The Rise of Nazism

After WWI, Germany had to pay huge reparations to the allied powers. Inflation occurred and Germany went into a deep depression. Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany in 1933 under President Paul Von Hindenburg. After Hindenburgs death in 1934, Hitler abolished the position of President and declared himself Fuerher of the Third Reich. The Nazi party was formed. Hitler wanted to start a master race. He had people he considered inferior killed or imprisoned. In 1936, Hitler took control of the Rhineland with no international opposition.

In 1938, he took control of Austria, again with no opposition. In 1938, Hitler declared he wanted the Sudetanland, a part of Czechoslavakia with a large German population. The Czech government refused to give it to them. In 1938, France, Great Britain, Italy, and Germany met at Munich. They told the Czechs to give up the Sudetanland to preserve peace. This was known as the Munich pact. In March 1939, Hitler invaded Czechoslavakia and took control against their will. Mussolini did the same thing to Albania. Hitler then made a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union. The Soviets would get the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) and Eastern Poland and Germany would get Western Poland. On September 1, 1939, Hitler invaded Poland. There was a “blitzkrieg” (a lightening war) and on October 5, Poland surrendered. On September 3, 1939, Great Britain and France declared war on Nazi Germany.

1. When was the Munich pact?
2. Who took control of Albania?
3. What does blitzkrieg mean?

Review Questions:

1. What happened in 1933?
2. When did Hitler declare himself the Fuehrer?

Worldwide Depression

After WWI, most countries began to prosper. The “roaring 20’s” began in the United States and everyone began to feel good about the economy. People believed the song “Happy days are here again” and felt they could prosper in life. In October, 1929, the stock market crashed. This ended the good times and happy days. The value of stocks people held in companies began a steep and sudden drop. Because stockholder began to realize they would lose everything they owned, they began selling as fast as they could. With more sellers than buyers, the prices fell even further. This started a chain reaction. Businesses found they could not sell their goods because people didn’t have the money to buy. With no money coming into the business, they couldn’t pay their debts. This caused the business to close which caused more unemployment. Because they couldn’t pay their debt to the factories, the factories began having to close which caused even greater unemployment. Because this happened so quickly, people began to panic. They tried to get their money out of the banks, which caused the banks to close. The economy of the United States came to an abrupt halt. This began to effect the farmers, because they could no longer get loans to farm nor could they pay off the loans to the bank. Because foreign countries traded with the United States, they began to suffer. Before long, there was worldwide economic depression.

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