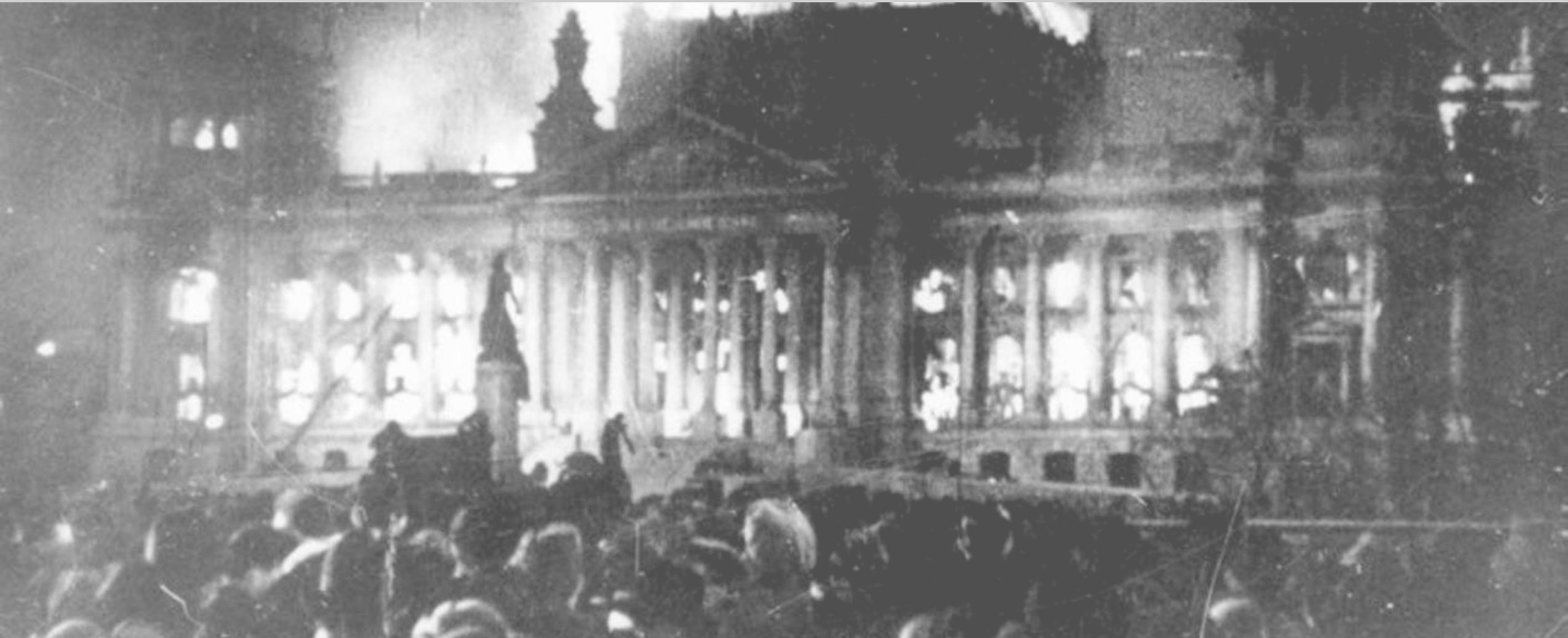


Hitler Comes to Power



The Weimar Republic

- The Kaiser abdicated in 1919 leaving Germany to be governed by the **Weimar Republic**
- The government established the first democracy in Germany, they created the **Reichstag** as the first parliament in Germany
- The president would be elected every seven years, however real power rested in the hands of the **Chancellor**, who was the head of the party with the most seats in the Reichstag

The Weimar Republic was Unpopular

- It was associated with the Treaty of Versailles which was extremely unpopular in Germany
- It was associated with the massive inflation and economic ruin of the 20's
- Democracy was not running smoothly in Germany, there were too many parties and no clear majority

The Nazis in the Early 1920's

- Eventually led by Adolf Hitler
- Attempted overthrow of the government by force in 1923 (The “Beer Hall Putsch”) ends in failure, but brings notoriety to the Nazi party and Hitler
- Hitler and the Nazis realize they will need to take power by working within the system
- While in jail Hitler writes “Mein Kampf”

The Impact of the Depression

- Germany hit hard by the Depression
- People are suffering and support for the Nazi Party grows to 35%. making them the largest party in the Reichstag
- Hitler demands to be Chancellor – President Hindenburg refuses, but is pressured by wealthy conservatives to offer him the position – **Hitler as Chancellor in January 1933**
- Wealthy conservatives hope to control him and use him and his “storm troopers” to return order to Germany

Hitler Consolidates Power

The Reichstag Fire (February 1933)

- Nazis secretly set fire to the Reichstag and use the crisis to imprison and persecute their rivals
- Reichstag Fire Act suspends civil liberties including free speech, assembly and right of habeas corpus

The Enabling Act (March 1933)

- Hitler granted the right by the Reichstag to rule by decree
- The Act passed the Reichstag due to non-Nazi party elected officials being either in jail or prevented from taking their rightful seats by the Storm Troopers

The Night of the Long Knives (June-July 1934)

- Opposition from within the party is removed: violently. The SA is 'purged'.

Further Events

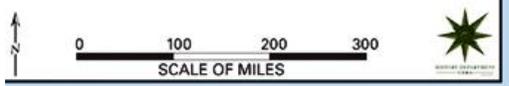
- One month after the “Night of the Long Knives” President **Hindenburg dies** – Hitler assumes both the Presidency and Chancellorship
- The **1936 Berlin Olympics** – the games held in Germany help give legitimacy to the Nazi regime
- **Kristallnacht** – “Night of Broken Glass” (November 1938)
 - An exiled German Jew killed a German diplomat in France and Hitler uses this as a pretext for unleashing violence on the German Jewish community

German Foreign Policy Under Hitler

- Goals similar to previous German governments – to obtain “**Lebensraum**” (living space) for German population
- End the terms of the **Treaty of Versailles** including rebuilding the military and regaining lost German territory

EUROPE, 1936 - 1939

GERMAN AGGRESSIONS, 1936 - 1939



Why Did Hitler Come to Power Questions

1. Using the first paragraph list the reasons why Hitler came to power. For each one discuss how plausible you think it is based on your own understanding of those events?
2. In each paragraph (2, 3 and 4) the author explains even more potential explanations for the rise of Hitler. For each one briefly summarize the arguments and discuss your thoughts.
3. On page 97 the author writes, "These diverse groups supported Nazism...because of its utopian promise to end class-based politics and replace them with a popular, ethnically united folk community." Explain the argument. Also discuss whether you see any connections to politics in the present day U.S..
4. Historians seem all over the map when trying to place Nazism into a broader historical context. Some view it as uniquely German, others argue it is part of a more broad right wing revolution. Based on the reading and your own knowledge where do you stand on this issue?
5. In the last 5 paragraphs the author lays out his own views about Hitler's aims and politics. Briefly summarize his argument and then discuss your reaction to it.
6. Think about the term historiography. Do you see evidence of historiography in this reading. What explanations of Hitler's rise to power do you think came first?