Hitler’s Legal Rise to Power

• After Hitler’s release from prison in 1924, he now understands that he will have to come to power legally and he cannot afford to be jailed again
• By 1924 conditions in Germany have improved. More Germans are working and industries are producing goods for Germany, not other countries
• Generally most economies in Europe and in North America had improved by 1924 – 1925
• To help Germany recover their debt was scaled down so that reasonable payments could be made (The Dawes Plan)
• Germany would also be granted loans from the United States to help them pay down their debt
• Hitler was surprised with this quick recovery but believed that Germany could do much better if the Weimar Government and Versailles Treaty were cancelled all together
• Hitler’s extreme views on Jews and communists were making some of his followers nervous
• In elections held in December 1926, the Nazi Party only won 3% of the popular vote

Hitler and the Nazi Party – 1920 – 1925

• After the war is over in 1919, Hitler will stay in the army and work as an intelligent officer, spying on political groups especially communists
• One political group called the “National Socialist German Worker’s Party” interested Hitler with their ideas and theories on Germany. Instead of spying on them he decided to join them and left his job
• He would soon become their chief spokesman and will change the name to the Nazi Party
• Hitler begins campaigning on behalf of the party and himself early in 1920. He will speak to thousands of curious Germans in the state of Bavaria in Southern Germany
• Hitler’s speeches are able to bring out emotions from his audience
• He knows that simple Germans desire peace, order and security
• He promises that if he is elected to office he will restore Germany honour and dignity
• In order to improve the standard of living for regular Germans, Hitler knows that people need work to help them feel secure about their families and their future
• Hitler quickly identifies the trouble spots such:
  • Jews
  • Communists
  • Weimar Government
  • Treaty of Versailles
  • He promises to rid Germany of all the above problems
• Hitler’s popularity with the people in Southern Germany increases quickly
• On November 8, 1923, Hitler along with other Nazi leaders and ex-servicemen attempted to illegally overthrow the provincial government of Bavaria in the city of Munich
• Hitler was caught and arrested by the Munich police and put on trial for treason. He was sentenced to five years in prison but only served eight months, released on good behaviour
• While under house arrest, Hitler writes a book call Mein Kamp – my struggle. This book was published throughout Germany, and became the handbook for the Nazi Party. The book outlines Hitler’s, hopes, fears and hatreds for Germany
• Hitler would remain as leader but realized that he would have to make the Nazi Party more appealing to the working class and to German Industrialists
• In 1924 the Locarno Treaty was signed - Germany, France, Belgium and Poland
• Germany accepted the new borders releasing tension between these countries and their borders
• Hitler’s social and economic policies would have to be changed and simplified for the common worker to understand and appreciate
• The popularity of the party would continue to decline. Hitler would now accept advice from German business men and middle class workers in an attempt to win their support in future elections
• The death of President Ebert in 1925 brings old war hero Hindenburg to power. Hitler hopes this will help him come to power

**Hitler Comes to Power in Germany**

1933

• After President Hindenburg comes to power in 1925 Hitler concentrates on becoming the Prime Minister or Chancellor of Germany
• From 1928-1930 new elections revealed that the Nazi party is gaining in popularity; Nazi propaganda has done its job and people are convinced that Hitler equals leadership
• President Hindenburg does not like Hitler and is suspicious of Hitler’s intentions
• Even though Hitler is the most popular candidate to lead the German Parliament, Hindenburg chooses three other men to act as chancellors:
  1. Bruning
  2. Schleicher
  3. Von Papen
• Unfortunately all three men will not be able to gain enough support in the German parliament to hold on to power
• Hindenburg can no longer deny Hitler his chance to be chancellor; on January 30, 1933, Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany
• Strangely the German Parliament building burns in February 1933 and Hitler asks for emergency powers to catch those responsible
• President Hindenburg grants Hitler Special Powers and in March 1933, Hitler passes the Enabling Act
• Nazi leaders will create new laws allowing him total control of Germany –
  1. the only legal party will be the Nazi Party
  2. a Nazi secret police called the Gestapo will be established (Blackshirts)
  3. religion will be monitored closely to make sure priests and ministers preach the gospel according to Hitler
  4. all levels of government – federal, provincial and local will follow Nazi directions
  5. the court system and all police forces will be directed by the Nazis
• President Hindenburg dies in 1934 from old age
• Hitler pretends to be saddened by this news
• Hitler now combines the offices of President and Chancellor, he will accept the title of “Führer” (the leader)

**Hitler’s Early Warning Signs**

• Early in 1935, Hitler decided to pull Germany out of the *League of Nations*
• Since the league was created for countries to negotiate their problems it appeared that Hitler had no time for peaceful talks
• In 1936, Hitler ordered his new army to take over the Rhineland – former German territory near the border with France. France permitted it as a show of trust
• They appeased Hitler, allowed him to violate the Treaty of Versailles in an attempt to prevent war
• In 1936-1937 Hitler signed a treaty with Italy and Japan called the *Rome, Berlin, Tokyo Treaty*, this treaty was about trade
• In 1939 Hitler takes over Austria without a fight. The *League of Nations* does nothing but appease him again to avoid war
• In 1938 – 1939 the country if Czechoslovakia is taken over without fight – *League of Nations* does nothing
• In 1939 Hitler signs a non-aggression treaty with Joseph Stalin, leader of Russia. Both men agree never to fight each other if a war breaks out in Europe. Much of this agreement was kept secret from the people of Europe.
• Hitler has not lost one soldier in all of his early conquests
• Britain, France and other European countries are allowing Hitler to be aggressive in hopes that he will soon stop. To avoid war with Germany they will trust Hitler will not conquer any further – *The Munich Agreement* – 1939
• By this point, Japan has taken over ½ of China - the *League of Nations* permitted this 1931-1937
• By now Italy has taken over Albania and Ethiopia in Africa - no one has tried to stop any of these aggressions