

Adolf Hitler Study Guide

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Plot Summary

Adolf Hitler comes from a modest family in Northern Austria. He wants to be an artist or architect but is not able to be enrolled in any such school. Hitler goes to Vienna to study art and ends up living in homeless shelter for years. He emigrates to Munich in Germany and enlists in the Bavarian Army when World War I breaks out. After being in the trenches for four years, Hitler is wounded by poison gas. When he recovers, he decides to become a politician. By then, Germany has sued for an armistice with the victorious Allies.

Hitler is picked up by certain circles in German military intelligence and soon he is spewing a line of blaming Jews for the Versailles Treaty and confronting Communists. Jews are also blamed for Communism, which is making headway in the chaos of post-war Germany. Hitler, with the help of money from the army and rich individuals, rapidly draws a following. He attempts to overthrow the government of the state of Bavaria in November 1923 in the Munich Beer Hall Putsch. This is defeated and Hitler is jailed. In a sensational trial, Hitler is allowed to justify his attempted coup in hours of speeches to the court, though he is sentenced to five years in jail. Hitler studies, writes his book, *Mein Kampf*, and is released after a year. Hitler is involved with women in a string of unhappy love affairs that includes the suicide of Geli Raubal, his niece. Hitler draws adventurers like Hermann Goring as well as intellectuals like Rudolf Hess to his movement. Hitler's next chance to come to power is the Great Depression. In 1930, his party becomes the second largest party in the Reichstag. After a leading banker backs Hitler's finances, Hitler is appointed Chancellor by President Hindenburg and quickly establishes a dictatorship. This is solidified after the Reichstag Fire, which Hitler blames on the Communists and uses as an excuse to get rid of civil rights. In the "Night of the Long Knives" Hitler has many of his opponents and rivals killed, including Ernst Rohm the leader of the SA and General von Schleicher.

Leading British statesmen such as Anthony Eden and former Prime Minister Lloyd George are fascinated with Hitler and are inclined to allow him to rearm, since they look at him as a strategic opponent of the Soviet Union. Hitler is allowed to occupy Austria and Czechoslovakia after much tension. In 1939, Hitler invades Poland, which results in war with Britain and France. Hitler signs a non-aggression pact with the Soviets and splits Poland with them. In April 1940, Hitler breaks the stalemate and attacks Norway, and soon he defeats France. Hitler is unable to bring Britain to surrender under its new Winston Churchill government. In June 1941, Hitler attacks the Soviet Union and is stopped at the gates of Moscow. Hitler mounts another attack towards the Caucasus and an entire German army is surrounded and destroyed at Stalingrad. Hitler continues to fight the war though he knows he has lost. His main goal seems to be to annihilate Jews in his concentration camp system and others that he targets for destruction. On July 20th 1944, a Gen. Stauffenberg attempts to kill Hitler with a bomb, but Hitler survives. A new wave of repression and murder begins in Germany, which only ends with Hitler's suicide and Germany's surrender.



Prologue, Part 1, Chapters 1,2,3

Prologue, Part 1, Chapters 1,2,3 Summary and Analysis

The 16th Bavarian Infantry Regiment are in the trenches of Belgium. There is an Allied attack by poison gas shells. A bunch of soldiers are blinded including Adolf Hitler. After nearly four years, Russia is defeated and Germany attacks again in the West, but is stopped. Germany under the Kaiser is swiftly demoralized by revolution. Hitler is brought to a hospital where he learns that the Kaiser has abdicated. He decides to become a politician.

Adolf Hitler's father Alois is born with the name Schicklgruber and is illegitimate. Alois becomes a civil servant and is given the name and the inheritance of J. N. Hiedler, and his last name is changed to Hitler. Adolf Hitler is born in 1889 to the former Klara Polzl. When Adolf is three, the family moves to Passau, a town on the German Bavarian side of the border. Adolf's older half-brother Alois Jr. runs away. Adolf loves church festivals and dreams of becoming a priest. In 1899, the family moves to the outskirts of the city of Linz. Adolf is now often beaten by his father and even tries to run away. In 1903, Adolf's father suddenly dies.

Adolf is put up in a room closer to his school in Linz and begins to dream of becoming an artist. Hitler passes his exams at his new school in Steyr, but then drops out of school allegedly for health reasons. The sixteen-year-old Adolph Hitler becomes friends with a music student named August Kubizek. Kubizek and Hitler go to the opera and Hitler first visits Vienna, the Austrian capital. Hitler tells Kubizek of his vision of one day leading his people to freedom. Klara Hitler becomes sick and is operated on for breast cancer. Hitler goes back to Vienna and is accepted at the fine arts academy, but fails the entrance examination. Hitler returns to Urfahr, outside of Linz where he cares for his mother in her last days.

Hitler goes back to Vienna at the age of eighteen. Soon he is joined by his friend Kubizek. The two young men share a room on a tight budget. Hitler has thoughts on rebuilding Vienna, writing plays and even writing an opera. Kubizek does well in school, but none of Hitler's projects advance forward. Hitler moves to a cheaper room without telling Kubizek. By the age of twenty, Hitler slips into homelessness. A man named Hamisch helps Hitler survive in a shelter and encourages Hitler to paint postcards while Hamisch sells them. The two men move to the Mannheim, a more comfortable shelter, and Hitler paints more.

Hitler moves to Munich, and likes the bohemian café life there. He has to report to the draft board in Austria and is rejected for service. Then, suddenly the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand is assassinated, and war begins. Hitler enlists as a volunteer in the army of the German state of Bavaria. Hitler fights in the battle of Ypres on the Western front. He has the dangerous duty of messenger and barely escapes death. Hitler goes to a



hospital in Germany. Food is becoming scarce on the home front. In March 1918, Germany defeats Russia. The next four months, the Germans advance into France. When German forces are finally stopped, demoralization breaks out everywhere. On October 14th, 1918, Hitler is gassed.

Democratic elements take over the German Government, led by moderate Socialist Friedrich Ebert and sue for peace. Hitler is discharged from the hospital and is sent to a battalion in Munich. The Spartacus League revolts in Berlin and is put down by the Freikorps, irregular forces recruited by military commanders. Oswald Spengler predicts there will be a German dictator. Alfred Rosenberg and Dietrich Eckart already are calling Communists part of a Jewish conspiracy. In Berlin, over fifteen hundred are killed putting down leftists. Leftists make a revolution in Munich, in April and are bloodily suppressed. More chaos is caused in Germany by the Treaty of Versailles and war reparations. Hitler is made an army spy on radical left and right groups. Hitler goes to the tiny German Worker's Party, and draws attention with his speech-making abilities. He joins the party and, for the first time, Hitler backs the removal of Jews from Germany.



Part 2, Chapter 4,5,6

Part 2, Chapter 4,5,6 Summary and Analysis

Hitler's Party is soon called the NSDAP, or Nazis. Soon, Hitler is speaking before two thousand people, wherein he verbally attacking the Versailles Treaty and demanding that Jews be denied citizenship. A key new party organizer is Captain Ernst Rohm. Dietrich Eckart also joins, who is a poet with aristocratic connections. Hitler goes to Berlin, where President Ebert must call in the Freikorps to put down the leftists. Hitler is discharged from the army and returns to Munich. Alfred Rosenberg joins the Nazi Party and publishes "the Protocols of the Elders of Zion," a known forgery. Former socialists Otto and Gregor Strasser, brothers, join the Nazis. The NSDAP is able to purchase the *Volksicher Beobachter*, a newspaper, with funds from Eckart's wealthy friends. By the January 1921 party conference, Hitler demands recognition as the absolute leader, or Fuhrer of the NSDAP and the *Sturmabteilung*, the SA is established as a private army. There is violence at NSDAP meetings and Nazis, Communists, and Social Democrats brawl. The Allies demand more war reparations from Germany. Foreign Minister Rathenau signs an agreement with Soviet Russia and then is assassinated by former Freikorps members. Hitler is jailed for a few weeks for inciting a riot. There is an aborted plan for a nationalist takeover in Bavaria. On October 22nd, Hitler experiments with mass marches to emulate the new dictator of Italy, Mussolini.

Hitler recruits Goring, a World War I flying ace, at a rally. Rudolf Hess also joins the Nazis, though he is a student of Professor Haushofer, a geo-politician. The US Ambassador to Germany, Captain Trumann Smith, investigates the NSDAP. He is impressed with Hitler's rhetoric and has Ernst Hanfstaengl, a Harvard graduate, go to a Hitler rally. In January 1923, French and Belgian troops occupy the German Ruhr. There is a worsening of hyperinflation. Hitler defies a police ban and has mass marches of the Storm Troopers (SS). Hitler still lives like a bohemian, and spends time in cafés. Hanfstaengl plays piano for Hitler and Hitler also likes Mrs. Helene Hanfstaengl and the couple's young son. Hanfstaengl gives Hitler the money to buy the paper, the *Volkischer Beobachter*, which becomes Rosenberg's outlet for promoting anti-Jewish pogroms. Hitler blames the Jews for all problems. He carefully alters his speech to convince a targeted audience. Hitler tries to get the Bavarian state government to defy Berlin. Nazi forces are forced to disarm when confronted by the army. In the beginning of Sept. 1923, Hitler speaks at a huge rally in Nuremburg.

Hitler stays at the home of the opera composer, the late Richard Wagner. By October 1923, the German Mark is almost worthless. Pres. von Kahr of Bavaria has difficulty in curbing the Nazis. Hitler tries to split the Bavarian leadership and meets with Police Chief von Seisser. Meanwhile, von Seisser, von Kahr and General von Lossow are plotting against the Berlin National Government. Hitler decides to run his putsch on Nov. 11th, 1923. The SS and SA are mobilized. Hitler enters the beer hall with Hanfstaengl, demands quiet, and shoots into the air.



Hitler has the Bavarian leadership under the gun. Von Kahr agrees to support Hitler's takeover. Captain Rohm is leading another Nazi force at the Lowenbraukeller. Rohm marches out and his troops occupy the military district building. The police are ordered to not intervene, and one thousand military cadets join the rebellion. At the Burgerbraukeller, Hitler makes the mistake of leaving his post and the Bavarian leaders escape. Next morning, the Putsch is going down. Rohm's forces are under siege. The main Nazi force marches towards downtown Munich, led by Hitler, Goring, Scheubner-Richter, and Gen. Ludendorff. The police open fire on them. Hitler is saved by his bodyguard, who takes several bullets. Hitler's arm is injured and he flees towards Uffing in a car. Other SA units seize hostages, but after stealing their clothes, let them go. Hitler ends up at the Hanfstaengl country house in Uffing. Hitler is found and taken to Landsberg Prison. He is near suicidal, but Helene Hanfstaengl stops him from shooting himself.



Chapter 7, 8, 9

Chapter 7, 8, 9 Summary and Analysis

Party loyalists coax Hitler to eat again. Hitler's party is legally disbanded, but continues to have front groups. Alfred Rosenberg is the nominal head of the Nazi Party, but Hitler prefers party operations to be temporarily suspended. Much of the national crisis ends when a new stable currency is created by Hjalmar Schacht with the help of the Bank of England. In February 1924, Hitler, Gen. Ludendorff and eight others are put in trial in Munich. Hitler accepts responsibility for the Munich Putsch, and the judge openly sympathizes with the Nazis. Hitler is found guilty but hopes for an early release. Hitler writes a press release that he is withdrawing from politics to write his book "Mein Kampf" (My Struggle). Rudolf Hess joins Hitler in prison and provides a big help with typing and editing the book. Goring goes to Venice to try to get a loan from Italian dictator Mussolini, but fails. Finally, just before Christmas 1924, Hitler is paroled.

Hitler is barred from further public speaking due to his violent attacks on the Jews. Hitler forces Captain Rohm to resign as leader of the SA. Hitler takes a holiday at the Obersalzberg, at Berchtesgaden. He has a relationship with a girl named Mitzi, who is a young shopkeeper. Hitler gives regional powers to Gregor Strasser to build up the NSDAP in Northern Germany. Josef Goebbels is also in the north, edits a Nazi newspaper and has socialist tendencies. Goebbels is only brought under control by Hitler's demand for personal loyalty. The second volume of Mein Kampf is published. It emphasizes that Germany must conquer the Soviet Union and obtain living space (lebensraum) for Germany. In March 1927, Hitler is allowed to speak at a mass Munich rally at the Zirkus Krone. Goebbels concentrates on winning over the urban workers in Berlin, attacking bourgeoisie capitalism. At a rally, Goebbels is provocative and has a pastor beaten up, resulting in the NSDAP being banned in Berlin. Hitler tries to be careful about his radical program and address the needs of the average German. By 1928, Hitler can speak in public in Berlin again. The NSDAP wins only twelve delegates to the Parliament (Reichstag). Hitler returns to the Obersalzberg and starts a love affair with Geli, the daughter of Hitler's half-sister Angela. Obsessions with the Jew as the promoter of Internationalism and Communism are found in Hitler's never published "Secret Book."

Hitler speaks in a stadium in Berlin, and a new recruit is future Nazi official Albert Speer. Hitler works with the Nationalist Party and backs a plebiscite against the Young Plan on reorganizing war reparation payments, which is defeated. Meanwhile, Geli takes a room in Hitler's apartment. Soon after, Hitler meets Eva Braun, who becomes his long-time lover. The Great Depression starts and the Nazis raise the banner of Horst Wessel, a student killed in battles with the Reds. Goebbels has a song composed to Wessel. Hitler breaks with Otto Strasser and his socialists. Hitler tries to appeal to everyone and anti-Semitism is downplayed. The Nazis win 107 seats and become the second largest party in the Reichstag. Ernst "Putzi" Hanfstaengl is appointed Nazi foreign press secretary.



Hitler's nephew, William Patrick Hitler, visits Paris and talks to the media. Hitler claims that William's father was really adopted by Hitler's father. Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*, becomes a best seller. Hitler has trouble controlling the SA (the Brownshirts) until Ernst Rohm returns from overseas and Hitler makes him the SA chief. There is also a revolt of the Berlin SA under Stennes, who wants more SA rallies and fighting. Hitler uses the SS, which he closely controls, as a counter-force to the SA. In his personal life, Hitler finds out that Geli is engaged to his chauffeur Maurice. Hitler breaks up this relationship, but then Geli finds another young man. Geli is isolated by Hitler, and then finds out about Hitler's affair with Eva Braun. Geli then commits suicide. Hitler is sad, and in reaction becomes a vegetarian.



Chapter 10,11,12, and 13

Chapter 10,11,12, and 13 Summary and Analysis

Hitler meets with Gen. von Schleicher, who thinks he can use Hitler against the Communists. In February 1932 at age eighty-four, President Hindenburg runs for re-election against Hitler. There is a scandal in which Ernst Rohm is revealed to be a homosexual, and Hindenburg wins the runoff vote. The Chancellor Brüning tries to ban the SA and SS, but instead is forced to resign. Von Papen is made Chancellor while von Schleicher is scheming for an army takeover. In July 1932, the Nazis win 37.3 percent of the vote, running on the issue of economic paralysis. Hindenburg refuses to appoint Hitler as Chancellor. Hitler decides to support a no-confidence vote against the von Papen government and new elections are called. Eva Braun shoots herself but survives. Bourgeoisie contributors to the Party are shocked by joint Nazi and Communist participation in a strike in Berlin and the Nazis lose seats in the Reichstag. Hitler gets contributions from key business interests. The nation is near civil war and Gen. von Schleicher is appointed Chancellor. Gregor Strasser is forced to resign from the NSDAP for treason. In December 1932, Hitler fears he is losing control and thinks of committing suicide. Then, a key banker Baron Kurt von Schroeder sponsors a Hitler, von Papen meeting in early January 1933. Von Papen agrees to back Hitler and stab von Schleicher in the back. In a small district called Lippe, the Nazis win almost forty percent of the vote. Von Papen tells President Hindenburg that he must back Hitler. At the home of von Ribbentrop the fateful deal is set to put Hitler in power. On Jan. 30th Hitler is named Chancellor.

Hjalmar Schacht of the Central Bank declares that big business backs the new regime. Hitler pushes through an emergency decree to control political meetings and the press. On Feb. 24th, Göring raids German Communist Party headquarters. Then on Feb. 26th, the Reichstag building is burnt down. The arson is blamed on a Dutch lunatic, Marinus der Lubbe. Internationally, the fire is widely viewed as done by Göring. Hitler runs to the Nazi paper, *Völkischer Beobachter*, and sets editorial policy. All civil liberties are suspended the next day, and three thousand Communists and Social Democrats are arrested. Elections are held again on March 5th under conditions of a civilian dictatorship. In the heated atmosphere, the Nazis receive forty-four percent and get a bare majority in coalition with their Nationalist allies. Schacht starts the infamous Mefo-bill scheme, where armament expenditures are funded by the government and the central bank. A process of "gleichschaltig" or coordination brings the nation totally under the grip of the Nazis. Hitler calls for a boycott of Jewish businesses, and Jews are thrown out of the civil service. On June 22nd, Germany becomes a one-party state.

Hitler enjoys the summer at his villa on the Obersalzberg, the Berghof, and has the Hanfstaengl family over as houseguests. In the fall of 1933, Germany leaves the League of Nations as an act of rejection of the Versailles Treaty. A book published in Paris shows that the Nazis started the Reichstag Fire. British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden begins to negotiate with Hitler over possible terms for rearmament. The French



Government is alarmed by Hitler's rearmament program and makes defense treaties with Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. Hitler attempts to win over Mussolini, and visits Italy

Hitler heads into a confrontation with Ernst Rohm, leader of the SA. Many Brownshirts believe in Rohm's idea of a second anti-capitalist revolution. Rohm is told to go on vacation and is targeted. Vice-Chancellor von Papen makes a speech at Marburg calling for more freedom. He also criticizes the brutality of the SA. The speech is soon suppressed. Hitler orders all SA Commanders to Bad Wiessee, a resort outside Munich where Rohm is resting. Hitler sets up headquarters nearby and goes in person to surprise Rohm, placing him under arrest, and mass executions of SA leaders begin. In Berlin, Gen. von Schleicher and his wife are murdered by SS agents. Von Papen's staff members are shot and von Papen is placed under house arrest. Hitler lectures to the surviving Brownshirt leaders that their excesses must be halted. Rohm is executed and hundreds of others are shot. Hitler attempts to mollify some officials and has the purge declared legal by the Reichstag. Himmler gains power for his SS, which establishes a military branch as well. In Austria, the Nazis launch an attempted coup. A Nazi gang seizes the Chancellery and is able to assassinate the head of state Dollfuss. Mussolini is enraged and threatens to go to war to defend Austria. President Hindenburg dies in the beginning of August 1934 and Hitler is declared the Fuhrer.

A huge Nuremberg rally is filmed by Leni Riefenstahl and later released as a film "The Triumph of the Will." There is a huge military parade that foreshadows Nazi rearmament. Hitler enjoys the company of artists and Eva Braun, his mistress. The army is expanded as leaders of Britain praise Hitler's Anti-Communism. Hitler proceeds to violate the Versailles Treaty by decreeing universal military training and establishing an air force. Hitler has discussions with Anthony Eden and offers to limit the new German battle fleet to thirty-five percent of the tonnage of the British navy. While an Allied meeting at Stresa condemns German rearmament, Britain agrees to allow Germany to build a fleet. Eva Braun misses Hitler and overdoses herself with drugs. Hitler feels remorse and gets Eva an apartment close to his in Munich. Hitler strips German Jews of their citizenship. In October 1935, Mussolini's Italy invades Ethiopia. In March 1936, Hitler has the German army march into the Rhineland. Hitler feels that the new British king, Edward VIII, supports him.



Chapter 14,15,16 and 17

Chapter 14,15,16 and 17 Summary and Analysis

French troops are partially mobilized, but British Prime Minister Baldwin refuses to back them up. Hitler is anxious and goes on vacation to Berchtesgaden and to the Wagner Festival. There he hears about Franco's military revolt in Spain. The summer Olympics of 1936 in Berlin are a big propaganda triumph for Hitler. Hitler relaxes at the Obersalzberg that summer. Soon, his half-sister Angela is driven out by Eva Braun. Ernst Hanfstaengl falls out of favor and flees to Switzerland with his son. The former British Prime Minister Lloyd George is impressed with Hitler and his Anti-Soviet attitude. He goes to the 1936 Party Day at Nuremberg, which includes mock aerial dogfights. There is a new deal between Hitler and the Italian Minister Ciano over backing Franco in Spain. King Edward VIII is forced to abdicate and Hitler doubts winning British support.

Hitler is treated by Dr. Theo Morell and is giving stomach pills that contain small amounts of the poison, strychnine. These are temporarily helpful. In Germany, Hitler is interested in building highways (autobahns) and cheap cars. Young people serve in the Youth Labor Service, a slave labor operation. Schacht soon resigns as he thinks Germany cannot afford a war economy buildup. Other nations in Europe and elsewhere build Fascist-type movements.

At an elite school, Hitler lays out his program to deceive the democratic nations and conquer Europe. Hitler builds an art museum in Berlin and consults with Frau Troost, widow of an architect. Hitler suppresses art from modern schools, such as Picasso and Van Gogh. In late 1937, Mussolini visits Berlin, and huge crowds greet the two dictators as members of a new Axis. Military leaders Gen von Fritsch and Blomberg are worried about the planned war drive. Already Hitler is planning on attacks in the West and the East. The new British cabinet under Neville Chamberlain is ready to work with Hitler. Hitler already tells Lord Halifax that he is looking for union with Austria and helping the Sudetenland Germans in Czechoslovakia. Hitler has scandals concocted against Blomberg, who is dismissed for marrying a woman alleged to have been a prostitute. Fritsch is ousted after being accused of being with a male prostitute and Hitler takes over supreme commander.

At a meeting with Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg, Hitler is violent and insulting. Hitler threatens to invade Austria at a moment's notice. Schuschnigg signs an agreement to give the Interior Ministry (and the Police) to the Pan-German faction. The local Nazis have street demonstrations in Vienna. Nevertheless, a few days later, Schuschnigg attempts to rally the Austrian people to defend their independence. Three weeks later Hitler sends his economic advisor with a new set of demands to Austria. A low intensity civil war erupts in Vienna. Schuschnigg declares on March 9th that he wants a plebiscite to affirm Austrian independence. Mussolini is ready to support Hitler this time. Under pressure, Schuschnigg cancels the plebiscite. Britain is ready to appease Hitler.



The pro-Nazi Minister of the Interior requests German troops to "restore order." German troops march into Austria and soon Hitler addresses a mass rally in Linz. Stormtroopers attack Jews as Hitler speaks at the Imperial Hotel in Vienna. Eva Braun joins her lover and soon Hitler has a reunion with his boyhood friend, Gustl Kubizek.

Goebbels unleashes propaganda and there is a partial Czech military mobilization. The British press signals that England can make a deal over Czechoslovakia. Ewald von Kleist tells England that if war is threatened, Hitler is isolated from his generals. The British ambassador Henderson tells Nazi officials that there can be cooperation and Chamberlain tells journalists that he thinks that Hitler is sincere. Chamberlain goes to see Hitler at Berchtesgaden on September 15th, 1938. The French under Daladier are also willing to compromise, and by Sept. 20th, Czech President Benes announces that they will give in. Chamberlain returns to Germany and is shocked that Hitler demands the Sudetenland immediately. Hitler hands Chamberlain an ultimatum and agrees only to wait until Oct. 1st. Hitler becomes hysterical and war is seen as inevitable. Mussolini intervenes, and the Munich Conference of France, Britain, Italy, and Germany is convened. Mussolini ends up dominating the conference because he speaks English, German, and French. The Czechs lose their defenses and key arms factories. Churchill warns Britain that it has suffered a "defeat without a war." Hitler is upset by his detractors in Great Britain led by Winston Churchill.



Chapter 18,19 and 20

Chapter 18,19 and 20 Summary and Analysis

In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws outlaw sex between Jews and good Germans. In November 1938, a Jew shoots dead an official at the German Foreign Office in Paris. Goebbels and SS assistant Heydrich fan the flames of anti-Jewish riots. By Nov. 12th, twenty thousand Jews are sent to concentration camps. Hitler is furious at Reichsbank head Schacht for criticizing the accelerated armament program and soon Schacht is fired. Goebbels is back in favor after his affair with an actress is stopped. Hitler, in a speech to the Reichstag threatens "annihilation" against the Jews of Europe if a general war starts. In Feb. 1939, Hitler renews his campaign against Czechoslovakia. A member of the Slovak regional government makes a deal with Berlin. Hitler has the Slovaks in Eastern Czechoslovakia declare independence. President Hacha of Czechoslovakia meets with Hitler and is told he must surrender his country to German occupation. On March 15th, to the shock of the British, Czechoslovakia is occupied. British Prime Minister Chamberlain makes a speech that Great Britain may soon have to fight.

On April 1st, 1939, Hitler protests England's guarantee of Polish borders. In Spain, Franco is victorious and Italy's Mussolini is about to seize Albania. The Soviet Union is negotiating with the Western Powers but also secretly with Germany. Ribbentrop sends Peter Kleist as an emissary to Soviet dictator Stalin. Hitler makes a radio broadcast threatening Great Britain and denouncing the Anglo-German Naval Treaty. Hitler shocks the German military staff that he is intent on war. Stalin is still too suspicious to sign an agreement. Stalin fears fighting Hitler with little backup from Britain and France. Meanwhile, Hitler enjoys life at the Berghof with his mistress Eva Braun. Hitler puts pressure on Ribbentrop to sign a deal with Stalin, since his deadline to attack Poland is Sept. 1st. Finally, Hitler is forced to come to terms with Stalin. Germany's economy is not fully mobilized, but Hitler tells his Generals that he intends to win a series of campaigns through Blitzkrieg, or lightning strikes. Ribbentrop flies to Moscow and the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact is signed, including secret agreements to divide Poland.

Hitler next offers the British to guarantee the territory of the British Empire if he has a free hand in Poland. Mussolini plans to stay out of the coming war. A Swedish diplomat goes to Britain, but the British insist of guaranteeing Poland's borders. Hitler tells the British Ambassador that he must see a representative of Poland immediately. The British Ambassador refused to accept the ultimatum and negotiations end in a shouting match between him and Ribbentrop. Reinhard Heydrich of the SS runs an operation to make it look like Polish soldiers attack a German border outpost. Germany attacks Poland on Sept. 1st. Hitler is thrilled by the quick victory in the making. There is a back channel messenger from Hitler saying he could still compromise with Poland. The British House of Commons revolts against appeasement and an ultimatum is coming from Britain. On Sept. 3rd, France and Britain declare war on Germany.



Chapter 21,22,23, and 24

Chapter 21,22,23, and 24 Summary and Analysis

By the first week, the Polish army is surrounded by quick air and tank thrusts. On Sept. 17th, the Soviets move into Eastern Poland with little opposition. Germany gets the populated areas of Poland with large Jewish populations. Hitler wants to attack France by Nov. 10th, since he fears the Soviet Union will stab him in the back. A man plants a bomb that explodes in a beer hall in Munich where Hitler speaks, but Hitler leaves early. The offensive in the West is stalled. Stalin launches an attack on Finland, which creates rage in Italy due to Hitler's reversal of his Anti-Soviet policy. Hitler plans to attack the West on Jan. 10th, but somehow a German courier plane with the battle plans crashes in Belgium. The war plans are seized by the Allies. The Russo-Finnish war ends and Stalin signs a trade treaty with Germany. Germany attacks Denmark and Norway in early April. Hitler develops a daring plan with Col. von Manstein to conquer France and attacks on May 10th. A strong attack is launched on the Netherlands and Belgium. On May 13th, the German surprise attack is launched in Southern Belgium through the Ardennes hills. German tank forces break through the Ardennes and race towards the English Channel. By a strange delay, the British army is able to be evacuated to England from the port of Dunkirk. Hitler makes up a story to his friend Frau Troost that he did not want to massacre the British army. In June, Italy joins the war and France surrenders. Hitler goes on a triumphal tour of Paris and admires the architecture.

Hitler's joy is broken by the British sinking of Vichy French ships in a harbor in Algeria. He spends time in Bavaria and Austria meeting his boyhood friend Gustl Kubizek, and enjoys the summer at the Berghof with Eva Braun. Hitler decides to gain air superiority over Britain in preparation for an invasion. The British with operation Ultra decodes German message and they are prepared. The British plane, the Spitfire, is superior, and many more German planes are shot down than British ones, and the British even bomb Berlin. Hitler stalls on Operation Sea Lion and instead bombs London, killing many. Hitler speaks to Spanish Interior Minister Suner about attacking Gibraltar and cutting the British off from the Mediterranean Sea. Hitler complains to Mussolini that Franco demands massive food and other supplies in order to agree to attack Gibraltar. Franco is careful not to antagonize Germany and risk an invasion, but he is a pragmatist. Hitler meets with the leaders of Vichy France and demands they actively join the fight against Britain, but they say it is not possible. Italy attacks Greece and Hitler has to deal with British forces there.

Ribbentrop and Hitler meet with Soviet Minister Molotov in Berlin to get the Soviet Union to join the Tripartite Pact. Molotov is interested in the Balkans, Turkey, and Finland. Ribbentrop insists that Britain is beaten, but at the same time British bombs make the meeting go to an air raid shelter. Hitler presses Spanish Minister Suner again to join in an attack on Gibraltar. Suner makes promises and threats and Hitler cannot launch this operation. Stalin offers further collaboration with Hitler, but Hitler loses interest. Hitler formulates the attack on the Soviet Union, because he feels that only by conquering it



can he defeat England and America later. Hitler is forced to attack Yugoslavia after there is a Pro-British coup there and also attack Greece. Hitler informs the military command that an attack on the Soviet Union is set for June 22nd, 1941. The military are worried about Hitler's open plans for mass murder of Slavs and Jews. Yugoslavia and Greece fall quickly. There is a Soviet-Japan non-aggression pact signed. Alfred Rosenberg warns Hitler to collaborate with Anti-Communist Russians and Ukrainians. Rudolf Hess opposes the coming attack on Russia unless Germany makes peace with Britain. Hess ends up imprisoned in the Tower of London. Hitler sets a policy of mass murder against Jews, Communists, and others in his coming attack on the Soviets, despite being warned against this course. Secret Agent Sorge warns Stalin of the coming attack, but Stalin cannot believe it.

Hitler moves to his headquarters at Wolf's Lair, near Rastenburg, East Prussia, and the first weeks of war are marked by many victories. The SS Einsatzgruppen moves in to the Soviet Union and kills thousands of Jews and others by firing squad. Hitler has severe stomach pains and the offensive is diverted to the Ukraine and towards Leningrad. Hitler meets Mussolini in occupied Russia. By Sept. 21st, Kiev is occupied. Next, Operation Typhoon is launched which encircles large Soviet forces in front of Moscow. In Mid-October, the defense of Moscow stiffens, and the Soviets counterattack with their superior T-34 tanks. The German troops lack winter clothing and the temperature reaches -31 degrees Celsius and the Soviets counterattack.

Japan attacks the United States at Pearl Harbor. Hitler rants to the press that the billionaires and Jews run the US. He has long feared the United States, which already occupies Iceland from the British and is sending huge amounts of lend-lease aid to the Soviet Union. Hitler declares war on the US. He rejects Gen. Brauchitsch's demand that there be a general withdrawal of troops before Moscow. Hitler stops the withdrawal and takes personal command of the Army.



Chapter 25,26, and 27

Chapter 25,26, and 27 Summary and Analysis

Hitler tells the Nazi leadership that the Jews will disappear from Europe. Himmler and R. Heydrich organize the ghettos and then ship Jews in box cars to the camps, euphemistically called deportation to the East. Hitler rallies the troops and prevents the Russian front from disintegrating. R. Heydrich is made chief of Bohemia and Moravia, is targeted by a resistance assassination squad and is killed. In revenge, the Nazis execute over one thousand villagers at the town of Lidice. Word seeps out in Germany of the use of gas chambers for mass murder at Belzec camp. In the spring of 1942, German forces encircle some Soviet armies. German forces head towards the Caucasus oil fields and southeast towards Stalingrad. Hitler rages against Gen. Jodl because Hitler's directive to take the Caucasus fails. He ignores the long extended flank on the way to Stalingrad. A memorandum warns that partisan resistance has been toughened by Hitler mass murder policy. The Soviets spring a trap north and south of Stalingrad, attacking through the weak Romanian army positions. The Soviets break through Italian army positions and the German relief attempt for Stalingrad fails. Hitler promises to airlift supplies to 250,000 soldiers surrounded at Stalingrad.

Hitler talks to his inner family circle of secretaries such as Ms. Traudl Humps about his struggle for power and philosophy. Goebbels, Himmler, and Goring discuss with other Nazi leaders about mobilizing for total war. The Anti-Hitler resistance tries to have a time-bomb blow up Hitler's plane, but the bomb is a dud. Ms. Traudl and other staff members follow Hitler to the Berghof. Eva Braun is there also with her dogs. Martin Bormann, a woman-chaser, is Hitler's shadow there. Traudl is engaged to Hitler's valet. Traudl is married, but soon her husband is sent to the Russian front. Hitler tries to mount another summer offensive at Kursk in 1943, but it fails. In July 1943, Mussolini is thrown out of power in Italy shortly after Sicily is invaded by the Allies. Hamburg in Northern Germany is destroyed in an air raid. Hitler forbids peace negotiations, but Foreign Minister Ribbentrop has a confidant trying to get talks with the West. Another Ribbentrop man is a back channel to the Soviets through German official Peter Kleist. The Allies land on mainland Italy and the Badoglio government signs a peace agreement. Hitler sends his top commando Otto Skorzeny who rescues Mussolini.

In June 1943, Hitler orders Himmler to continue the mass deportations of Jews to concentration camps. In the Warsaw Ghetto there is resistance and a month-long battle. The Catholic Church saves the lives of many Jews. A thirty-four-year-old lawyer, Konrad Morgen also creates problems for the death camps. Morgen is investigating the corruption of Karl Koch, commander of Buchenwald. SS Commander Himmler lives simply and does not loot like Goring does. He wants executioners to obey orders without being corrupt or sadistic. Hitler informs Nazi official Peter Kleist that not only Jews but Slavic peoples also must be killed to acquire living space for Germany. SS Judge Morgen meets Commander Christian Wirth of Buchenwald and sees the mass

murder camps in the Lublin area. Due to Morgen's cases concerning arbitrary killings, three camps are shot down, but Himmler protects Auschwitz from interference.



Chapter 28,29, 30,31 and Epilogue

Chapter 28,29, 30,31 and Epilogue Summary and Analysis

In March 1944, Hungary is near surrender and German forces are forced to occupy it. Hitler prepares for the Allied invasion of France. The German command is deceived that the landings on June 6th in Normandy are a diversion. Germany develops a hybrid jet bomber-fighter which is not terribly effective at either task. Von Stauffenberg gains a position close to Hitler and the plot against Hitler is revitalized. On July 11th, Hitler leaves a conference just before he is to be killed by a bomb. Another bomb is put near Hitler on July 20th at Wolfsschanze (Rastenburg). The bomb is moved away from Hitler before the bomb explodes. Hitler is not heavily wounded. Conspirators move to seize Berlin, but wait for von Stauffenberg to fly to Berlin. At the Bendlerstrasse, word leaks out that Hitler is not dead. Major Otto Remer at the Berlin Garrison contacts Hitler and is given orders to suppress the putsch. Hitler loyalists execute von Stauffenberg and others. Conspirators are discovered in Paris and also link Admiral Canaris to the plot.

US General Patton is driving German forces out of France. Meanwhile, leading Anti-Hitler conspirators are executed after being tried by the hanging judge Roland Friesler. Hitler keeps Auschwitz open to continue his mass murder of the Jews of Hungary. At the end of August 1944, Paris falls, and Romania changes sides and declares war on Germany. Hitler stops taking the pills that Dr. Morell gives him that are slowly poisoning him. Hitler may have had a minor heart attack. Ms. Traudl hears from Hitler that her husband has been killed at the front.

Hitler has a sinus infection and is depressed at evidence that large number of his command conspired against him. Finland, Romania, and Bulgaria sue for peace. Hitler plans to break through in the Ardennes and reach the Belgian coast. He waits for bad weather to ground the Allied planes. The Germans attack in mid-December in the Ardennes, and thousands of American GIs are taken prisoner. The Germans surround the town of Bastogne. Skorzeny's small commando force of pseudo-Americans causes massive confusion among US forces. Hitler attempts to extend the breakthrough, but by Jan. 3rd, 1945 the Allies counterattack. By Jan. 17th, the Battle of the Bulge ends in a German defeat.

Hitler is deep in his Berlin bunker, and spends much time with Martin Bormann. On Feb. 13th, the city of Dresden is firebombed and over sixty thousand killed. Foreign Ministry official Peter Kleist is in Sweden talking about a separate peace with the West. Hitler forbids all negotiations with the Soviets. Eva Braun returns to Berlin to be with Hitler until the end. In March, the Americans cross the Rhine over an intact bridge at Remagen, despite Hitler's orders to destroy infrastructure. Gen. Guderian protests to Hitler the failure to evacuate 200,000 German soldiers in Kurland on the Baltic Sea. Hitler dismisses him. Stalin is mad at the West for their arrangements with German



Gen. Karl Wolf in Northern Italy. In mid-April, US President Roosevelt dies and Hitler and Goebbels fantasize that this will save them.

Himmler makes excuses for mass killings of Jews, saying to a Jewish representative that other nations would not take the Jews. The Russians are twenty miles from Berlin. Hitler refuses to flee to Berchtesgaden and Eva Braun stays by his side. Goebbels and his large family come to see the Fuhrer and soon will commit murder-suicide. Goring hears that Hitler has collapsed and attempts to be declared the new leader. Bormann radios a message that Goring must be arrested. A key German army defending Berlin is nearly surrounded. Goebbels calls for a final effort to defend Berlin. Goring is forced to resign all offices. Allied bombers bomb the Berghof. On April 28th, Mussolini and his mistress are executed by partisans. The Russians are near the bunker. Eva Braun's brother-in-law is caught looting and is condemned to death. There is a little party as Adolph Hitler marries Eva Braun. Hitler jokes, drinks wine, and plays a phonograph record. Admiral Donitz is appointed Hitler's successor. Hitler shoots himself the next morning. Eva Braun Hitler takes poison. Their bodies are brought outside and burnt.

For many years there are rumors that Adolph Hitler escaped to Argentina with Martin Bormann. Martin Bormann's remains are discovered near the bunker in 1974. Himmler is captured weeks later, and commits suicide by biting on a cyanide-full glass tooth. Goring, Keitel, and Ribbentrop are sentenced to be hung at the Nuremburg trials, but Goring commits suicide by cyanide capsule the night before. Some of the survivors of Hitler's inner circle talk to the author after returning to Germany years later from imprisonment in the Soviet Union.



Characters

Adolph Hitler

The author paints Adolph Hitler as a complex character whose has an unlikely background to his infamous career. Adolph Hitler is marked by trying to be accepted by an art or architecture school, and failing. Hitler spends four years in the trenches in World War I before being temporarily blinded by poison gas. Hitler is appalled at the chaos in Germany and the threat of Communist revolution after the war. He is recruited into an Army operation that monitors extremist groups and soon takes over the group, renamed the NSDAP or Nazi Party.

The chaos in Germany of hyperinflation and war reparations payments gives Hitler the opportunity to gain a following rapidly. In 1923, he launches the Munich Beer Hall Putsch as a step towards taking over Germany. Hitler is defeated and jailed, but only for one year. There he writes a book, *Mein Kampf*, where he writes of his theory of a secret Jewish design for global domination through Communism and western capitalism. His goal for Germany is to seize territory and conquer the Soviet Union. After years of organizing, Hitler gets mass support due to the Great Depression. International and local bankers and industrialists finance him, and Hitler comes to power and soon establishes a dictatorship.

Many leading British statesmen hope that Hitler will strike east against Russia and therefore they appease him. After a series of diplomatic triumphs using threats, Hitler attacks Poland and divides it with the Soviet Union. In 1940, Hitler stuns the world by defeating France and occupying most of Western Europe. Hitler's pattern of endless war continues when he attacks the Soviet Union, but is stopped at the gates of Moscow. By 1942, the United States is also at war with Germany. Hitler continues to fight while organizing the mass murder of Jews and millions of others. This continues until his final defeat and suicide in his bunker in Berlin.

Hermann Goring

Herman Goring is a World War I flying ace. Goring meets Hitler at a rally and is attracted to Hitler as a man of action. Goring is shot during the Beer Hall Putsch but recovers. At the time of the Reichstag Fire, Goring is one of the first German officials on the scene, and many believe him responsible for this incident. His first wife dies, and when he marries the actress Emmy Sonnemann, under the Hitler regime it is an international media event. Goring is known for his greed and collection of luxuries. Goring is given the command of the Air Force and is a key Hitler operative in the surrender of Austria and Czechoslovakia, threatening to bomb these countries. He is part of the team that makes the Stuka aircraft- Panzer tank cooperation possible for the Blitzkrieg strikes of the early phase of the war. Goring is designated as Hitler official successor, but later fall out of favor. When he radios from Berchtesgaden that he is



ready to become leader after Hitler commits suicide, Martin Bormann has him arrested. Goring is tried at Nuremberg but takes poison before he is to be hung.

Heinrich Himmler

Heinrich Himmler becomes the head of the hated and feared SS, particularly its secret police functions, the Gestapo. As head of the SS, Himmler is the Nazi official responsible for carrying out mass murder of Jews and many Slavs, and others. Himmler is originally a follower of Ernst Rohm and participates in the Beer Hall Putsch. Himmler is a Catholic and some say he models the SS on several strict religious orders in the Church. Himmler plans mass murder, but has strange moments of conscience when he lets people or whole groups escape. Toward the end of the war, Himmler tries to negotiate with Western and Soviet officials. He later conceals his identity but is captured by British soldiers. Before he can be interrogated, Himmler bites down on a tooth containing poison and dies.

Josef Goebbels

The infamous Nazi Propaganda Minister meets the Nazi party in the early 1920s. Before that, Goebbels considers himself a socialist and is close to Gregor Strasser and the North German, so-called left-wing of the Nazi Party. He is a key operative in Nazi newspapers, propaganda, and recruiting. Later, Goebbels comes under total personal control of Hitler and is the leading organizer of "Crystal Night," which is the night of mass pogroms against German Jews in November 1938. Goebbels has a temporary falling out with Hitler because of his obsessive affairs and adultery, until he abandons his affair with an actress. Goebbels is committed to the concept of total war even as late as the end of the war. He and his wife commit suicide and murder their six children on May 1st, 1945.

Ernst Rohm

Captain Ernst Rohm is initially Hitler's superior when Hitler is doing intelligence work for the Army. Rohm is a key operative in Hitler's 1923 Beer Hall Putsch and the first commander of the SA. Later, Rohm is driven out of the leadership of the SA by Hitler and spends several years abroad. In 1930, Rohm is put back as head of the SA. Rohm begins to become a liability to Hitler in 1932, when he is revealed in the press to be homosexual. In 1934, leading elements in the military target Rohm for elimination, because Rohm is promoting a second revolution of socialism in Germany. He wants the SA to take over as the leaders of the German Army. Rohm is lured to a spa outside Munich and rounded up along with other SA leaders in July 1934, in the Night of the Long Knives. He is executed without a trial. Rohm is called the Judas who followed Hitler but then betrayed him.



Joachim Ribbentrop

Ribbentrop is appointed Foreign Minister under the Hitler Government. He is key in arranging meetings that lead President Hindenburg to appoint Hitler Chancellor. Ribbentrop's key triumph is the Hitler-Stalin pact, which allows Hitler to invade Poland and face the West without a threat on the Eastern front. Ribbentrop attempts to get Hitler to have the Soviet Union join the alliance of Germany, Japan, and Italy. In this move, Ribbentrop is thwarted by Hitler, who does not make big concessions to Stalin and prefers to attack the Soviet Union at the first opportunity. Ribbentrop has great fear of war with the Soviet Union and is an increasing irritant to Hitler.

Rudolph Hess

Rudolph Hess is one of Hitler's closest associates. Hess is a disciple of the geopolitican Haushofer when he joins the Nazi movement. Hess is sent to Langsberg Prison along with Hitler, and takes dictation for Hitler's book, Mein Kampf. In fact, some of Hess' geopolitical views find their way into Mein Kampf such as the geopolitical need of Germany for expanded "Lebensraum" or living space. Hess has close associates in Britain and is upset once Britain goes to war with Germany. His anxiety grows when he is aware that Hitler is about to invade Russia, and in May 1941, Hess makes his solo flight to the estate of the Duke of Hamilton in Britain. Hess desperately hopes that he can negotiate peace terms with Britain before the coming war with Russia begins. Instead, he is summarily imprisoned for life.

Alfred Rosenberg

Alfred Rosenberg is from the Baltic States and an ideologue of Nazism. Alfred Rosenberg promotes an extreme version of an International Jewish Conspiracy being behind Communism in his newspaper articles and books. Rosenberg also publishes in German the famous forgery and fraud "the Protocols of the Elders of Zion." Rosenberg is given a position by the Nazis over Eastern Occupation Affairs during the invasion of the Soviet Union. Rosenberg has a theory about constituting the Ukrainians, the Russians, the Baltic and Caucasus peoples as dependent states of Germany. Instead, these areas are treated brutally. Rosenberg has more success with his anti-Bolshevik organizing in the Caucases in 1942, which yields pro-Nazi armies in that area.

Gregor Strasser, Otto Strasser

Gregor Strasser is a key organizer of the Nazis in Northern Germany. Strasser's allegiance to the party is weak at times, though he becomes a key organizer in Northern German cities such as Hamburg and Berlin. Gregor's brother Otto also follows Hitler, but is expelled from the Nazi party in 1930, and goes into exile in Switzerland. During the political struggles of 1932, General Schleicher attempts to break Gregor Strasser from



Hitler and Gregor Strasser is forced to resign from the Party. Later, during the "Night of the Long Knives" Gregor Strasser is killed by the Gestapo.

Martin Bormann

Martin Bormann, towards the end of the war, is Hitler's closest confidant. Bormann becomes the head of the Party Chancellery in 1941 and becomes close to Hitler after the flight of Rudolf Hess to Britain. Martin Bormann has a great deal of bureaucratic power over who sees Hitler, but is not well known by the German public. He and his wife have nine children, and Martin Bormann is also known for his numerous advances and affairs with other women. For many years, Bormann is thought to have escaped after the end of the war. Finally, his remains are identified and it is believed he died shortly after Hitler's suicide.

Eva Braun

Eva Braun is Hitler's long-time mistress and becomes his wife just before they commit suicide together. Eva Braun is very sensitive when Hitler does not pay attention to her. Once she shoots herself because of her despondence, but she recovers. Also, Eva Braun took sleeping pills but recovers from this. During long periods she lives with Hitler in Munich and later at the Berghof in Berchtesgaden.

August Kubizek, Gustl Kubizek

Gustl Kubizek is Hitler's boyhood friend from Linz, Austria. He shares a room with Hitler when they go to Vienna, Austria to seek their fortunes as young men. Gustl is a music student and is fairly successful. Hitler is jealous of Gustl's success and at some point moves out of their joint room and disappears into flophouses. Gustl's education is interrupted by World War I and he ends up with a clerical job. Later, when Hitler annexes Austria, Hitler and Gustl meet and discuss architecture and other topics of interest in their youth. Gustl is married with three children and also writes a book about his friendship with Hitler.

Alois Hitler

Alois Hitler is Adolf Hitler's father. He is a minor Austrian customs official. After two marriages and other affairs, Alois Hitler marries Klara Polzl and is the father of Adolf Hitler and his younger sister Paula. He is the father of two other surviving children from previous relationships. Alois Hitler dies in 1903.



Klara Polzl Hitler

Klara Hitler is Hitler's mother, who he is very close to. She is concerned that Hitler still tries to become an artist, which she considers impossible. She wants him to get a reasonable job or career. Klara dies of breast cancer at age forty-seven, just before Christmas 1907.

General Schleicher

General Schleicher is an Army leader and a rather devious politician. Schleicher tries to use Hitler in 1932 against the Communists, but does not want Hitler to come to power. Schleicher forms the last government of the Weimar Republic and requests power to form a temporary military dictatorship from President Hindenburg. Schleicher is denied this and resigns the Chancellorship, and then Hitler comes into power. Schleicher continues to be an enemy of Hitler and is murdered by Gestapo agents during the Night of the Long Knives in 1934.

Franz von Papen

Franz von Papen is an aristocratic horse jockey who is also an ex-General Staff officer. He is drafted by President Hindenburg to be Chancellor after the fall of the Brüning Government. Von Papen ends up losing power to General von Schleicher and promoting Hitler as Chancellor. Von Papen is Vice-Chancellor in the first Hitler Government. Von Papen quickly antagonizes Hitler with his calls for the restoration of free government and is placed under house arrest during the Night of the Long Knives. He escapes murder and becomes German ambassador to Austria, until that country is annexed.

President, Field Marshall Paul Von Hindenburg

Von Hindenburg is elected President of Germany after the death of President Ebert. He is right-wing, but his personal inclinations are towards the former German Kaiser. At the age of eighty-four, Hindenburg defeats Hitler and is re-elected President of Germany. Hindenburg tries to resist naming Hitler as Chancellor but falls victim to outside threats and pressures. He appoints Hitler as Chancellor in January 1933. Hindenburg's health is declining and his decline is accelerated by news of some of the killings of the Night of the Long Knives. He dies in August 1934, and Hitler succeeds Hindenburg as President, combining the office with that of Chancellor.

King Edward VIII

King Edward VIII is king of England for less than a year before he is forced to abdicate. Edward VIII is noted by Hitler to be a supporter of the Nazis.



Sir Anthony Eden

Anthony Eden is the long-time Foreign Minister of Great Britain. Eden is an early supporter of negotiations and appeasement of Hitler. Later, Eden feels betrayed by Hitler, after the fall of Czechoslovakia. He gives more warlike speeches in the House of Commons along with Winston Churchill.

Benito Mussolini, Fascist Dictator of Italy

Hitler is an early admirer of Mussolini and bases the idea of his Munich Beer Hall Putsch on Mussolini's successful seizing of power with his march on Rome. Mussolini does not return this respect, and refuses to loan the Nazi Party money when Goring requests money in 1924 from Mussolini. In 1934, Mussolini feels betrayed when Nazi assassins kill the leader of Austria, and mobilizes troops to the Austrian border. Later, Mussolini emulates Hitler with foreign adventures, and the Axis alliance is signed between Germany and Italy. After Mussolini is arrested when Italy is invaded, Hitler orders him to be rescued. Mussolini heads a puppet Italian Government in Northern Italy until he is executed by partisans near the end of the war.

Geli Raubal

Geli is Hitler's niece and daughter of his half-sister Angela. Geli is an attractive girl who gets a lot of attention from young men. Some claim that she is sexually promiscuous. Geli is involved with Hitler, though to what extent is unknown. She lives in Hitler's apartment and apparently commits suicide there in 1931, in a fit of jealousy over Adolf Hitler. Geli dies at the age of twenty-three.

Josef Stalin, Dictator of the Soviet Union

Josef Stalin is the dictator of the Soviet Union and is the one man that Hitler is fascinated by. Hitler attempts to gather intelligence about Stalin from people who visit Stalin. Hitler also admires Stalin's authoritarian rule and show trials of opponents. Parts of Hitler's concentration camp system are copied from that of Stalin in the Soviet Union. Hitler signs the Hitler-Stalin pact with Stalin, but never trusts Stalin. Hitler insists that he attacks the Soviet Union before Stalin can attack Germany.

Lieutenant Colonel Count Claus Stauffenberg

Stauffenberg is wounded by an aircraft bombing but manages to be physically rehabilitated and get on the staff of Hitler's Headquarters at Wolf's Lair in Rastenberg. Stauffenberg takes leadership of the German Resistance against Hitler and brings a bomb into the Fuhrer's staff meeting. Stauffenberg leaves before the bomb goes off, and



it is moved further away from Hitler. Within days, Stauffenberg is caught in Berlin and executed.

Joachim Von Ribbentrop

Von Ribbentrop is the Foreign Minister of Nazi Germany. Ribbentrop is key in facilitating the negotiations between Hitler, von Papen, and Hindenburg that results in making Hitler the German Chancellor. Ribbentrop tries to get Hitler to come to a long-term agreement with Stalin after the defeat of France, but Hitler cannot lose his hatred and fear of the Soviet Union and rejects this. After the war, Ribbentrop is tried at Nuremberg and hung.

Field Marshall Fritz Erich von Manstein

Von Manstein is a brilliant officer who, together with Hitler, makes the plan for the Ardennes flank attack in the 1940 French campaign. Manstein leads the force that attempts to relieve Stalingrad, but is stopped by Soviet attacks on Italian front line forces. Later, Manstein deals with Hitler in a sarcastic manner when Hitler demands fighting to the last German.

General Heinz Guderian

General Guderian is a brilliant commander of tank troops in the first Blitzkrieg operations in France and the Soviet Union. Later, he tries unsuccessfully to get Hitler to attack Moscow before the Winter of 1941. In March 1945, Guderian leads German troops on the Eastern front. He is retired from duty after berating Hitler for allowing 200,000 German forces to be stuck on the coast of Kurland (in Latvia) by the Baltic Sea.

SS Judge Konrad Morgen

Konrad Morgen becomes an SS judge and is upset by evidence he sees of the Nazi Holocaust against the Jews. Morgen starts a series of legal cases against arbitrary killings and corruption, which ends up closing several concentration camps in the Lublin area. He is unable, despite some efforts to interfere with the Auschwitz camp.



Objects/Places

Vienna

Vienna is the capital of Austria and a center of the arts and commerce. Hitler goes there in order to be admitted to an art or architecture school. He fails in this, and instead is homeless in the city for many years. Hitler finds the city strange and alienating due to its diverse ethnic composition.

Munich

Hitler moves to Munich in 1913. Munich is the capital of the state of Bavaria, part of the German Empire. After World War I, Hitler returns to Munich and it is the location of the founding of the Nazi Party. Munich remains Hitler's favorite city throughout his adult life.

Linz, Austria

Linz, Austria is a small Austrian city where Hitler spends part of his youth. He first hears opera at the Linz Opera House and meets his long-time friend Gustl Kubizek there.

Ypres, Belgium

Ypres is a village in Western Belgium near the North Sea. Hitler fights in some of the many battles that occur here in World War I, on the Western Front. Several battles occur in Ypres, starting in October of 1914.

The Night of the Long Knives

The Night of the Long Knives occurs in July 1934. In the Night of the Long Knives, hundreds of Hitler's opponents are killed both inside the Nazi Party and outside. SA leader Ernst Rohm is killed, and General Schleicher is assassinated by the Gestapo. Many other SA leaders and former political opponents of Hitler, such as Gregor Strasser, are shot without trial.

The Munich Beer Hall Putsch

The Munich Beer Hall Putsch is Hitler's first attempt to take power, and occurs in November 1923. Hitler's SA and SS occupy the Burgerbraukeller, a huge beer hall, while the Bavarian President von Kahr and other officials have a mass meeting. Later, the Nazis are stopped by police while on a march and shot at. Several are killed, Hitler is slightly wounded and flees. The Putsch is stopped and Hitler is put on trial.



The Hitler-Stalin Pact

The Hitler-Stalin Pact is an agreement signed in August 1939 for a non-aggression treaty between Germany and the Soviet Union. The Agreement has secret clauses that divide up Poland between Germany and the Soviet Union, and also give the Soviet Union the Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

The Tripartite Pact

The Tripartite Pact is a treaty between Germany, Italy and Japan for cooperation. It is nominally aimed at the Soviet Union, but Foreign Minister Ribbentrop gets the idea of having the Soviet Union joined the Pact in 1940. This is discussed with Soviet representatives but never actually happens. Instead, Hitler attacks the Soviet Union in June of 1941.

Richard Wagner, Wagner Opera, the Wagner Family

Richard Wagner is the composer of operas such as Lohengrin. Richard Wagner is deceased, but Hitler goes to visit his family and attend the Wagner Music festivals. Hitler becomes friends with the composer's widow and also Wagner's son's wife Winifred.

Wolfsschanze, Wolf's Lair, Rastenburg, East Prussia

Wolfsschanze, or Wolf's Lair, is an operational center that Hitler uses to plan the war against the Soviet Union. It is located in Rastenburg, East Prussia, near the Prussian Eastern border. It is here that the attempt is made to kill Hitler with a bomb on July 20th, 1944.

Auschwitz, the Concentration Camps, the Death Camps

Auschwitz is the largest concentration and death camp, and is located in the Government-General area of occupied Poland. Millions of Jews, Slavs and others are both gassed here and worked to death. Other infamous concentration camps and death camps include Maidanek, Bergen-Belsen and Buchenwald. Inmates are often immediately executed, but in other cases they work until their strength is exhausted.

SA, Brownshirts, Sturmabteilung, Stormtroopers

The SA, or Brownshirts is the main street army of the Nazis during the period of their organization and coming to power. After Hitler comes to power, the army is afraid that the Brownshirts will takeover the army. During the Night of the Long Knives, SA leader



Ernst Rohm is executed without a trial. Later, the SA has only a minor role in military education.

SS, Schutzstaffel (translation: Protective Unit, Bodyguards)

The SS begins as Hitler's personal bodyguard. Hitler uses the SS as a personal bodyguard and as a defense and control against the initially larger and more powerful SA. Later, it is vastly expanded and acquires new powers when the SA is partially suppressed in July 1934. There are army units that only fight in military combat under the SS. The SS also includes parts of the Secret Police, the Gestapo, and units such as execution squads and concentration camp guards.

Nuremburg Party Days

Nuremburg Party Days are rallies that become huge after the Nazis come to power and are held in early September. One of these days long rallies is filmed by Leni Riefenstahl and wins international acclaim as the film "Triumph of the Will."

The Berghof, Berchtesgaden, The Obersalzberg

The Berghof is Hitler's residence in the resort area of the town of Berchtesgaden, south of Munich and near the Austrian border. The Berghof is located on a hill known as the Obersalzberg that looks over the Salzburg, Austria area. This is Hitler's favorite place for relaxation, especially in the summertime. The Berghof is in a mountainous place and there is a fantastic view of the surrounding area.

Danzig, Polish Corridor

Danzig is a free city that holds a port that is used primarily by Poland. It is made a free port after World War I, and has a mostly German population. The Polish Corridor is an area that is given to Poland from Germany after World War I. It is primarily Polish in population, but contains a significant German minority. Hitler claims that Poland must give these areas back to Germany in 1939.

Ardennes Flank, French Campaign, May 1940

A key feature in Hitler's attack in the west on May 10, 1940 is the Ardennes Flank. While the German army attacks Holland and through Northern Belgium, Allied armies are led north along the English Channel. Then, on May 13th, German forces attack in Southern Belgium, at the start of the French Maginot line. German forces penetrate to Sedan, and then are able to cut off Allied forces as they drive towards the English Channel from the



South. The French defenses are totally outflanked and destroyed, and soon France surrenders.

Battle of the Bulge, of December 1944 to January 1945

Hitler launches a surprise attack in mid-December 1944 at the same Ardennes hills area where he attacked in May 1940. After surprising the US Army, and the occupation of a "bulge" of territory, the Germans are defeated by January 1945.

Battle of Stalingrad

German forces are over-extended fighting for Stalingrad. In November 1942, Soviet forces attack the extended Axis flanks north and south of Stalingrad, which are manned by Romanian and Italian troops. These lines are broken through and over 250,000 Axis forces are surrounded in an isolated pocket that ends in Stalingrad. By January 1943, these forces surrender.

Berlin, Capital of Germany

Berlin is the capital of Germany with also a large urban workforce. During the 1920s and early 30s the Berlin area is a battleground between Communist and Nazi street armies. When Hitler takes power, the Reichstag is burned down in a suspicious fire, and the Reichstag body meets in the Berlin Kroll Opera House. Hitler commits suicide as Soviet forces approach his bunker in Berlin on April 30th, 1945.

The Munich Conference

The Munich Conference is called on the initiative of Mussolini to settle German claims on the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia. It is a conference of the leaders Hitler, Daladier of France, Mussolini, and Neville Chamberlain of Great Britain. Hitler is given the right to occupy the Sudetenland, which he does almost immediately.

Blitzkrieg War, Lightening War

Blitzkrieg War is the German tactic for quick victory in Poland, France and the beginning of the campaign against the Soviet Union. Blitzkrieg consists of fast military strikes using coordinated attacks of tanks and aircraft, particularly Stuka dive bombers.



Kristallnacht, Crystal Night

Kristallnacht is an Anti-Jewish pogrom organized in many major German cities after November 7th, 1938. Many shops and homes are destroyed and 20,000 Jews are sent to concentration camps.

Treaty of Versailles of 1919

The Treaty of Versailles of 1919 is the peace treaty between Germany and the Allies. It causes Germany to lose major territories to France, Poland and other nations. Also, Germany admits guilt for starting World War I, and must pay a huge monetary amount in war reparations.

Nuremburg Laws of 1935

The Nuremburg Laws of 1935 make it illegal for Jews to marry "Aryan" Germans or have sexual relations with them.

Reichstag Fire

The Reichstag Fire is a fire that burns down the Reichstag building in February 1933. It is said to be started by a Dutch madman named van der Lubbe. Van der Lubbe is found at the site of the fire, but many observers blame the fire on the Nazis, since it is seen to start rapidly and may have been set by many people. The fire burns down the Reichstag, the Parliament, and is blamed by Hitler on the Communist. This is the excuse for the immediate cessation of civil liberties and establishment of a Nazi dictatorship.



Themes

The Motivations of Hitler

Adolf Hitler is a man who is not well-educated. There is little in his background that marks him as especially anti-Semitic or reactionary. He spends years as a bohemian artist who is in and out of homeless shelters. Then he becomes a front-line soldier and survives World War I. Hitler seizes on the populist myths of his time in post-World War I Germany. The military wants to blame someone else for the defeat of Germany. They are threatened by active revolutionary movements, some of them Democratic and others Communists. While the military claim to hate and fear only the Communists, deep down they seem to also despise the Social Democratic, Catholic Center, and other moderate parties. Hitler, like many Germans, is alarmed by the prospect of a Communist Revolution. He seizes on the myths he is told, such as that the Jews are running a secret conspiracy and that the war could have been won except for those who betrayed the nation.

Hitler sees the Slavic nations to the east, such as Poland and Russia to be the targets of Germany for conquest and eventual extermination. Like a medieval knight, Hitler seeks to conquer these territories as "Lebensraum," or living space for the German people. Hitler's theory is directly opposite to the ideas of the American Revolution, that all men are created equal. It is an extreme version of the oligarchical idea of Empire and racial superiority. In a sense, Hitler seeks to replace the British Empire, the most powerful rival to Germany, or be its rival on the continent of Europe and Asia. Hitler becomes the one who believes that it is not enough to blame the Jews and persecute them, but it is also necessary to exterminate them. Extermination of other peoples becomes part of Hitler's viewpoint of the evolution of nations. To Hitler, only the strongest nations survive and the weak nations must be enslaved and exterminated.

How Hitler Comes to Power and the Nature of Appeasement

Many people wonder after the fact how Hitler is allowed to get as far as he does. In the beginning of the rise of Hitler to power, there is tremendous guilt in Britain and France over the Versailles Treaty. The Versailles Treaty of 1919 declares that Germany is responsible for World War I. Germany loses all its colonies, large territories in Europe and is forced to pay a huge amount of war reparations. The payment of these war reparations causes tremendous upheaval in Germany. In 1923, under conditions of hyperinflation, Hitler is able to make his first attempt to seize power in the Munich Beer Hall Putsch. By the time that Hitler comes to power in 1933, many in Britain question whether the Versailles Treaty is too harsh. In a sense it is paradoxical that such harsh conditions are placed on Germany after World War I that they even lead to the occupation of the Rhineland. After Hitler comes to power, suddenly there is little attempt to enforce the restrictions of the Versailles Treaty. Germany is allowed to rearm and



even has negotiations with Britain on how large of a battle fleet it is allowed to construct. Hitler's troops march into the Rhineland in 1936 in violation of the Versailles Treaty, despite the fact that they could have been defeated relatively easily. Germany is allowed to annex Austria quickly in 1938 once Mussolini's Italy ceases to object. In fact, the first talk of war danger only comes later when Hitler demands the annexation of the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia.

One theory is that British statesmen want Hitler to strike east against Poland and the Soviet Union. Even when Britain and France go to war, they do little against Germany except for a naval blockade. The Hitler-Stalin Pact upsets the faction that appeases Hitler in Britain and France since they see that they soon will have to fight Hitler. Of course, Hitler's invasion and seizure of Denmark, Norway, the Low Countries, and France is not tolerated by the British. The British are forced to fight for their life, with the increasing material support of the United States.

The Banality of Evil

A popular theory that gains some support from this book is that of the banality of evil. Hitler copies the slogans of the right-wing of his day in Germany and turns them into the most extreme version. Instead of restricting Jews and blaming them for various misdeeds, he wants to kill them all. Instead of complaining about a difficult economic situation, Hitler wants to invade neighboring nations and seize their land and wealth. Many people and even nations want to find an easy way out of their economic problems, but Hitler makes a case for the extreme action to solve Germany's problems through war.

During much of the period after the outbreak of war in 1939, Hitler lives the life of a very successful businessman or politician. He enjoys leisure activities at his favorite vacation house, the Berghof in Berchtesgaden, on the Obersalzberg. There he comfortably lives with his mistress Eva Braun, and during breaks from military briefings and political decisions, Hitler relaxes with his guests and family circle. He cares for his secretaries, their families, and their little problems. Even more extreme examples of banal evil can be seen in Hitler's top subordinates. The head of the Luftwaffe, Hermann Goring, is dazzled by the huge amounts of wealth he can accumulate under the Nazis. Goring dreads the coming of war in 1939, afraid that it will disrupt his plundering and pleasure. Heinrich Himmler is relatively modest in his material acquisitions. As a bureaucrat he tries to effectively manage his job of mass murder. Even so, Himmler takes the time to listen to the complaints of people under his command and often saves an individual or even thousands of people from arbitrary death. Himmler likes to look like a good fellow to his peers and wants to appear considerate. Many other leaders who are Nazis are forced by the course of events into criminal activity, though they would prefer to be successful bureaucrats and not undertake unnecessary risks.



Style

Perspective

The perspective of the author is highly academic. The author attempts to show the evil of Adolf Hitler by Hitler's action and does a minimal amount of labeling of these actions. The book is in the third person, but has numerous quotes from Hitler and his associates and adversaries placed within the text. These quotes in turn are extensively footnoted with their sources. The book was published in 1976, when numerous associates of Hitler and people of these times were still alive and in many cases interviewed by the author. Several books by people familiar with Hitler are quoted and are particularly useful to the author. These include "The Young Hitler I Knew" by August Kubizek, and Hitler's Secret Conversations, 1941-1945, edited by H.R. Trevor Roper.

An interesting perspective of Hitler's early organizing of the Nazi party and his first years in power is provided by the extensive tapes the author makes of interviews with Ernst Hanfstaengl, his son Egon, and former wife, Helene. Hanfstaengl is a German-American, and large amounts of the earlier parts of the book come from the information from the three Hanfstaengls. This seems to shift the book somewhat in viewpoint, but not overly, since Helene Hanfstaengl is an important person in Hitler's life. Hitler comes for refuge to her after the failure of the Beer Hall Putsch. Obviously, the author obtained a good primary source and decided to use it to the utmost. Other people interviewed are spouses and children of Nazi officials that were executed after the Nuremberg trials, such as Mrs. von Ribbentrop, wife of the German Foreign Minister. For more on these sources, see Sources, p. 1020.

Tone

The book has a curious tone of being objective and evenhanded, which has advantages and disadvantages. The author tries hard to consider what Hitler is thinking and his motives. The author is particularly effective in trying to unmask Hitler's reasons for mass murder against Jews and other peoples in the East through description of things Hitler authorized. This even-handedness can be overdone. For example, in the matter of the Reichstag Fire of Feb. 1933, many historians blame this on the Nazis. It is believed the rapid burning of the Reichstag had to be the work of a team, not just the madman caught, van der Lubbe. Yet the author insists that this is a happy coincidence for the Nazis, giving them the opportunity to decree a total police state.

The author's in-depth study of the relationship between leading British statesmen and Hitler is more successful. Numerous British statesmen are shown to be fascinated with Hitler. Some are quoted as seeing Hitler as a key force against the dreaded Soviets and Communism. Yet, the author does not come to the conclusion that leading British circles back Hitler in hopes that he will attack the Soviet Union. Overall, the author tries to have an objective tone and let the reader make his or her own conclusions. Another



controversial issue that is not as clearly dealt with is which circles finance Hitler's rise to power. The question always remains of how Hitler, a man who had been homeless for years, could become the aggressive and murderous dictator of Nazi Germany.

Structure

The book is published in two hardcover volumes. The first volume goes from Hitler's ancestors and his birth until the Munich Conference of 1938. The second volume starts at the Crystal Night Anti-Jewish pogroms of November 1938 and continues to the end of World War II in 1945. The book is organized chronologically from Hitler's birth in 1889 to his death on April 30th, 1945. The book is divided in a very rigorous fashion into a prologue, nine sections, and an epilogue. Each of the nine parts is divided into from three to seven chapters. There are a total of thirty-one chapters, and each of the parts and chapters are organized with a central theme. In reality, there is usually many different things going on in Hitler's life, from his personal routine to his political acts, visits, and meetings. Often a theme-named chapter has only a small amount of material on that theme. Thus, it is best that the reader view the theme of a part or chapter to be the most important event that the author considers to have happened to Hitler in that period of time. For example, in Part 3 "A Mind in the Making," there are three chapters, "In Landsberg Prison," "Hitler's Secret Book" and "A Death in the Family." In the first chapter in this part, Hitler is mostly in Landsberg Prison. In the next section, Hitler's so-called Secret Book is referred to only briefly. In the third chapter, "A Death in the Family," Hitler is involved in an intense political campaign that is broken up by the suicide of his niece and love-object Geli Raubal. The book also has some excellent maps, including of Hitler's military campaigns and conquests, and other tables.



Quotes

"He was imperious and quick to anger from childhood onward and would not listen to anyone," he told an interviewer in 1948, still resentful after fifty-two years."

Alois Hitler Jr., Chap. 1, p. 9

"Every outstanding personality brought up in the peculiar intellectual atmosphere of Vienna lived ever after in a dialectical syncretism of love and hatred for the city which offered splendid potentialities for the highest accomplishments, as well as the most stubborn resistance to their realization." Chap. 2, p. 36

"Do you know you have a natural orator among your students?" Muller told Captain Mayr, indicating the pale-faced soldier. Mayr called out, 'You Hitler, come up here.'"

Chap. 3, p. 89

"For two hours he expounded on the subject of 'Why We Are Against the Jews,' and from the beginning made it clear that his party alone 'will free you from the power of the Jew!'"

Chap. 4, p. 108

"He charged that 'so-called World Pacifism' was a Jewish invention; that the leaders of the proletariat were Jews ('Jews again!'); that the Freemasons were tools of the Jews ('Once more the Jews!'); and that, in fact, the Jews were conspiring to conquer the world!" Chap. 5, p. 146

"The Kahr government, he shouted, had been deposed and Adolf Hitler had declared a national revolution." Chap. 6, p. 167

"Hitler misled me,' he complained to Hans Frank after the trial. 'He lied to me. He told me on the evening of his mad Putsch that the army was behind it to a man... He is only a speech maker and an adventurer.'" Chap. 7, p. 197

"Sixty-two million Germans, he said, were crowded into an area only 450,000 kilometers square. 'This is a ridiculous figure when one considers the size of other nations in the world today.'" Chap. 8, p. 236

"On his own, Goebbels joined the Reds in a wildcat strike of Berlin transport workers asking for a pfennig or so an hour increase in pay. It was not the first time that the two parties, with many goals in common, had fought together; and for the next few wet, raw days the Communists and the National Socialists ate communally on the picket line."

Chap. 10, p. 287

"After Hitler saw the red sky above the Tiergarten he shouted. 'It's the Communists!' and set off with Goebbels for the scene of the fire." Chap. 11, p. 313



"I gave the order to shoot those who were the ringleaders in this treason and I further gave the order to burn out down to the raw flesh the ulcers of this poisoning of the wells in our domestic life and of the poisoning of the outside." Chap. 12, p. 357

"Who is King here? Baldwin or I? I myself wish to talk to Hitler, and will do so here or in Germany. Tell him that please." Chap. 13, p. 400

"Now that the King has been dethroned, there is certainly no other person in England who is ready to play with us." Chap. 14, p. 423

"In early August Brauchitsch was persuaded to convene the senior army commanders. It was he, in fact, who read a memorandum prophesying that a Czech invasion would lead to a general war that Germany was doomed to lose." Chap. 17, p. 493

"Furthermore, the Fuhrer was about to suggest to those foreign powers so concerned over the plight of German Jews that they be deported to the island of Madagascar." Chap. 18, p. 592

"Danzig is not the subject of the dispute at all." Chap. 19, p. 620

"After shouting anti-German slogans into the microphone the 'Poles' would retreat, leaving behind a number of dead bodies as proof that a fight had taken place." Chap. 20, p. 658

"Churchill,' he complained, 'was quite unable to appreciate the sporting spirit of which I had given proof by refraining from creating an irreparable breach between the British and ourselves.'" Chap. 21, p. 705

"Molotov replied with sarcasm: if Germany was waging a life-and-death struggle against England as Hitler had remarked that afternoon, he could only assume this meant that Germany was fighting 'for life' and England 'for death.'" Chap. 23, p. 743

"We can't shoot these 3,500,000 Jews, we can't poison them, but we can take steps which, one way or another, will lead to an annihilation success, and I am referring to the measures under discussion in the Reich." Chap. 25, p. 804.

"I would be a weakling, a criminal to our descendants if I allowed hate-filled sons to grow to manhood in this battle of humans against subhumans... but we must recognize more and more that we are engaged in a primitive, original, natural racial battle." Chap. 27, p. 877

"...but was impeded by the brown briefcase. He couldn't budge it with his foot so leaned down and transferred it to the outside of the heavy table support. It was a trivial move which would alter the course of history." Chap. 28, p. 904

"Three days later Hitler spoke to the people. He raised the specter of international Jewry and Asiatic Bolshevism before calling on every German to do his duty to the last." Chap. 30, p. 956.



"After announcing that Wenck was not coming, he said that he and his wife were going to die unless some miracle intervened. He passed out phials containing cyanamide."
Chap. 31, p. 999

Topics for Discussion

Discuss the dangers of Nationalism. Hitler is backed by factions in the Army initially to help organize the population against left-wing movements and Communism. It is not clear if these Army factions intend to create a policy of endless war and genocide against Jews, Slavs, and others. Is this an outgrowth of excessive nationalism?

Discuss the banality of evil. Hitler is an uneducated artist who lives in flophouses for years. Somehow he is transformed into a mesmerizing speech-giver and demagogue. Yet he still enjoys a certain bohemianism, hanging out in cafes and enjoying the company of men and women of the arts. Can the personality of Hitler explain the evil force that he becomes?

Discuss Empire and Imperialism. In Hitler's time, the leading victors of World War I, France, Britain, and Belgium have huge empires in Africa and Asia. Hitler rationalizes that he is only trying to procure an empire for Germany in the East. Is Hitler's desire for Empire and "lebensraum" only a more violent expression of what is acceptable in Hitler's time, that is imperialism?

Hitler targets the Jews in part because many prominent Communist and Democratic politicians are Jews. Some of these are patriotic politicians, such as the Jewish Foreign Minister of Germany, Walter Rathenau, who is assassinated. Why does the persecution and elimination of Jews become a leading part of Hitler's program?

The Treaty of Versailles of 1919 causes extreme hardship in Germany. The huge reparations cause hyperinflation which leads to Hitler's opportunity to make his Munich Beer Hall Putsch. Is it wise for the French and British governments to enforce the harsh provisions of the Versailles Treaty?

Many mass murderous officials of Nazi Germany maintain friendliness and decency in their private lives. Hitler is kind to his family circle and cares about the welfare of his secretaries. Himmler helps the mother of a German officer who is sent to a concentration camp as a member of the Jehovah's Witness sect. How can these officials reconcile their mass murderous activities with their private lives?

Discuss political opportunism. The Hitler-Stalin Pact of August 1939 seems to go directly against all of Adolf Hitler's principles of anti-Communism. This treaty causes great confusion in both Hitler's enemies and in the German population itself. Is the Hitler-Stalin Pact successful in helping Hitler's opening war campaigns? Is Hitler foolish to violate the Hitler-Stalin Pact by invading the Soviet Union in June 1941?

Ribbentrop, Goring, and Goebbels are tried at Nuremburg and sentenced to be hanged. These three argue that they did not have a direct role in mass murder of Jews and others and in any case are following orders. Should they have been sentenced to be executed?