Rise and Fall of the Third Reich

William L. Shirer

Book: 1959 • Film: 1968

AP European History
J.F. Walters & G.W. Whitton
Shirer’s thesis

William L. Shirer
Hitler’s background

Adolf Hitler (1889-1945)
“Chaos can have gentle beginnings.”

—“Rise and Fall of the Third Reich”
Hitler born
20 April 1889
in the Austro-Hungarian Empire

Adolf Hitler as an infant
Hitler’s close friend August Kubizek

August Kubizek (1907)
Hitler in Vienna (1905-13)

Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, where Hitler failed to gain admission

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Antisemitism in Vienna

Karl Lueger, anti-Semitic mayor of Vienna (1897-1910)
Hitler’s move to Munich, Germany (1913)

Munich is in the German state of Bavaria

Hitler in World War I
Field Runner

A photo of Hitler during taken during the Great War
Weimar Germany
(1919-1933)

- democratic republic
- forced to sign Versailles Treaty (1919)
- major economic problems
- challenged by political opponents on the left (communists) and right (fascists)

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<td>communism (left wing)</td>
<td>democracy</td>
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Germany after WWI

- economic problems
- political instability

Demonstrations against the Treaty of Versailles in front of the Reichstag, Berlin (1919)
Hitler after WWI

a 1923 drawing of Adolf Hitler
Hitler joined the German Workers’ Party (1919) transformed it into the National Socialist Workers’ Party (Nazis) *The Nazis were fascists*
Ernst Roehm

Head of the
Sturmabteilung:
The Storm Troopers (SA)

Ernst Roehm
Hermann Goering would eventually become head of the Nazi Luftwaffe.
Rudolf Hess
Hitler’s secretary

Rudolf Hess
German Inflation (1923-24)

German bank notes being used as wallpaper (1923)
George Grosz
German Cartoonist

“The Hero,” George Grosz (1918)
Beer Hall Putsch (1923)

Nazis on the Marienplatz, Munich (1923)
Hitler’s Trial (1924)

Defendants in the Beer Hall Putsch Trial.
Hitler is fourth from the right.
Hitler in Prison (1924) Wrote Mein Kampf:

- argued that the German Aryan was the master race
- inferior peoples are destined to be German slaves
- argued that people were moved by charismatic speaking
- promoted the use of violence and terror
- declared that France was Germany’s mortal enemy and must be destroyed
- claimed that Jews were the root of Germany’s ills

The most common cover of Mein Kampf
Weimar Prosperity (1925-29)

A painting depicting life in Berlin during the “Golden Twenties”
The “Spirit of Locarno” (1925-29)

- The Locarno Treaties (1925)
- Germany allowed into the League of Nations (1926)
- Kellogg-Briand Pact (1928)
- economy grew during the last half of the 1920s

Gustav Stresemann
The “Spirit of Locarno” (1925-29)

- **Kellogg-Briand Pact (1928)**
  - Briand (French Foreign Minister) & Kellogg (U.S. Secretary of State)
  - condemned war as a solution to international controversies
  - countries who signed renounced war as an instrument of national policy
  - 65 nations signed

Aristide Briand
Paul von Hindenburg
President of Weimar Republic (1925-34)

Growth of the Nazi Party
Organization & Membership

“Even to get power legally, it is useful to have a gun pointed at the government.”

—Hitler as quoted in “Rise and Fall of the Third Reich”

Hitler and a group of Nazi Party members (c. 1930)
Great Depression
(1929-39)

“Never have I felt so well disposed.”

—Hitler on the Great Depression

Sign: “Diligent Young Man Seeks Work”
Communist strength
Nazi violence

“We are proud to be called barbarians.”

—Hitler as quoted in “Rise and Fall of the Third Reich”

Hitler saluting at a Nazi party rally
Street warfare

Communists vs. Nazis
Nazis in the Reichstag
(German parliament)

Parliamentary Election Results: 1930 Reichstag
Weimar coalition governments: political instability

Franz von Papen, chancellor of Germany (1932)
1932 Presidential Election: Hindenburg vs. Hitler

A 1932 Hindenburg campaign poster
Hitler gained support of industrialists

Communist-fearing industrialists like Gustav Krupp (left), owner of Krupp Industries, supported Hitler’s plans for German rearmament
Election of 1932: Hindenburg won Hitler lost

Paul von Hindenburg
Weimar Cabinet Crisis (1932-33)

Kurt von Schleicher, chancellor of Germany (1932-33)
Hitler appointed chancellor (1933)

Adolf Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany on 30 January 1933
Nazi revolution?

What is it? Where will it lead Germany?
Hitler’s consolidation of power (1933-34)

Elimination of enemies

- Parliamentary democracy
- Communists
- German military/SA dilemma
- President Hindenburg

Hitler was known as the *Führer* (the leader)

Nazi propaganda against Communists

Nazi propaganda cartoon (1934)
Source: Calvin.edu
Reichstag Fire (1933)
Reichstag granted Hitler emergency powers (1933): parliamentary democracy was dead in Germany
Communists and other political opponents arrested

The Karl-Liebknecht-Haus, Berlin: Headquarters of the German Communist Party (1926-33)
In order for Hitler to gain the support of the German military, he had to destroy the Storm Troopers (SA), his personal army.

Hitler (L) and Roehm (1933)
The Night of the Long Knives (1934)

Hitler destroyed the SA: Roehm and other top leaders were killed
Hindenburg Died (1934)

Hindenburg’s Funeral
Source: Google Images
The Third Reich (1933-45)

The national insignia for the Third Reich

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German army pledged allegiance to Hitler (1934)

A helmet decal for Nazi Wehrmacht
Hitler’s powerful oratory

Hitler speaking to a crowd
Source: Google Images
Revival of German economy through corporatism

Hitler at the opening of a section of the autobahn
Source: german-architecture.info
The Nazi utopia

A model of Albert Speer’s proposed “People’s Hall”
The Aryan ideal

“The Guard,” Arno Breker (c. 1935)
Antisemitism & Nuremberg Laws (1935)

Sign: “Germans, Attention! This shop is owned by Jews. Jews damage the German economy and pay their German employees starvation wages. The main owner is the Jew Nathan Schmidt.” (1933)

Political purification

Political prisoners at Dachau, a camp created for holding Nazi political opponents (1933)
Book burnings: Nazi destruction of ideas

A Nazi book burning (c. 1933)

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Berchtesgaden: Hitler’s Alpine retreat

Berghof: Hitler’s summer retreat house above Berchtesgaden in the Bavarian Alps
The personal Hitler

Hitler, Eva Braun (L) and dogs at Berghof (c. 1940)
Joseph Goebbels
Minister of Propaganda

Joseph Goebbels
Heinrich Himmler
Head of the SS

Heinrich Himmler (1942)
Promotion of violence

Hitler Youth (1933)
Hitler & the Nazis: “Triumph of the Will”

Leni Riefenstahl (standing on cart), director of “Triumph of the Will” (1935)

Berlin & the Reichschancellory:
Center of European activity

Albert Speer’s Reichschancellory

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Nazi rearmament

The Heinkel He 111, built in the 1930s in violation of the Treaty of Versailles. 
Cause of WWII: Nazi Aggression

- Military occupation (remilitarization) of the Rhineland (1936)
- Austrian Anschluss (1938)
- Czechoslovakia (1938)
- Poland (1939)
Remilitarization of the Rhineland (1936)

The Nazi army crossing the Rhine
Source: ImageShack
“Anyone other than myself would have lost his nerve; what saved us was my unshakable obstinacy and my amazing aplomb.”

—Adolf Hitler (1942)
reflecting on the 1936 remilitarization of the Rhineland
Source: “Rise & Fall of the Third Reich”
Austrian Anschluss (1938)

Dismantling a border crossing station along the former border between Germany and Austria
Propaganda against Czechoslovakia (1938)

A map of Czechoslovakia (1928)
Germans in the Czech Sudetenland

The Sudetenland area of the Czech section of Czechoslovakia

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Neville Chamberlain
British Prime Minister (1937-40)

“I had the impression that he could be relied upon.”

—Chamberlain reflecting on Hitler as quoted in “Rise and Fall of the Third Reich”

Neville Chamberlain
War?
Munich Conference (1938): best example of appeasement

Neville Chamberlain arrives in Munich (1938)
“Our enemies are worms. I saw them at Munich.”

—Adolf Hitler (1939)
reflecting on the 1938 Munich Conference

Source: “Rise & Fall of the Third Reich”
Czechoslovakia occupied (1938)

Wenceslas Square, Prague (c. 2005)
Hitler mocked United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt

President Roosevelt with dog Fala and Ruthie Bie, a friend's grandchild (1941)
Nazi propaganda against Poland

The Polish army in the late 1930s
Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact (1939)

An American cartoonist’s interpretation of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact
Source: johndclare.net
Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact (1939)

Source: brokenworld.wikispaces.com
Start of World War II (1939-45)

• Nazi invasion of Poland
  ✓ Germany invaded Poland, 1 September 1939
  ✓ invasion marks the beginning of World War II
  ✓ Nazis used *blitzkrieg* in their conquest of Poland

• Britain and France declared war on 3 September 1939

German stamp from 1943 celebrates *blitzkrieg*
Occupation of Poland (1939)

Jews in occupied Poland were required by law to wear yellow badges of identification.

Source: google images
Phony War
Winter 1939-40

a British poster that was commonly displayed during the Phony War phase of World War II
Nazi conquests (Spring 1940)

Norway
Denmark
Belgium
Netherlands
Luxembourg

German military officers in Oslo, Norway (1940)
“Miracle at Dunkirk” (1940)

British troops being evacuated from Dunkirk (1940)
Fall of France (1940)

Nazi troops march past the Arc de Triomphe (1940)
France under the Nazis: Vichy France (1940-44)

Philippe Pétain (L), Chief of State of Vichy France, shakes hands with Adolf Hitler in 1940

France under Nazi occupation

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Winston Churchill
British Prime Minister
(1940-45)

Churchill offering his trademark “V for Victory” sign in London (1943)
“We have but one aim and one single irrevocable purpose. We are resolved to destroy Hitler and every vestige of the Nazi regime. From this nothing will turn us. We will never parley; we will never negotiate with Hitler or any of his gang. We shall fight him by land; we shall fight him by sea; we shall fight him in the air, until, with God’s help, we have rid the earth of his shadow and liberated its people from his yoke.”

—Winston Churchill
radio broadcast, 22 June 1941
Battle of Britain (1940): “The Blitz”

An iconic photo of London’s famous landmark
St. Paul’s cathedral during The Blitz (1940)
Hitler at the peak of his power (1940-41)

Hitler (center) on his only visit to Paris shortly after the fall of France (1940)
Europe stripped of art and resources

Herman Goering was notoriously famous for looting priceless art from European museums for his own personal collection.

Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union (1941)

A map of German troop movements (1941)
Soviet tactics: scorched earth & retreat

Soviet leader Josef Stalin
Russian autumn: rain and mud

Nazi Wehrmacht troops struggle to move along a muddy Russian road during World War II

Russian winter: snow and cold

Soviet troops advance in the harsh Russian winter during World War II
Hitler declared war on the United States (1941)

Hitler delivering a speech against the United States (11 December 1941)

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Hitler’s tactical error: dividing his forces in order to attack both the oil-rich Caucasus region and the symbolically-important industrial city of Stalingrad.

Field Marshall Paul von Kleist led the German army in the attack on the Caucasus region of the Soviet Union.

Battle of Stalingrad (1942-43)

The aftermath of a Nazi bombing raid on Stalingrad

The Holocaust (1942-45): “The Final Solution”

Women, children and the elderly keep German war machine going
British victories in North Africa (1942-43)

British Field Marshall Bernard “Monty” Montgomery led the Allied forces to victory at the Battle of Alamein (1942) in Egypt.

Nazi defeat at Stalingrad (1943)

German Field Marshall Friedrich Paulus prepares to surrender to the Soviet Union at Stalingrad (1943)
Allied invasion of Italy (1943)

A map of the Allied invasion of Italy (1943)
Allied air attacks on German cities

The German city of Dresden after the Allied firebombing of 1945
German solidarity (unity) on the home front

“Our walls may break, but never our hearts.”

—German poster displayed during World War II

Source: “Rise & Fall of the Third Reich”
D-Day: Allied invasion of Normandy, France (1944)

US troops land at Omaha Beach on the Normandy coast (1944)
Claus von Stauffenberg: cruised his way to a death sentence for treason

Source: googleimages
Goebbels’ Nazi propaganda

Joseph Goebbels
Source: adrianasasson
Armaments Minister Albert Speer: kept Nazi military supplied

Albert Speer (left) working with Hitler
Germany’s new technology: jet engines & V-rockets

(innovative, but developed too late in the war)

A Nazi V-2 rocket being launched in 1943
Nazis in retreat on both fronts
(1944-45)

Soviet trucks drive the Nazi army west toward Berlin

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Germans in retreat: Destruction
Soviet Red Army approaches German border

Soviet soldiers use a rocket launcher
German defense of homeland (1944-45)

Germans had to defend the country on both the eastern and western borders

An advertising poster for the 1945 film “Kolberg”
Hitler returns to Berlin

Hitler (right) returns to bombed-out Berlin
France & Belgium liberated and Allies cross the Rhine (1944-45)

A British tank on the River Meuse (1944)
Nazi army reduced to child soldiers

Joseph Goebbels shaking hands with a 16-year-old in the German army (1945)
A photo of a Berlin street taken shortly after the end of the war

Soviet Red Army attacks Berlin 1945
Hitler’s last days in the Führerbunker (April 1945)

Martin Bormann, Hitler’s private secretary, is believed to have burned Hitler and Eva Braun’s remains after the couple committed suicide on 30 April 1945.

Liberation of Nazi death camps (1944-45)

Prisoners liberated from Mauthausen (1945)
Nuremberg Trials (1945-46)

• trial of leading Nazi “war criminals”
• Allied tribunal (Britain, US, France, SU)
• Nazi defendants
  ✓ accused of “crimes against humanity”
  ✓ pleaded “not guilty” (argument: they were just following orders)
  ✓ found guilty: individuals can be held responsible for state-sponsored crimes

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“The wrongs which we seek to condemn and punish have been so calculated, so malignant, and so devastating, that civilization cannot tolerate their being ignored, because it cannot survive their being repeated.”

—Robert H. Jackson, American prosecutor
Nuremberg Trials, Germany (1945)
Return to Shirer’s thesis
The children of Teresienstadt (Terezin) concentration camp

Produced by State Jewish Museum, Prague
Source: Amazon.com
Reflections

What did you like and/or dislike about the film “Rise and Fall of the Third Reich” and how it was used as an educational tool in class?
Reflections

What did you learn about this period in history that you had not known before viewing “Rise and Fall of the Third Reich”? 