



# **The Church in Hitler's Germany**

**Green County Genealogical Society**

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**Mark Peterson**

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# **The Church in Hitler's Germany**

## **Why study this topic?**

Erwin W. Lutzer: “**Nazi Germany is a rich source of lessons** on the source of laws, the impact of economic policy, the power of propaganda, the high cost of anti-Semitism, and the role of the church in a state that has gone bad.”

## **Hitler was a Cauldron of contradictions:**

- Willing to trample on his closest friends to achieve his goals.
- Prepared for War but speeches are about his desire for peace.
- Hitler's dictatorship enjoyed wide public support.
- University students and professors supported Hitler.
- Hitler achieved power thru a democracy legitimately.
- Depths the mind can descend once the conscience dies.

## **Are there lessons we can watch for and take action?**

# **The Church in Hitler's Germany**

- A. German Nationalism**
- B. Hitler's Background**
- C. Hitler's Strategy to gain complete control**
- D. Church Status and Bonhoeffer's Background.**
- E. Hitler attacks the Church by year from 1933-45**
- F. Reflections for US?**
- G. References**

# A. German Nationalism (First Reich 800-1806)



**Charlemagne made emperor in the year 800.**

At first Germany is a very divided country.

The First Reich starts with Charlemagne. Traditional spot on the floor of the Vatican where this took place.

Frankish King's capital was Aachen (in Western Germany)

Holy Roman Empires Flag is shown above. Germany still uses those three colors Red, Black and Yellow.

# A. German Nationalism (First Reich 800-1806)

The 1<sup>st</sup> Reich lasts for 1000 years.

Relations between the German Empire and the Pope are close. The Emperor is elected by a group of princes, then crowned by the Pope.

Central part of Europe becomes the “Holy Roman Empire”.

At one point, there are 365 kingdoms. The picture shows the kingdoms in 1200 AD.

The Church and State are ONE.

**State Churches** still exist today (Denmark)

Taxes in Denmark pay for the churches.

But today regular attendance is 5% in Denmark compared to US with 45% (2018).



# A. German Nationalism (First Reich 800-1806)

The Thirty Years War: 1618-1648

- German civil war
  - Protestantism and Catholicism
  - Constitutional issues (emperor vs independent member states)
  - Both Protestant and Catholic areas fought against emperor for independence
  - First large-scale war fought with gunpowder (and swords)
- International war
  - France vs Habsburgs
  - Spanish vs Dutch
  - Involvement by Denmark, Sweden, and Transylvania



The map illustrates the religious and political divisions of Europe during the Thirty Years War. It shows the Holy Roman Empire, France, the Dutch Republic, and other major powers. The legend indicates: Roman Catholic (yellow), Calvinist (orange), Lutheran (green), and other Protestant denominations (purple). It also shows the boundaries of the Holy Roman Empire and the involvement of various powers like Denmark, Sweden, and Transylvania.

In 1517, **Martin Luther** starts the Protestant Reformation. Germans revere him like the Jews revere Moses. He translates the New Testament into German among other positive ventures.

There are Religious Wars between Catholics and Protestants across Germany and much of Central Europe for about 130 years.

In Germany, Catholics are mainly in the South and Protestants are mainly in the North. Treaty of Westphalia (in 1648) ends the religious wars.

# A. German Nationalism (First Reich 800-1806)

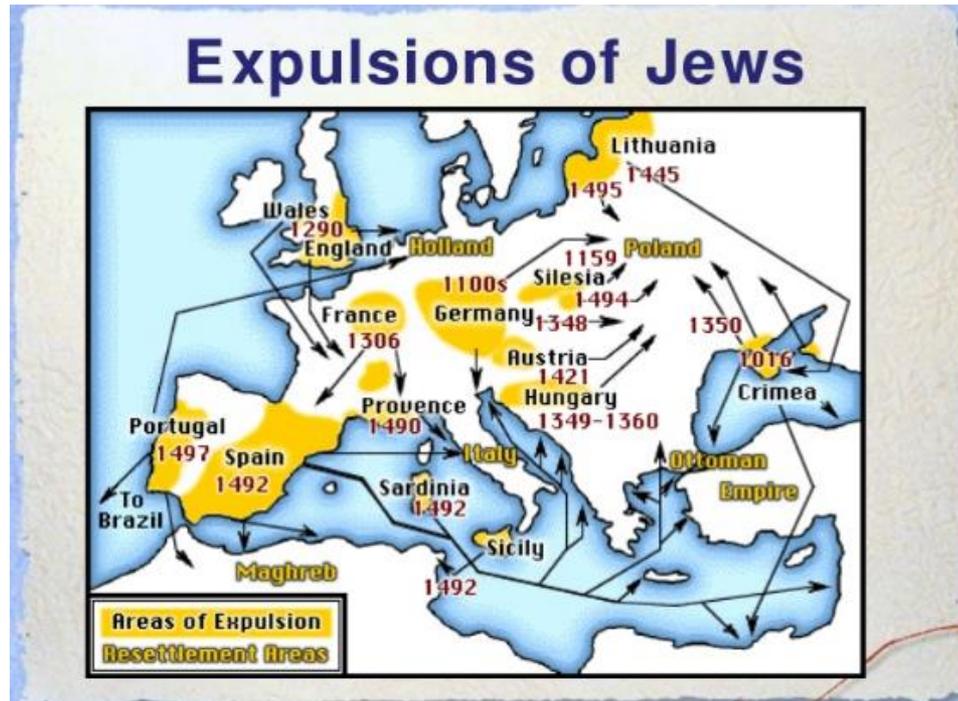
**WAS MARTIN LUTHER (PROTESTANT REFORMATION) A FRIEND OF THE JEWS OR AN ENEMY? EXPLAIN WHY.**

- In his youth, he had been a champion of the Jews, but when they refused to convert to Protestantism, he raged against them and called for their destruction
- He called for the burning of their synagogues, seizure of their books, and their expulsion from Germany



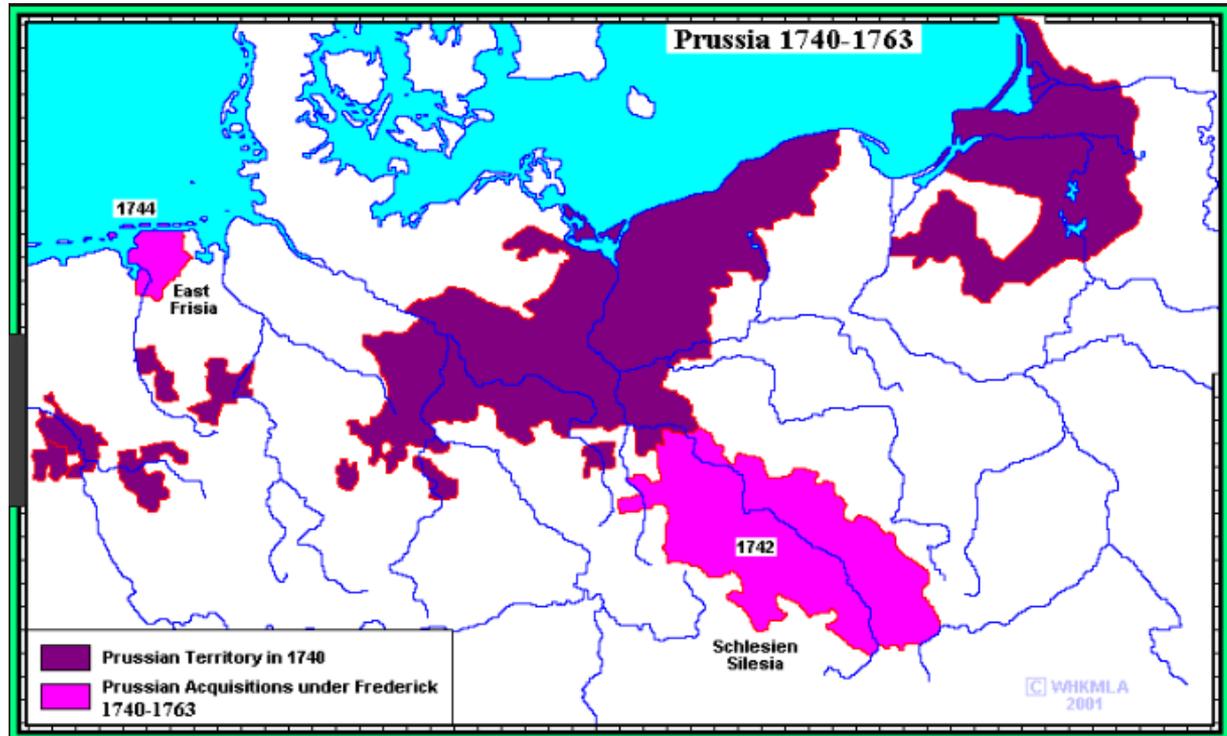
Germans see Luther as a great GERMAN National Hero. But-- Many Germans, including Hitler, point to Martin Luther's Anti-Semitism. However, Luther is against Jews because of their beliefs. Hitler is against Jews because of their Race.

# A. German Nationalism (First Reich 800-1806)



**European Jews** during the 1000 years were never landowners. Farmers, which are 80 to 90% of the population, are never Jewish. Jews are urban and literate. So, they become bankers, lawyers, doctors, shop owners and teachers. As Jewish bank lenders, there are people, including Kings, who could not pay their debts. So, Jews are expelled from many countries and their loans are forgotten. Hitler accuses the Jews of being bankers.

# A. German Nationalism (First Reich 800-1806)



**Frederick II** declares himself King of Prussia (1740-1786)

Prussia has greatly increased its territories and becomes a leading military power in Europe under his rule. Prussia eventually unites Germany.

He says, “salvation is God’s affair – everything else belongs to me.”

He is one of Hitler’s Heroes, because of his military ability.

# A. German Nationalism (First Reich ends 1806)



Napoleon

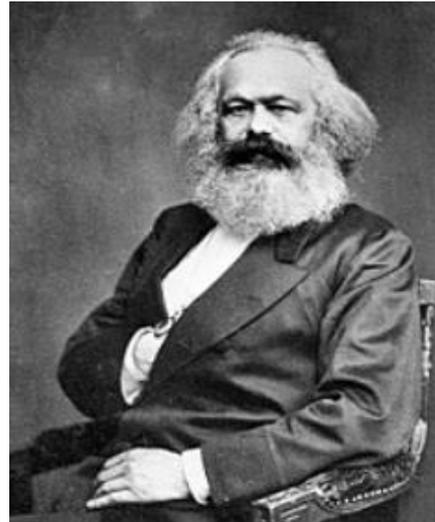
Napoleon and the Revolutionary French, end the Holy Roman Empire and for administrative reasons they combine its numerous little kingdoms into larger regions. This starts Germany on the road to unification.

1<sup>st</sup> Reich paves the way for Hitler's idea to unify State and Church.

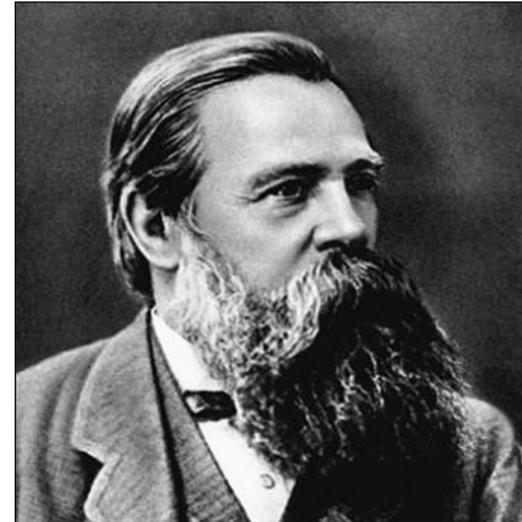
## A. German Nationalism (from 1806 - 1871)



Georg W F Hegel



Karl Marx



Fredrich Engels

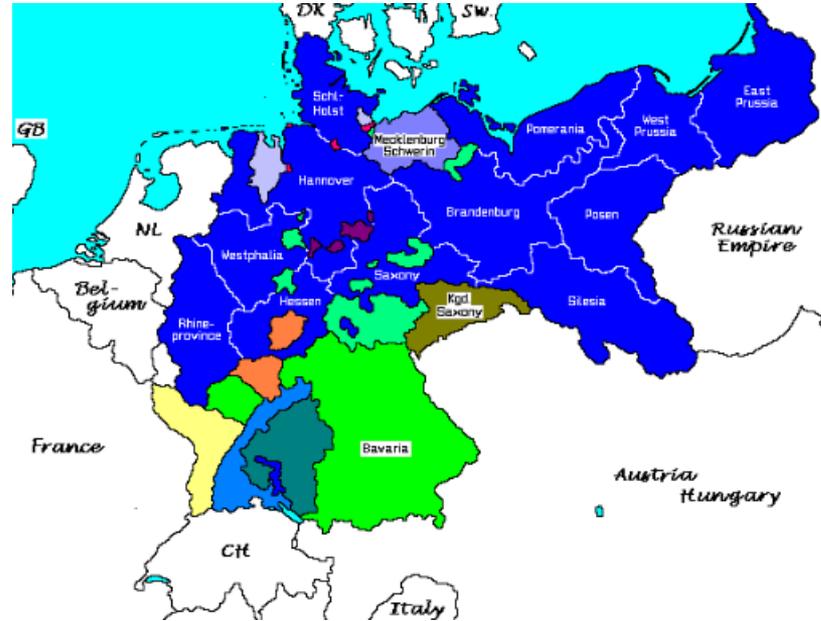
By 1840 – Some Germans say “Special intuition” is the method of discovering important truths and finding god. Their Philosophy argues that it is their duty to promote the greatness of Germany.

Georg W F Hegel – denies the uniqueness of Christianity; he argues against the Bible’s Old Testament and rejects it. It’s Jewish. Karl Marx, a follower of Hegel, says, “man is the maker of his own history, and there is no god.” Karl Marx with Fredrich Engels write the **Communist Manifesto in 1848**, explaining “Class Struggle” and the importance of the State.

# A. German Nationalism (2nd Reich 1871-1918)



Bismarck



**Otto von Bismarck** becomes the Chancellor of Prussia and takes the lead to unify Germany. He says, “I believe I am obeying God, when I serve the King”. Bismarck desires efficient & reliable bureaucrats and tries to omit the individual.

After 3 separate wars against Denmark (1864), then Austria (1866) and finally France (1870). Prussia unites all of Germany in 1871, which makes it a relatively young nation.

# A. German Nationalism (2nd Reich 1871-1918)



Kaiser Wilhelm I



Hall of Mirrors at Versailles

**Kaiser Wilhelm I** - begins the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reich on Jan 18, 1871, when he is crowned the German Emperor in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles in Paris. Bismarck states “the great questions of the day will not be settled by resolutions, but by blood and iron”.

2<sup>nd</sup> Reich tells the German people, there must be a **separation between private & public morality**.

## A. German Nationalism (2nd Reich 1871-1918)



**Nietzsche**



During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reich more German intellectuals command world attention. Influenced by Darwin. In 1883 Friedrich **Nietzsche**, uses the term Übermensch, or **Superman**. He says, “I call Christianity the one great curse. The virtues of mercy and forgiveness, make the Germans weak.”

With God out of the way, humans are unrestrained. There would be no fear of judgment, and no belief in the virtues of morality.

“A **genius** is above the law” and “The ruthless will inherit the earth”.

Hitler often visits his museum and makes this as a basis for his Nazi “Master Race” Philosophy.

# A. German Nationalism (2nd Reich 1871-1918)

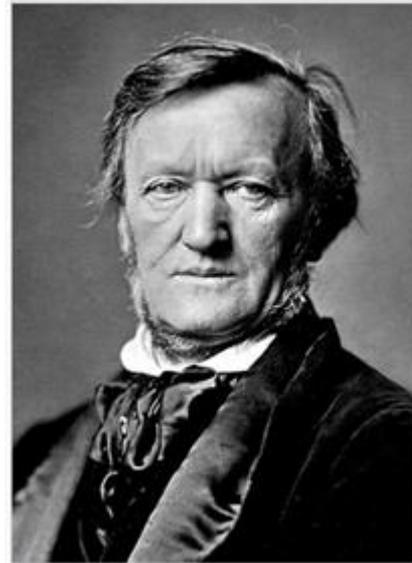
German Romantic composer, **Richard Wagner**, who he is anti-Semitic, is a favorite of Hitler.

Wagner coins the expressions "Jewish problem" and "final solution".

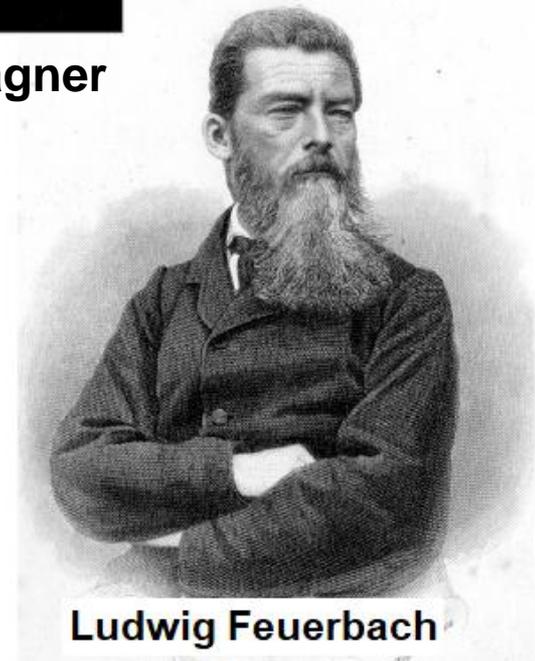
**Ludwig Feuerbach** – writes a book The Essence of Christianity –

Man is no longer second but first;  
The miracles of the New Testament should be forgotten.

The German National Anthem is **Deutschland uber alles** which means "Germany is above all else".



**Richard Wagner**



**Ludwig Feuerbach**

# A. German Nationalism (2nd Reich 1871-1918)



## In 1914 - Kaiser Wilhelm II

leads Germany into The Great War where Germany sustains almost 6 million casualties or 54% of its armed forces.

Note: Peter Jackson's movie "**They Shall Not Grow Old**" shows a very good representation of British life in World War 1.

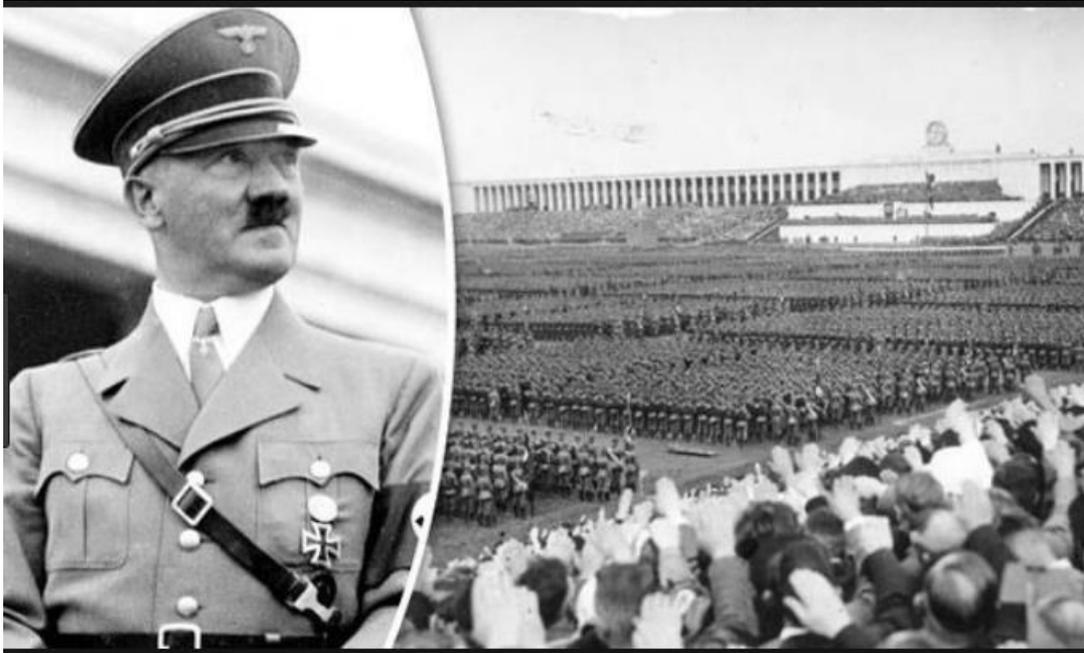
Country	Mobilized	Killed	Wounded	Total	Casualties
Austria-Hungary*	6,500,000	1,200,000	3,620,000	4,820,000	<b>74%</b>
Canada	620,000	67,000	173,000	241,000	39%
French Empire*	7,500,000	1,385,000	4,266,000	5,651,000	<b>75%</b>
Germany*	<b>11,000,000</b>	<b>1,718,000</b>	<b>4,234,000</b>	<b>5,952,000</b>	<b>54%</b>
Great Britain*	5,397,000	703,000	1,663,000	2,367,000	44%
Italy*	5,500,000	460,000	947,000	1,407,000	26%
Russia*	12,000,000	1,700,000	4,950,000	6,650,000	55%
USA*	4,272,500	117,000	204,000	321,000	<b>8%</b>

# A. German Nationalism (Weimar Rep. 1918-1932)



Germany lost the war, and on November 1918 signs the Armistice in France. The Treaty of Versailles is completed in June 1919 and Germany is NOT invited. Part of the treaty says Germany must pay for the war, 132 billion marks (\$33 billion). German Weimar Republic accepts the one-sided treaty. They attempt to pay reparations by printing more money. Inflation runs wild **4 marks/\$1; 75 marks/\$1; 400 marks/\$1; to 7000 marks/\$1 in 1922; 18,000 marks/\$1; in Nov '1923, 4 billion marks/\$1.** The middle class is financially wiped out.

# A. German Nationalism (3rd Reich 1933-1945)



By the 1930s, Most Germans feel they were betrayed in 1918.

**They want Revenge for the Treaty of Versailles.**

The word Reich means “Realm”. The term "Third **Reich**" was coined by Arthur Moeller van den Bruck in his 1923 book Das Dritte Reich.  
...the term refers to Nazi Germany.

**Adolph Hitler** proclaims he will lead this 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich in 1933; and claims it will last for a 1000 years.

# A. German Nationalism (3rd Reich 1933-1945)



Initially Hitler is seen doing GOOD for Germany.

- 1) Build Freeways – Autobahn (in US - Interstates) and the VW
- 2) Revives Economy, by 1938 there is full employment.
- 3) Erases the shame of Germany's defeat in the Great WAR
- 4) Crime is under control
- 5) Germans begin to believe in themselves
- 6) The 15 years of Democracy is considered a bad experience.  
Many Germans want a ruler, a Dictatorship.

**But what is Hitler's background?**

## B. Hitler's Background



Braunau am Inn, Austria



Alois Schicklgrubber

Alois Schicklgrubber (1837 – 1903) **Adolph Hitler's Father** is born illegitimately in Austria, and his paternity is never established. It also means that Adolf can not prove pure Aryan blood.

Alois is a **Civil servant** working in the Customs service, and when he is promoted, he applies to be legitimized at the age of 39 (in 1877). At his age, this is very unusual, but he takes the name of his **stepfather Hiedler**, which is entered in the register as 'Hitler', for unknown reasons.

## B. Hitler's Background



Baby Adolf and his 1<sup>st</sup> residence.



Klara Polzi

Alois takes up with a few women during his career, first as a shoemaker, then as a customs official. After the death of his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife, he marries Klara Polzi on January 7, 1885. Klara may have been Alois's first cousin.

Klara Polzi (1860 – 1907), Alois's 3<sup>rd</sup> wife, becomes the **mother of Adolf Hitler** born on 20 April 1889, the 3<sup>rd</sup> child of this marriage.

**Klara's first 2 children die in infancy**, which may have made her overprotective of little Adolph.

## B. Hitler's Background

Adolf Hitler is an **altar boy** for a short time in the Catholic Church. He sings poorly, and he never tries it again.

Adolph Hitler has a **poor relationship** with his domineering father, who wants him to be trained as a civil servant, the last thing Adolf wants. He stops studying in school and **thinks his teachers are stupid**, except for a History teacher, Dr. Leopold Poetsch (Putch), a fanatical German nationalist.

At 11, Adolf is sent to the high school at Linz. In 1903 his father dies when Adolf is 13 years old.



Adolph Hitler - 11

## B. Hitler's Background

Hitler dreams of **becoming an artist**, he is also fascinated with the occult.

His mom, an ailing widow, finds it difficult to make ends meet, but sends Adolf to Vienna to study art; when he is between the ages of 16 to 19. While in Vienna, Adolf becomes **obsessed with politics**. He has sudden bursts of anger with those who disagree with him. He hates the Austrian Hapsburg monarchy and its multinationalism.

He loves German history & mythology. He is a **teetotaler, a nonsmoker and a vegetarian**. The 3 years that he spends in Vienna are a waste. On 21 Dec 1907, his mom dies of breast cancer.



Adolph Hitler in Vienna

## B. Hitler's Background



Homeless in Vienna

From 1908 to 1913 Hitler, after wasting his inheritance, has a time of utter misery and destitution. He works at **odd jobs** – shoveling snow, carrying bags, beating carpets, and painting crude little pictures of Vienna. He lives in homeless shelters like the one pictured above. He has a few dealings with Jews in Vienna. He rejects help from family members who want him to be a civil servant. In May of 1913, Adolf moves to Munich, Germany to avoid arrest for evading military service to Austria.

## B. Hitler's Background



16<sup>th</sup> Bavarian Reserve Regiment



Corporal Adolf Hitler

August 1914, World War 1 starts, and Hitler joins the **German army**, as an Austrian. This is allowed because both countries speak German.

He is a **currier**, a dangerous job, and earns the iron cross twice. At the battle of Ypres against the British, his regiment of 3500 ends with only 600 men. In 4 years of combat, he suffers a leg injury and late in 1918, he is temporary blinded in a gas attack and hospitalized.

# B. Hitler's Background



The Armistice is signed while Hitler is recovering in the hospital. Adolf weeps when he hears of the Armistice. The Treaty of Versailles is signed by the Weimar Republic, and **many Germans are angry**. It limits the German Army (the pride of Germany) to only 100,000 men (< 1% of WW1). 1919 – Hitler stays in the army and is told to monitor a new political party called the **German Workers Party**. He eventually joins this party which is very small (50 members), and discovers he has a **gift for oration**. After the war, Hitler becomes openly antisemitic which is based on the **Social Darwinist race-theory**.

## B. Hitler's Background



National Socialist German Workers' Party



Ernst Rohm with Hitler

By 1921 – Hitler takes control of this political party & changes its name to **National Socialist German Workers' Party or Nazi.**

Captain **Ernst Rohm** (who is gay) is the head of the Storm Troopers (or SA), which is their political party's army. These **Brown Shirts**, are used to intimidate others into the Nazi way. It is not uncommon for the Brown Shirts to hit citizens who do not give the "Heil Hitler" salute. Hitler uses some of the same methods created by Mussolini and the Fascists.

## B. Hitler's Background



General Ludendorff



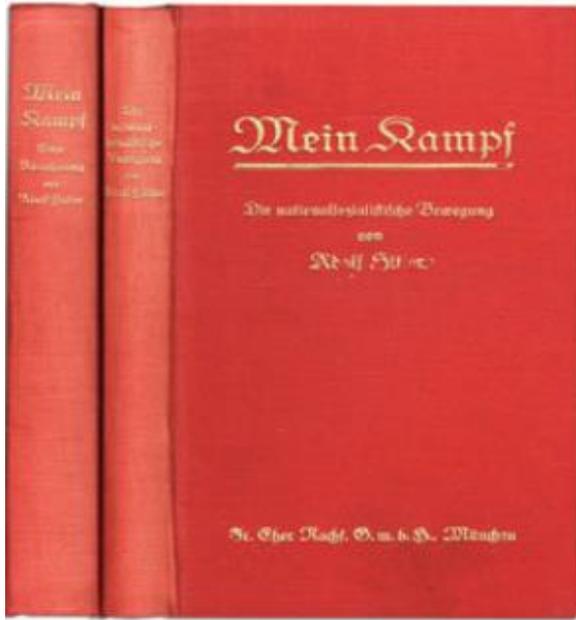
Heil Hitler salute

Hitler attempts to overthrow the government by force with General Ludendorff (a WW1 hero) and 3000 Nazis in Munich in 1923. It is known as the “**Beer Hall Putsch**”, but it fails, 14 people are killed.

Hitler says next time, he will use democracy to gain power then, he will crush it. Hitler is sentenced to 5 years in prison.

**Heil Hitler salute** might come from a 1909 Italian silent movie called “Nero”. There is no evidence that this salute was done in Roman times.

## b) Hitler's Background



In prison, Hitler writes **Mein Kampf** (My Fight) and serves only 9 months. In his book, Hitler **blames the Jews** for all the vice in Germany. He damns them if they are Capitalist and damns them if they are Communist. Mein Kampf states Jews are subhuman. Hitler says he follows **Divine Providence**. Hitler refuses to allow his book to be translated into English. By 1930, large numbers of Germans enter the Nazi Party. In the Reichstag (like Congress), in 1930, Social Democrats have 143 seats; Nazi have 107; Communist have 77.

# **C. Hitler's Strategy**

- 1) Expand your Power Base.**
- 2) Create and defeat a Common Enemy.**
- 3) Control the Media.**
- 4) Eliminate ALL Political Enemies.**
- 5) Control the Schools and Universities.**
- 6) Instigate a Monopoly on the use of force**
- 7) Limit Choices**
- 8) Create an Ideology to Justify a Single-leader.**

Some Points are taken from journalist Anjana Ahuja,  
British Indian science journalist

# C. Hitler's Strategy



## 1) **Expand your power base**

Using nepotism, corruption and intimidation, only select those people you can trust. **The end (control) always justifies the means.** Hitler creates and uses his political army, the Brown Shirts (SA) to intimidate Germans. The German Government and its Military ignore these tactics.

## C. Hitler's Strategy



### **2) Create and defeat a common enemy.**

Hitler focuses Germans' hatred toward the Jews and portrays himself as a defender of the Fatherland against Jewish International Financial Institutions (Bankers) and their desire for War.



The Jew  
War Instigator  
War Extender

# C. Hitler's Strategy

## 3) Control the Media.

Turn the media into a propaganda machine.

Truth can be whatever you want it to be, its relative. Only broadcast one point of view.

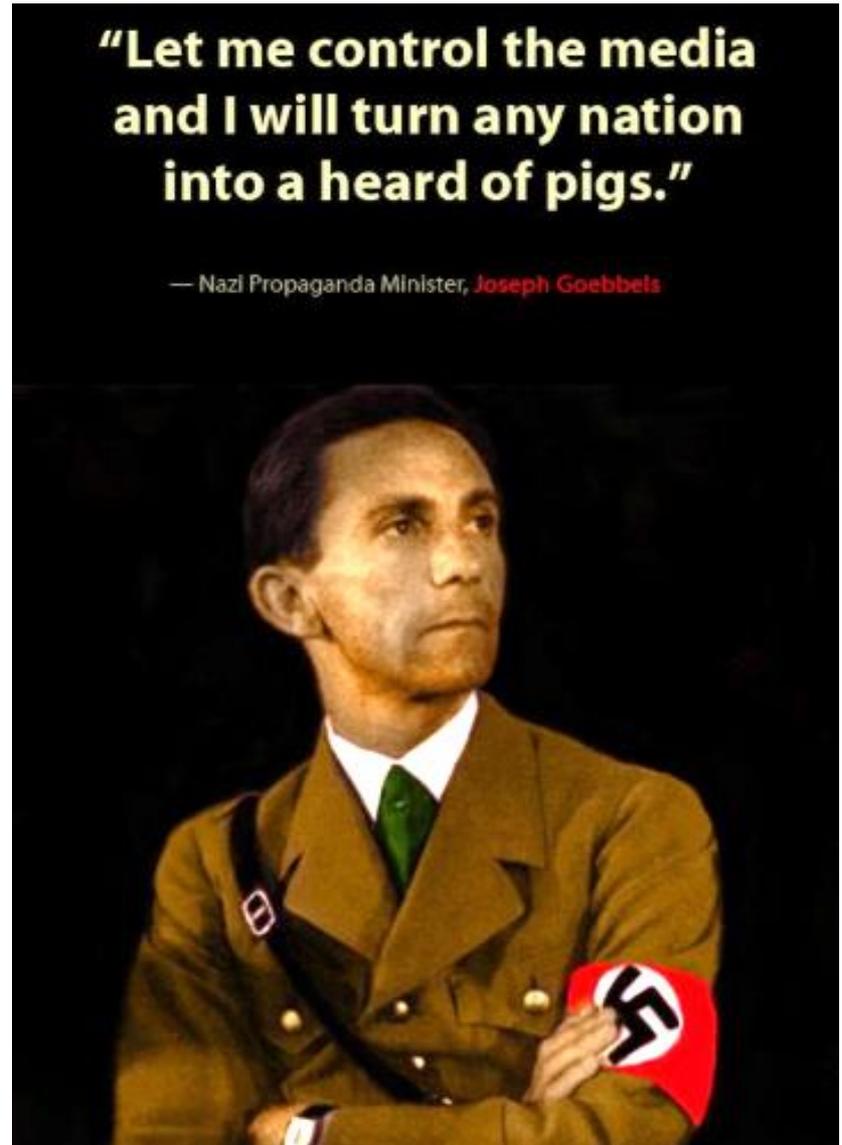
**Joseph Goebbels Minister of Propaganda**, says, "If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it."

**Truth is Relative?**

**Are you absolutely sure?**

**"Let me control the media and I will turn any nation into a heard of pigs."**

— Nazi Propaganda Minister, **Joseph Goebbels**



## C. Hitler's Strategy



### **4) Eliminate ALL political enemies.**

**Divide and Conquer.** Hitler uses character assassination and violence by the SS to eliminate rivals. Political opposition is rounded up and sent to concentration camps for reeducation.

Hitler plans to appear religious then eliminate church leaders who oppose him. When he gets control, **Hitler moves fast.**

## C. Hitler's Strategy



Nazi Book Burning



Come on and!  
Into Hitler's youth

### 5) Control the Schools and Universities.

The Hitler Youth use **peer pressure to ensure commonality**. Hitler ensures that only one point of view is taught; and all others are marginalized or banned at all libraries, state schools and universities.

Uneducated people are much easier to control.

He also prohibits all alternatives to state schools.

## C. Hitler's Strategy



### **6) Instigate a monopoly on the use of force**

Always align with the largest force, which can curb public protest. People prefer order to chaos, even at the expense of freedoms. The Weimar Republic in 1928, had all private guns registered. Hitler turns against the Brown Shirts in the night of the Long Knives (30 June 1934) to win favor with the established military leaders.

In 1938, German Law prohibits Jews from having handguns.

# C. Hitler's Strategy

## 7) Limit choice

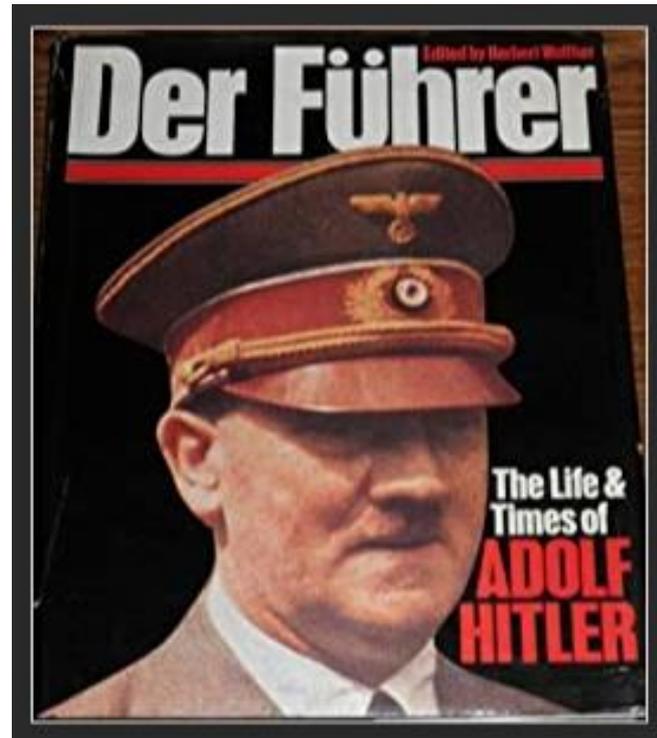
Citizens should only have one political party, one media message, one trade union movement, one type of car, one type of refrigerator, one gov't radio station, etc.

People will allow individual restrictions for economic security. Curry favor by providing public goods efficiently and generously.

Pictures at the right show the Volkswagen (the People's Car) developed by Porsche.



## C. Hitler's Strategy



### **8) Create an ideology to justify a single-leader position.**

The Weimar Republic was forced on Germany after the Great War. This democracy brought chaos to Germany in its 15 years of existence. Germany must turn to a strong leader (de Fuhrer) to stop this chaos. Hitler requires all his leaders, even in the military, to give an oath of loyalty personally to him. In the US, the oath is to the Constitution.

## D. Church Status

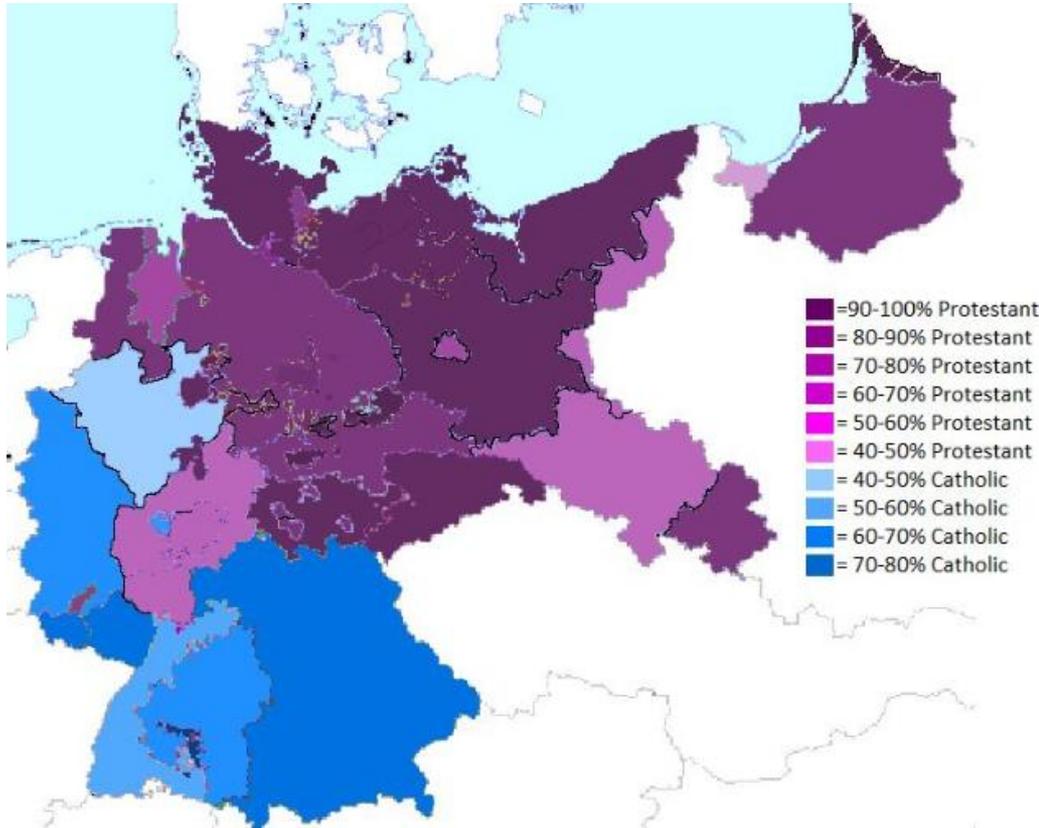


By 1925-1929, before Hitler, the German economy seemed to come into its own – funded by US loans. Then the Depression hits in 1929 – US withdraws those investments – the German economy collapses. This economic situation is the opportunity that Hitler seeks to capture government by constitutional means.

By 1930, large numbers of Germans enter the Nazi Party.

Some **Catholic Bishops prohibit membership** in Nazi Party but allow church attendance. The Catholic Church opposes the Nazi doctrine.

# D. Church Status



In 1933, most Germans go to church weekly, but there are Divisions in the Christian Church.

The **Catholics** are fairly unified around their bishops who follow directives from Pope Pius XI in Rome.

But there is a major split between the Protestants.

The **German Church** follows the Nazi Party and gets its direction from Hitler.

Other Protestants eventually form the **Confessing Church** and slowly attempt to oppose the Nazis and Hitler.

**Catholics** 1/3 of the population are mainly in the South

**Protestants** 2/3 of the population are mainly in the North

## D. Church Status - Bonhoeffer



One of the leaders in the Confessing Church is Dietrich Bonhoeffer (the blond) is born in on 4 Feb. 1906 with twin sister Sabina. They are a wealthy aristocratic family, 4 boys and 4 girls. They are **home schooled** by Mom, Paula who is a Christian. Her Father was the Protestant Chaplain to the Kaiser. **Mom does not encourage church attendance but reading the Bible.** Their Dad, Dr. Karl Bonhoeffer, an agnostic, is head of Psychiatry and Neurology at the University of Berlin, a position he took in 1912.

# D. Church Status - Bonhoeffer



Dietrich

This is the family home in Berlin. Dietrich is 8 years old when WW1 starts in 1914. Walter, the 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest, is killed in the Great War in 1918.

In 1920, at age 14, Dietrich tells the family he plans to be a Theologian attending Tubinger University in 1923.

In 1924, he visits Rome and is impressed with all the different races in the Vatican. He sees that The Church includes everyone – not just Germans.

## D. Church Status - Bonhoeffer

Bonhoeffer graduates from the University of Berlin in 1927, at the age 21, and then spends 3 months in Barcelona, Spain as an assistant pastor to a German congregation. He believes people must give God everything or nothing. The essence of Christianity is not religion at all, but its about the person of Christ. He sees “humanism” as the most severe enemy. Then it is back to Germany to write a dissertation.

He becomes friends with a Swiss Neo-Orthodox Theologian, Karl Barth who is prominent in the Ecumenical Movement.



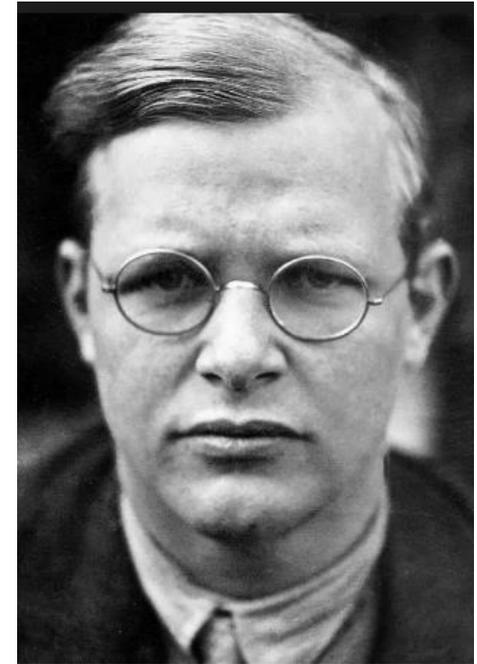
Karl Barth

## D. Church Status - Bonhoeffer



In 1930, Dietrich Bonhoeffer travels to New York City to attend **Union Theological Seminary** and he is not impressed. US has little intellectual competition especially from Liberals. He believes there is no fruit where the Word of God is not preached. Dietrich is invited to the Abyssinia Baptist Church (African-American) in Harlem. He loves to attend this church and particularly loves the music. Travelling through the US, Bonhoeffer is appalled by segregation in the South, and opposes it.

## D. Church Status - Bonhoeffer



Jews are prohibited from entering

Dietrich watches the movie, “All Quiet on the Western Front” showing the horrors of war. This movie creates a firestorm in Europe and is soon banned in Germany. In 1931, Bonhoeffer returns to Germany to find the Nazi Party is pushing for **segregation against the Jews** and he is appalled. Bonhoeffer becomes a lecturer in systematic theology at the University of Berlin. Deeply interested in ecumenism, he is appointed by the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches (**World Council of Churches**) as one of its three European youth secretaries.

# E) Hitler Attacks



President Hindenburg



Reichstag

By 1932, Millions of Germans agree to give Hitler a chance. In July 1932 election, **Nazi Party becomes the largest party, 36.8%**. President Hindenburg at 83 years old (another WW1 hero) appoints **Hitler as Chancellor on 30 January 1933**.

A crisis is created by the Nazis – on 27 Feb. 1933 – **Reichstag goes up in flames**; Hitler blames the fire on Van der Lubbe and his fellow Communists. Hitler then **uses Article 48** to enact emergency powers (**martial law**) – by July 1933, the only political party allowed is the Nazi Party.



Marinus Van Der Lubbe

# E) Hitler Attacks

The Catholic Centre Party puts its trust in Hitler to protect the church. On 1 March 1933, Hitler and Goebbels (Minister of Propaganda) promote a national boycott of Jewish business. Many principled Germans make it a point to use these Jewish shops. The Pope protests, and Hitler appears to put a halt to it.

Then decrees the **Enabling Act** on 23 March. Reichstag then votes itself out of existence. There is **No freedom of press, No right to assemble; No private mail or phone calls.** It also allows homes to be searched by the SS.

Any Catholics in the German government are dismissed. Many Protestants favor Hitler's new order, because they are Nationalists.

If economy is OK, people ignore their freedoms.



Hitler and Goebbels



boycott of Jewish business

# E) Hitler Attacks - 1933



**Ludwig Müller**, Reich Bishop



Some replace Bible with Mein Kampf

The German Church aspires to form a church free from Old Testament influence, its too Jewish. They claim that Jesus was an Aryan.

In some churches, the **Bible is replaced** on the altar with Mein Kampf.

In Spring of 1933, Bonhoeffer states it's the churches duty to help Jews.

By 23 July, German Christians are a majority in the Protestant Church; and **Ludwig Müller** is appointed its first Reich Bishop. He integrates the Protestant Evangelical Youth into the Hitler Youth. There is a protest, but by 4 January 1934, Mueller issues a muzzling decree to silence all opposition.

# E) Hitler Attacks - 1933

22 April 1933 – Jews are not allowed to be **Lawyers or Doctors.**

10 May 1933 – **Book Burnings start** including Einstein, Jack London, Hellen Keller, HG Wells, Thomas Mann and Sigmund Freud and many more. Quote from Heine in 1821, “Where books are burned, they will in the end burn people too.”



June 1933 – No Jewish **Dentists**

29 Sept. 1933 – Jews not allowed to **attend theaters** or the arts.

Oct. 1933 – **All newspapers** are placed under Nazi control.

Churches are unable to focus on a plan of resistance. Hitler was on their side, right? It was his lieutenants that were anti-Christian.

## E) Hitler Attacks - 1933



Confessing Church – Bonhoeffer far left, middle row

By the end of 1933, **Pastor Martin Niemoller** (WW1 sub captain) and other pastors (7000) form the **Confessing Church** – Matt. 10:32

“Whoever confesses me.” The Nazis suspend pastors’ salaries.

Pastor Wilhelm Busch, an evangelist, is arrested after holding meeting in the city of Darmstadt. He states that “To God’s people, no suffering is ever meaningless.” Some see that God is purifying His church in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich. The Nazis continue to Divide and Conquer.

## E) Hitler Attacks - 1933



Catholic Bishops giving Nazi salute

Catholic Bishops withdraw their prohibition to join Nazi Party.

Catholic Masses accept Hitler's pledges of non-interference.

Church teaches that all authority comes from God, Romans 13.

They believe that **Hitler is bond to moderate** his views soon.

So Bishops take the Appeasement Policy – Give Him what he wants.

## E) Hitler Attacks - 1933



Catholic Bishops meet Hitler

Catholic Priests arrested

Hitler speaks on the radio promising to **uphold Christian values**, but he has no intention of keeping any promises.

With increasing Nazi atrocities, Hitler always blames his subordinates.

By April 1933 – Hitler wants a **Concordat** (a legal agreement) with the Holy See, which Pope Pius XI has already done for Fascist Italy.

Heinrich Himmler's political police (SS) incarcerate almost 2000 (many from the Catholic Center Party), including 150 priests.

## E) Hitler Attacks - 1933



Pope Pius XI signs Concordant

By July 4, **Catholic Centre Party dissolves** itself and Hitler releases the priests. The concordat is signed on 20 July 1933, but Pope Pius XI has a deep distrust of political parties.

Article 1 & 4 are on Religious Freedom; Article 5 is Hitler's protection promise: **Catholic schools are to be respected;**

But Catholic Church is restricted to teaching the Faith and the Sacraments

In Oct. 1933 – Hitler leaves League of Nations and ignores Treaty of Versailles by building up his army. League has no will to stop him.

# E) Hitler Attacks - 1934



Nazi SS arresting Jews



Cardinal Parcelli



Bishop Bell

**Jews are rounded up** for transfer to work camps, most bishops & Germans make no protest, but some shelter the Jews; **Cardinal Parcelli**, who becomes Pius XII, denounces Hitler and the Nazis.

**Catholic Schools** come under attack and again priests are sent to prison.

Parents are required to explain to the gov't, why they are sending their children to Catholic Schools. Many switch their children to state schools.

Every **German Pastor** must take an **oath** of personal allegiance to Hitler.

**Bonhoeffer** on assignment in London can openly speak about conditions in Germany. He gets help from Bishop Bell to galvanize UK against Hitler.

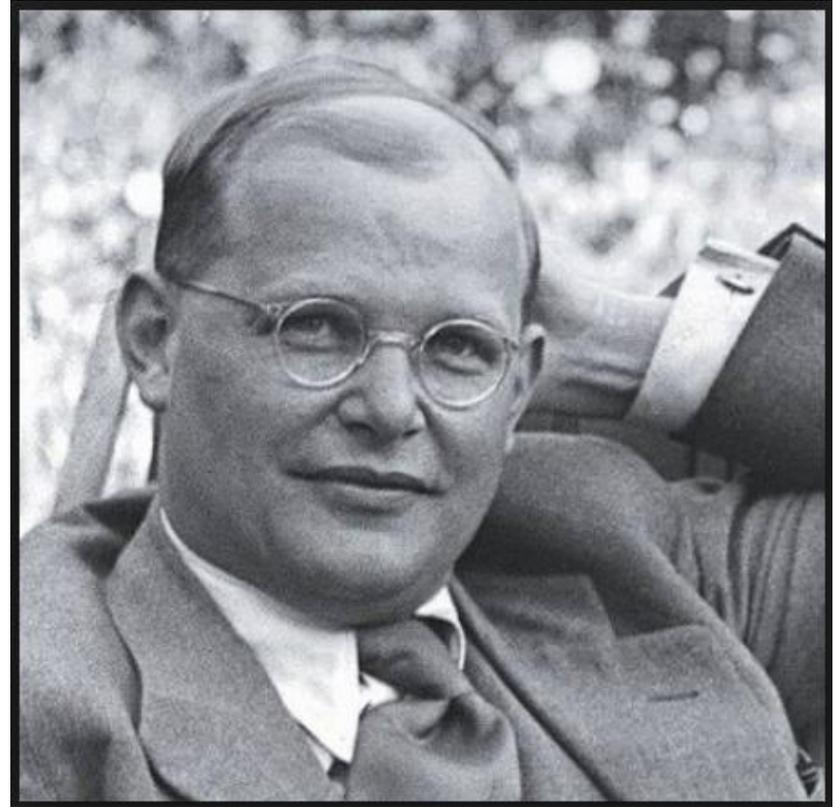
# E) Hitler Attacks - 1934

In May 1934, Dietrich Bonhoeffer comes back from London to Germany and helps to continue the forming of the Confessing Church.

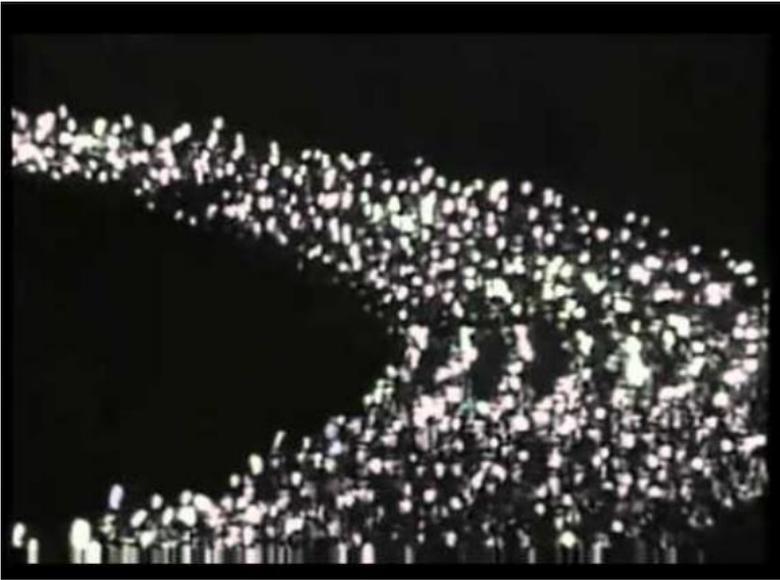
They generate The **Barmen Declaration** which is published, with the help of Bishop Bell, in the London Times on 4 June 1934. The principal author is Karl Barth and states that unity can only come through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

The **Reich Church is upset**; and starts using veiled threats against pastors not in line with the State's mandates.

Bonhoeffer works with his Ecumenical contacts, Bishops from England and Sweden, which some in the Nazi Government see as **treason**.



## E) Hitler Attacks - 1934



Pres. Hindenburg dies

On 30 June 1934 – **Night of the Long Knives**: Hitler, in order to get German army's (OKW) support, turns on and executes Rohm and hundreds of other SA (Brown Shirts). The **Gen. Sec. of Catholic Action**, and the Editor of Catholic Press are also **executed**.

On 2 August 1934, **Pres. Hindenburg dies at 86**. Hitler is in charge. Hitler abolishes office of President and becomes the Fuhrer (Leader).

All of the German Army **MUST** also take an oath of loyalty to Hitler.

On 19 August 1934, a **German plebiscite** shows 89.9% approval.

## E) Hitler Attacks - 1934



Flag of the German Church



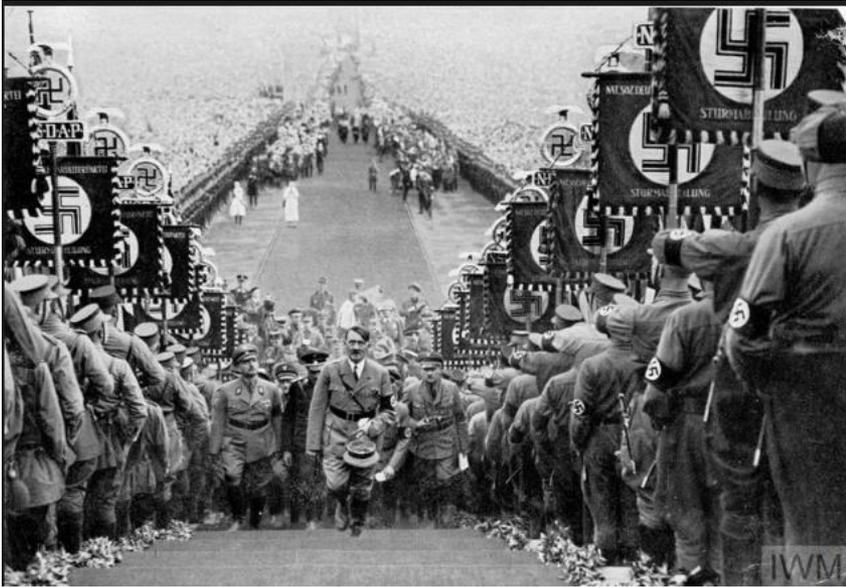
Cardinal Faulhaber

Dr. Krause, the leader of the Berlin German Christians, plans to “cleanse” the New Testament of un-German material and writes The Myth of the Twentieth Century. He promotes **Positive Christians**, its flag is shown above, which “consciously summons to life the powers of Nordic-blood”. All others are considered **Negative Christians**, who see this writing as pagan & racist.

**Cardinal Faulhaber** pays homage to the Jews for the Old Testament.

“It was Christianity that civilized the Germans”

# E) Hitler Attacks - 1934



**Nuremberg Rally**, in Sept 1934, is held in an arena that holds 700,000

On 1 May 1935, New **Conscription Laws** start, and every man must serve in the military. The swastika becomes the official flag.

German troops march into the **Rhineland** which violates the Treaty of Versailles, but the Allies do nothing.

Christianity is defamed in the Nazi Press; and hundreds of priests and pastors are arrested – **People are forbidden to slander the state.**

Catholic Bishops issue a protest, but Hitler ignores them.

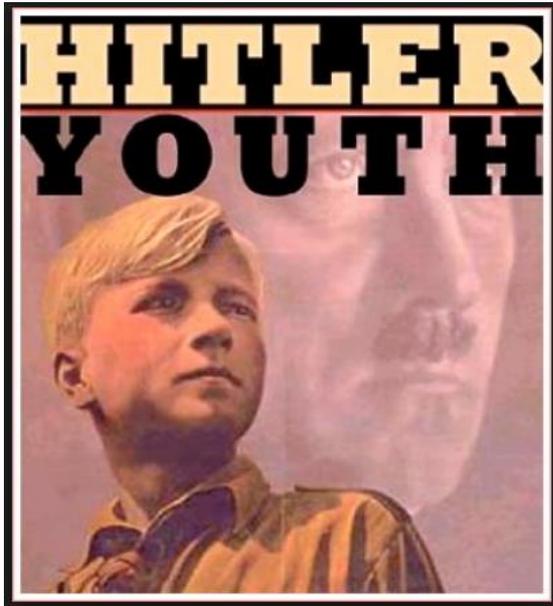
## E) Hitler Attacks - 1935



Many in the Confessing Church believe that **Hitler will still change**, just reason with him. In 1935, Bonhoeffer is teaching future pastors in an underground seminary, at **Finkenwalde**. On 4 Feb. 1936, Bonhoeffer takes 24 German seminarians to Sweden. The Swedish press follow their visit and publish their story. The Nazi gov't revokes his teaching credentials from Berlin University.

The seminary is discovered and closed by the SS in 1937. The Confessing Church becomes increasingly reluctant to speak out against Hitler, and **moral opposition** proves increasingly ineffective, so Bonhoeffer begins to change his strategy.

## E) Hitler Attacks - 1936



By 1936, only the **Catholic Youth** has not been absorbed into Hitler Youth.

Hitler Youth is made compulsory by law, on 25 March 1939.

Jews and Church have a brief respite in 1936 in Berlin because of the **Olympics**. These were the first to be televised and have a torch run.

Nazis in Oldenburg begin to remove the crucifixes from Catholic Schools – and it starts a revolt; Hitler then backs down.

By 1937, Pope Pius XI's patience with Hitler runs out, but what can he do?

# E) Hitler Attacks - 1937

Cardinal Pacelli (Pius XII) states in German, that it is a “misplaced patriotism that precludes loyalty to God and his church.” **The Primary Right in education** belongs to the parents.

Nazi leaders enraged and the Catholic Press is destroyed.

Pope Pius XI Guidance – **to save, protect or rescue Hitler’s victims**. An Encyclical (in German) is smuggled into Germany **condemning racism** preached to all churches – Hitler is furious.

In 1937, Nazis crack down on Confessing Church. **Niemoller is arrested**. He says, “We must obey God rather than man”.

The reading of **Prayer Requests** in church are forbidden and taking collections are illegal.

Bonhoeffer is under constant surveillance.



Pope Pius XI



Martin Niemoller

# E) Hitler Attacks - 1938

4 Feb. 1938, Hitler takes personal command of the German Army (OKW)

March 1938 – Hitler takes over Austria “**Anschluss**” (Annexation) – religious houses are seized, and what is left of the Catholic Press is muzzled.

In the winter of 1938, Knauer writes Hitler that his severely disabled child should be destroyed –

**T4 (Euthanasia) Program** is started.

## NAZI EUTHANASIA PROGRAM



Hitler started a program to *euthanize* (ending life to stop pain) people with *disabilities* and deformities

The Nazis' goal was to eliminate “*useless eaters*”: those who were a drain on German resources

This Nazi policy's purpose was to remove those “*unworthy of life*”

## E) Hitler Attacks - 1938



FDR with Cardinal Mundelein

A Chicago archbishop, **Cardinal Mundelein**, describes Hitler derogatively, as “an Austrian paper-hanger”.

Hitler and the Nazis are furious and tell the Pope to discipline Mundelein.

Tensions rise and it becomes a war of words.

14 July 1938 – Mussolini excludes Jews from his government.

The Pope asks US and Canada to **aid the European Jews**.

Because of the Depression, this is largely ignored.

## E) Hitler Attacks - 1938



Munich Conference – 29 Sept. 1938

Pope Pius XI does not heed ultimatums – “Human dignity consists in the fact that **all make up one single family, the human race.**”

Mussolini orders Jews out of Italy – Pope protests.

Hitler plans an attack against Czechoslovakia for 1 October 1938. The army is not ready for war. **OKW start a plan to remove Hitler.**

But Neville Chamberlain requests a conference to stop hostilities.

**Munich Conference** is signed on 29 Sept 1938, where allies give into Hitler’s demands. Czechoslovakia and Russia are NOT invited.

# E) Hitler Attacks - 1938

In October 1938, **Dohnanyi** of the Abwehr (an agency that works opposite the SS like the FBI and CIA). starts to compile a file documenting Nazi atrocities. It is referred to as the Chronicle of Shame or the Zossen File.

He is Bonhoeffer's brother-in-law.

In Paris, a German diplomat is assassinated by a 17-year old Jew. In retaliation, on 11 November 1938 Nazis attack German Jews, and burn 200 synagogues which becomes known as **Kristallnacht** or Crystal Night.



Zossen Communication Bunker



Synagogues burned in Germany

# E) Hitler Attacks - 1939

**Pope Pius XI dies** on 10 Feb 1939;  
and Pope Pius XII starts on 2 March.  
Pius XII is the preferred choice of Great  
Britain, France and FDR.

Pius XI confronted the Nazis, but now  
Pius XII tries a more conciliatory tone.

15 March 1939 – Hitler dismembers  
Czechoslovakia and sets sites on  
Poland. Poland will not give in to Nazi  
pressure.

1 May 1939 – **Pastors in US try to  
rescue Bonhoeffer**; and on 22 May –  
Bonhoeffer is notified for military service.



Pope Pius XII

## E) Hitler Attacks - 1939

Bonhoeffer travels to the US in June of 1939 but quickly sees this is a **mistake**. He visits the World's Fair in New York.

Even though some try to convince him to stay, **Bonhoeffer decides to go home**, and he takes a ship back to Germany in July of 1939, only weeks before the start of WW2.

22 August 1939 Russia signs non-aggression pact with Germany.



# E) Hitler Attacks - 1939



If I sit next to a madman as he drives a car into a group of innocent bystanders, I can't, as a Christian, simply wait for the catastrophe, then comfort the wounded and bury the dead. I must try to wrestle the steering wheel out of the hands of the driver.

— *Dietrich Bonhoeffer* —

AZ QUOTES

With the help of his brother-in-law, Dohnanyi, **Bonhoeffer becomes part of the German secret service** the Abwehr under Adm. Canaris, who will become part of the resistance. Bonhoeffer is to collect information about the places he visits, but instead he is a double agent, **trying to help Jews escape** Germany and trying to contact the Allies. Bonhoeffer also becomes part of a plot to overthrow Hitler. There are many aristocratic Germans who desire to rid themselves of Hitler but must wait for an opportunity.

## E) Hitler Attacks - 1939



On 31 August 1939, German convicts, dressed as Polish army, “attack” a Germany radio station, and the German Army responds killing them.

**World War 2 starts on 1 September 1939.**

Pius XII seeks ways to limit the suffering that would follow.

**Catholic Refugee Committee** gives baptismal certificates to enable thousands of Jews to enter the US.

# E) Hitler Attacks - 1939

Sept 1939 – **Joseph Muller**, German lawyer and Catholic on behalf of the resistance asks Pope to be intermediary **if Hitler was removed** as dictator. Still want lands, English are skeptical.

April 1940 – Hitler takes Denmark and Norway

May 1940 – Hitler takes Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg

June 1940 – Hitler takes France

German military who want to remove Hitler find it impossible when he continues to rack up victories. **Hitler's popularity soars** and the Germans worship success.



## E) Hitler Attacks - 1940



Because **Poles** are Slavic, **Nazis treat them with greater severity**. Germans want more “Living space”. Hitler sent out orders to eliminate the Polish intelligentsia, nobility and clergy. Nazis executes more than 200 priests and imprisons a thousand others. **Vatican does a Radio broadcast on what is happening**.

Hitler is angry and threatens reprisals. **Poles ask the Pope to stop** – Each broadcast brings more suffering.

## E) Hitler Attacks - 1940

Several Jews are publicly hanged in the town of Lodz, with the Christian family (Couple and children) who shelter them. Jews find shelter in churches, monasteries and convents. **Karol Wojtyla (who becomes Pope John Paul II) is a student in an underground seminary.**

There are numerous stories of Christians helping Jews and others who do not.

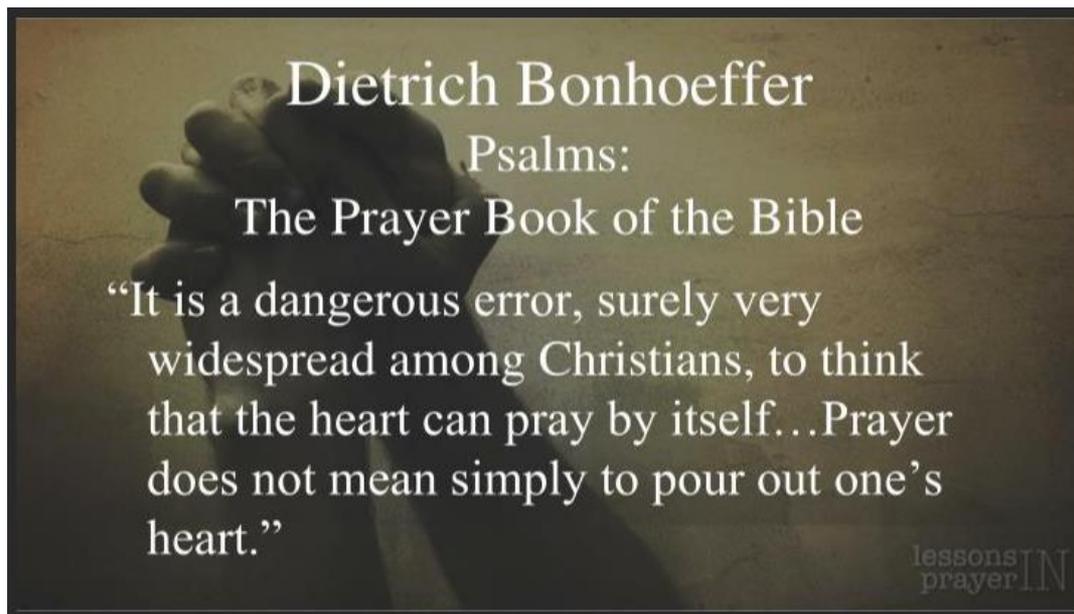
Bonhoeffer helps with **Operation 7** – The transportation of 14 Jews to Switzerland, which requires a large sum of money to the Swiss gov't to keep them. Bonhoeffer convinces the Nazis that these Jews will tell the world how well they were treated.

Gestapo starts to trace this trail of money.

Good movie – **“The Scarlet and the Black”**



## E) Hitler Attacks - 1940



Bonhoeffer knows that God wants obedience. He must rethink how best to oppose Hitler. He writes and gets published his book, **Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible** published in Germany in 1940. In it he declares the importance of the Old Testament to the Church and to Christianity. The Nazis Board for the Regulation of Literature confronts the author. Bonhoeffer plays dumb. He wonders if deception is lying. Mueller, a German lawyer in contact with the Vatican, invites **Bonhoeffer to Ettal Monastery**. He has long conversations with the Abbott; and meets other conspiracy members.

# E) Hitler Attacks - 1941

22 June 1941 Germans attack Russia; and by December fortunes turn against Hitler.

23 May 1942 – **Bonhoeffer meets Bishop Bell** in Sweden. Asks for help for the resistance. Bell tries to get help from Churchill and FDR with no success.



February 1943 – a **bomb is placed on Hitler's plane**, which is going to Smolensk, but the detonator fails, and Hitler arrives safely.

5 April 1943 – **Bonhoeffer is arrested** and taken to Tegel Military Prison, where his uncle is the warden. He is visited by family 7 miles away. He becomes friends with guards whom he helps with problems and they smuggle his writings out.

**During interrogations he does deceptions** on multiple levels.

# E) Hitler Attacks - 1943

As bad news continues from the Eastern Front other resistance starts. One is the **White Rose** which start making protests. It grows into a **German Resistance Group**. Its leaders Sophie and Hans Scholl are captured and quickly executed by the Nazis on 22 February 1943



“How can we expect righteousness to prevail when there is hardly anyone willing to give himself up individually to a righteous cause? Such a fine, sunny day, and I have to go, but **WHAT DOES MY DEATH MATTER**, if through us, thousands of people are awakened and stirred to action?”

—Last words of Sophie Scholl, 1921–1943, before her execution by the Nazis

# E) Hitler Attacks - 1944

On 20 July 1944, **Col. Claus von Stauffenberg**, a devout Catholic from an aristocratic family attempts to kill Hitler near the Eastern Front at the “Wolf’s Lair” The code name is **Valkyrie** (movie made with Tom Cruise)

Right before he starts his attempt, Stauffenberg asks a priest, “Can the Church grant absolution to a murderer who has taken the life of a tyrant?”

Priest replies, “Only the Pope can grant absolution. The bomb inside a briefcase is moved from under Hitler place moments before it goes off. The leg of a table protects Hitler from the blast and the attempt fails. Stauffenberg is captured and yells, “Long Live Sacred Germany” right before he is executed. The **SS** is determined to find all the conspiracies and in the process, **find the Zossen Files** on 20 Sept 1944.



# E) Hitler Attacks - 1945

Bonhoeffer is moved to a different prison on 8 Oct 1944, which is bombed by the Allies. On 1 April 1945, Bonhoeffer is then moved to a Concentration Camp near Flossenburg in Bavaria. **Hitler** gets all the details about the Zossen Files and as one of his last **orders on 4 April** has many of the Abwehr which **includes Bonhoeffer hanged on 9 April 1945**. Bonhoeffer is calm and says, “ Death is not wild and terrible, if only we can be still and hold fast to God’s Word.”

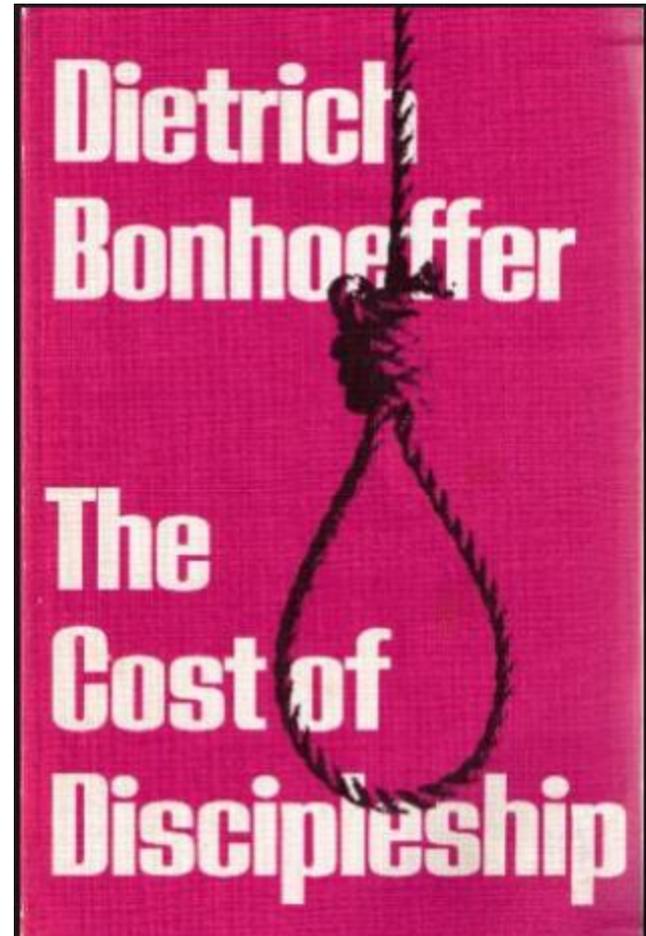
This occurs is a few weeks before Allies liberate the camp.



# E) Hitler Attacks - 1945

Bonhoeffer states in his book  
The Cost of Discipleship

*"Cheap grace is preaching forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession. ... Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."*



# F) Reflections



Do Christians and Catholics see persecution in the US today?

In September 2011, a Judge stated that No More Foster Care for Illinois Catholic Charities because they do not use LGBT families.

875 churches are destroyed in France in 2018.



# F) Reflections

## **Hitler's Strategy (any Dictator) Is it happening in the US today?**

- 1) Expand your Power Base.
- 2) Create and defeat a Common Enemy.
- 3) Control the Media.
- 4) Eliminate ALL Political Enemies.
- 5) Control the Schools and Universities.
- 6) Instigate a Monopoly on the use of force
- 7) Limit Choices
- 8) Create an Ideology to Justify a Single-leader.

# G. References

## **Hitler's Cross**

By Erwin W. Lutzer (1941 – present)

Canadian - evangelical Christian pastor, Senior Pastor of Moody Church

Moody Publishers 1995, 2016

Reviews the church's response to Hitler and indicate similarities for the US today

## **Catholics Confronting Hitler, The Catholic Church and the Nazis**

By Peter Bartley ( ? )

English

Ignatius Press 2016

Good Explanation of the Pope Pius XI; Pope Pius XII and Catholics struggle against the Nazis

# G. References

## **Bonhoeffer – Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy**

By Eric Metaxas (1963 – present)

Thomas Nelson 2010

An American is from New York City

His father is Greek; and mother is German

Starting in 2015 he hosts a 2-hour Radio Program.

## **In the Garden of the Beasts**

By Erik Larson (1954 – present)

Broadway Books, NY 2011

American journalist and author of nonfiction books

He looks at Nazi Germany from William Dodd, the American Ambassador's, and his family's point of view. His daughter, Martha (25 years old) gets romantically involved with the Nazis.

# G. References

## **The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich**

By William L. Shirer (1904 – 1993)

American Journalist and war correspondent

A Fawcett Crest Book 1959

A good overall explanation of Germany from 1920 to 1945 – mainly using information from the Nuremberg Trials which took place right after WW2

## **Hitler: The Man and the Military Leader**

By Percy Ernst Schramm (1894 – 1970)

German

Quadrangle Books, 1971

German army officer responsible for recording Hitler's after-dinner conversations