

## Week 2

Friday, April 12, 2013

*“Above all, what differentiated Hitler from the many other demagogues and ideologues in Europe between the wars was the tremendous power he achieved after he became chancellor of Germany in 1933.”* (Bergen, 40)

*“Hitler did not need to seize power. It was handed to him.”* (Bergen, 50)

### Learning Objectives

- Understand how older antisemitic stereotypes were drawn on & appropriated by the Nazis
- Learn about different approaches to the significance of Hitler for the Nazis' rise to power.
- Learn about the formalities of academic writing.

### Peer Review & Announcements (15 minutes)

Go to the Catalyst Workspace, Writing Resource Section

<https://catalyst.uw.edu/workspace/denaar/37546/261457>

for

- Writing guide for historical essays
- Link to the Chicago Manual of Style
- A brief guideline & template for more effective reading notes – *Go over them in class*

### Discussion Questions (35 minutes)

Bergen, *War and Genocide*:

What were some of the key factors that led to Hitler's rise to power?

What were some of the reasons that the Weimar Republic, in retrospect, has been characterized as a "failed experiment in German democracy"?

Niewyk, ed., *The Holocaust*:

Why does Ian Kershaw argue that without Hitler, the physical extermination of European Jewry would have been "unthinkable"?

Hitler, *Mein Kampf*:

As you read this excerpt, consider the rhetoric that Hitler uses to build up an image of "the Jew". **Old stereotypes!**

How do the ways in which Hitler recollects his experiences growing up and coming of age in Linz and Vienna shape his characterization of Jews and the "Jewish Question"? How does he understand his transformation from a "cosmopolitan" into an "antisemite"?

Why does Hitler seem preoccupied with the role of Jews in the press and media? **Old stereotypes!**

What is meant by the phrases "spiritual pestilence" and "seducer of our people"?

How does Hitler see himself as "fighting for the work of the Lord" in his opposition to Jews?

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What does Kershaw describe as the "hostage tactic"? (p. 28)

According to Kershaw, what is the importance of language? (pp. 28/29, 31; ink to what Devin said.)

Read passage from Hitler speech on p. 29 (Kershaw) aloud:

What is the central topic of this speech? (Dealing with Jews.)

What are his main points? (Personal animosity & conspiracy theory. The former supports Kershaw's central point of the centrality of Hitler.)

According to Kershaw, what could be one reason why the central role of Hitler for the Holocaust is often misunderstood? (p. 29)

What is potentially problematic about an approach that puts Hitler so much at its center? Read final passage of the essay on p. 38. (The question of responsibility.)

Which old stereotypes about Jews does Hitler draw on (Kershaw, pp. 30/31)?

According to Kershaw, how are the war and the Holocaust connected in the Nazi logic?

What is the contradiction that Hitler phrases in terms of "reason" and "sentiments"?

Which of the currents Bergen describes (p. 30), would fall Kershaw into? What is Bergen's own position?

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## Conclusion

Old stereotypes & prejudices drawn on & appropriated.

Used as justification for the carefully planned mass murder of millions of Jews.

As seen in Kershaw: Crucial question how central and indispensable the figure of Hitler was.

Variation of the question of inevitability (as Prof. Naar has already addressed several times) & responsibility, which we will talk about later. Because: As the more crucial we see the figure of Hitler, what happens to other people & events?



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