party in Germany.

1933 — Hitler is sworn in as the Chancellor of Germany.

1933 — The Reichstag burns.

1933 — Hitler becomes dictator of Germany.

Vocabulary

Totalitarian state — A state whose government, ruled by a dictator, has total and unlimited authority over the people.

Great Depression — The time period from around 1929 to 1939 in which many people worldwide suffered from extreme poverty as a result of high unemployment.

fascist — An advocate of a system of government that glorifies the state and the leadership of a single powerful ruler.

Holocaust — A term that refers to the destruction of many people; primarily used to describe the planned killing of European Jews and others not considered “racially pure” by the Nazis during World War II.

World War II — The second major war of the 20th century that involved the Allied Powers led by England, France, the Soviet Union and the United States who fought the Axis Powers, which included Germany, Japan and Italy.

Treaty of Versailles — The 1919 treaty that ended World War I. Many believe that the harsh penalties Germany faced set the stage for World War II.

Nazi — A member of Adolf Hitler's political party in Germany; also known as the National Socialist German Workers' Party.

Reichstag Fire — The burning of the German Parliament building in 1933, which was a pivotal moment in the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany.

communist — One who advocates an economic system in which all property and means of production are publicly owned.

Weimar Constitution — The Constitution of Germany from 1919 to 1933 that governed the Weimar Republic until after the Reichstag Fire.

Teutonic — A term referring to ancient Germanic peoples or their language.

SS — Hitler's personal guard and security forces which fought with the German army and ran concentration and death camps during World War II.

Fuhrer — Hitler's title, which is the German term for “leader.”

The Night of the Long Knives — A violent purge of political rivals by Hitler and his henchman which consolidated Nazi power in 1934.

Sudetenland — A part of Czechoslovakia that Hitler annexed with the assent of European leaders in 1938, which led to future Nazi aggression.

Discussion Questions

- After World War I, how did the Treaty of Versailles affect average Germans?
- Who was Ernst Rohm? What was the SA?
- Why did Hitler seek to align himself with the German Army?
- Who was Joseph Goebbels?
- What was the result of “The Night of the Long Knives”?
- What was Hitler's “unalterable resolve” after becoming dictator of Germany?
- How did propaganda play a role in the plan to annex the Sudetenland?
- What was the British response to Hitler's speech at the Berlin Sportpalast?
- What were the terms of the Munich Pact?

Discussion Questions and Activities

- Determined to rule without the restraint of Parliament following the Reichstag fire on February 27, 1933, Hitler lobbied for the passage of the Enabling Act, which constitutionally and legally gave him dictatorial powers. There are similarities and differences between the Enabling Act and the Patriot Act passed by the U.S. Congress on October 26, 2001. Ask students to read portions of the Enabling Act and develop Venn diagrams that compare and contrast the circumstances of its passage and legal measures with those of the Patriot Act. More information on the Enabling Act may be found at the following web site:
web.jjay.cuny.edu/jobrien/reference/ob60.html
- The Nuremberg Rallies were annual gatherings designed to boost support for the Nazi Party and featured stirring speeches by Adolf Hitler, which he delivered to adoring throngs. Ask students to read Hitler's 1927 Nuremberg Rally speech and analyze its tone, use of language and content. How does he define the concept of power in relation to Germany and its people? The partial text of this speech may be found at the following web site:
www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/rpt27c.htm
- After his bloody purge of political rivals during “The Night of the Long Knives” in 1934, Hitler spoke before an enthusiastic hand-picked audience, saying: “If anyone reproaches me and asks why I did not resort to the regular courts of justice for conviction of the offenders, then all I can say to him is this: In this hour I was responsible for the fate of the German people, and thereby I became the supreme justice of the German people.” Ask students to research and develop biographical profiles of the “offenders” Hitler mentions. Who were these people? Why did Hitler believe they posed such a threat? Students may follow up by chronicling other famous political purges from world history.

(Continued)