HITLER: FORMATIVE YEARS

by Deepikaa Sriram
• Thesis: Hitler was a “mountebank” opportunist with no convictions, but Hitler is at fault for WWII. Devotion to power during WWII led to downfall.
• Alois Hitler: Hitler’s father
  • Illegitimate
  • Married thrice
  • Hitler: 3\textsuperscript{rd} Child of Alois’ 3\textsuperscript{rd} marriage (only one to survive thus far)
  • “Hard, unsympathetic, and short-tempered man, and his domestic life suggests a difficult and passionate temperament,” (4)
  • Built himself up a bit from poverty
Hitler: The Child

- Born on April 20, 1889 into a poor family in Branau (between Austria and Bavaria)
  - Lenin at the time was 19

- “Hitler attempted to represent himself as the child of poverty and privation,” (4)

- Reality: Adolf had the chance for a good education
  - Did not perform well in school
  - Dodged school at any occasion

- Did not get on well with Alois

- Preferred his mother
HITLER: THE ARTIST

- In Mein Kampf: AH emphasizes conflict between him and father over ambition to be an artist
- Unlikely that conflict with Alois was about ambitions to attend Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna (5)
- First attempt (1907): unsuccessful
  - Lived the year in solitude
- Second attempt: wasn’t even admitted to examination
  - Offended by rejection: chose to live next 5 years in obscurity (7)
Hitler: The Offended

oh nein you didn't
Hitler: The Friend

- Didn’t have many friends

- August Kubizek: basically his only friend
  - Wanted to be a musician
  - Moved in with Hitler between 1907-1908
  - In 1908, Kubizek was ditched by Hitler after he was rejected for the second time from the Academy

- “Apart from Kubizek, Hitler lived a solitary life. Women were attracted to him, but he showed complete indifference to them,” (6)
Hitler: The Friend

- Reinhold Hanisch “for a time knew Hitler well” (8)
  - Joined forces with AH in looking for work
  - AH proposed they start conning people by painting and baking art replicas to make them look like old originals and sell
  - Hanisch talked him out of it – made postcards instead
  - RH sold one of AH’s paintings of Vienna Parliament and kept the money → resulted in lawsuit and end of partnership (9)
HITLER: THE POOR

- 1907-1908: When pursuing artist ambitions, had orphan’s pension to fall back on

- 1909-1910: Described in contradicting ways in Mein Kampf (7)
  - Lived on the streets for periods of time
  - After falling our with Hanisch, AH continued to make money the same way—postcards and artwork

- 1911: Occasionally received financial help from aunt

- “Lazy and moody” (10)

- Quote from Mein Kampf (bottom of 11)
HITLER: THE CHARACTER

• How would you describe Hitler’s character?

• “Much of the time he spent dreaming or brooding,” (6)

• Desperately anxious to impress people and full of clever ideas; talked with great ambition, then relapse into a moodiness state and disappear (11)

• Jack of all trades, but couldn’t make anything of them

• “He struck people as unbalanced” (11)

• Radical beliefs

• “Never trusted anyone; never committed himself to anyone, never admitted any loyalty” (12)
Hitler: The Leader

- Took several of his policies from others (hated democratic institutions)

- “The political ideas and programme which Hitler picked up in Vienna were entirely unoriginal. They were the clichés of Pan-German gutter politics,” (17)

- Social Democrats:
  - Mass party and mass propaganda
  - How to appeal to people

- Georg von Schönerer:
  - Nationalism, anti-Socialism, anti-Semitism, hatred of Hapsburgs, and program of reunion with GER

- Karl Lueger
Hitler: The Anti-Socialist

- Hates the misery of the Vienna working class and the working class movement
  - “They disparaged the nation, the Fatherland, the law, religion, and morality,” (13)
- Working men were victims of brainwashing organized by the Social Democratic Party’s leaders → the real aim of Socialism
- Karl Lueger: the one Socialist that wasn’t all bad
  - Leader of Christian Socialists
  - AH admired his leadership. Views conflicted, but “Hitler was prepared to overlook even this in his admiration for Lueger’s leadership,” (19) → attention to middle class
Hitler: The Anti-Semitic

- Anti-Semitism common in Vienna
- AH first “repelled by violence anti-Semitic Press” (14)
- Mein Kampf: depicts Jews as non-human creatures “into which Hitler projects all that he hates and fears—and desires” (15).
- AH convinced himself that Jews were out to destroy and subdue the Aryan race (15)
- Sees the world as inherently unequal—law of nature
**HITLER: THE NATIONALIST**

- Ardent GER nationalist
- Reflected on views of equality and hatred of Hapsburgs
- GER should rule the Hapsburg Empire--at least Austrian half of it (17)--changed his view with onset of WWI
- Believed in national unity
- Hitler was in the crowd to hear GER declaration of war
- Seen in his experiences as soldier
Hitler: The Soldier

- AH leaves Vienna in 1913 because he avoided military service since 1913 (20)

- “War meant to Hitler the opportunity to slough off the frustration, failure, and resentment of the past six years,” (23)

- Volunteered to fight in WWI

- First battle of Ypres—“one of most critical engagements of the war” (24)

- Suffered injury to eyes in 1916 during gas attack

- Given Iron Cross, Second Class in 1914

- Iron Cross, First Class in 1918 – uncommon for corporal

- Mentality was different than other soldiers—more serious (25-26)
Rank on a scale of 1-5 which of the following factors prevalent in Adolf Hitler’s formative years influenced his policies the most during the 1930s-1940s.

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