Week 6 Short Paper Assignment #2

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History 112 – World Civilizations Since 1650 (D004 Fall 14)

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01/02/2014

American Public University System

History has shown how many people, natural events, and inventions have helped shape the world into what it is today. One person that helped shape the world into what it is today is Adolf Hitler. It is possible that Hitler might not have come to power had it not been for the Great Depression in the United States. Adolf Hitler was not only significant to the lives of the Germans, but also the number of other people that were affected by his actions throughout his life.

In order to understand anything about Adolf Hitler, one needs to have an understanding of who he was. Adolf Hitler was a member of the Bavarian Army during approximately 1914 through 1920 and was a war veteran that was considered decorated for his actions during World War I (Toland, 1991). Adolf Hitler tried to gain power in 1923 when he attempted a coup which has become known as the “Beer Hall Putsch” when he tried to overthrow the government (Toland, 1991, p. 146). Hitler was unsuccessful and was arrested for his actions. He was sentenced to jail but was pardoned in December 1924 by the Bavarian Supreme Court (Toland, 1991).

Many people were killed during his attempted coup. Toland (1991) pointed out that during his attempt to overthrow the Bavarian government “sixteen supporters of his and four police officers were killed (p. 147). This just goes to show that at a very early part of Hitler’s life he caused many deaths because he wanted to gain power, and this was just the beginning of the many lives that he would affect during his lifetime.

After Hitler was released from prison, he was able to gain support for his views by pushing back against the Treaty of Versailles. The reason why the people did not like the Treaty of Versailles was because it required them to admit fault for causing World War I (Atkinson, 2002). When Hitler came out saying that he did not like the Treaty of Versailles, people wanted to support him because he was helping them with the feeling of nationalism towards their country (Atkinson, 2002). The support that he had gained from pushing back against the Treaty of Versailles allowed his political party to gain support. However, Adolf Hitler needed something else that would help him gain control of Germany.

The extra piece of help that Adolf Hitler needed came in the form of the Great Depression that was affecting the United States. Gavin (1996) pointed out that the way the Great Depression of the United States helped Hitler was because “the German economy was especially vulnerable since it was built upon foreign capital, mostly loans from America and was very dependent on foreign trade” (para. 2). Germany's economy was affected from events outside of the German’s control causing the German citizens to go through their own depression of sorts due to the Great Depression, and many people in Germany were being laid off and did not have work (Gavin, 1996). The amount of unemployed people in Germany has been estimated to be around 6 million as of July of 1932 (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d). Germany decided that it would be in their best interest “to dissolve the Reichstag according to parliamentary rules and call for new elections” (Gavin, 1996, para. 14). This is when Hitler was able to gain a lot of attention from people in Germany, and he was eventually put into power in January 1933 (Duiker, 2010). In other words, one can conclude that if it would not have been for the Great Depression in the United States that Adolf Hitler would have never been put into power over Germany.

After Hitler came to power, he affected many other lives other than those of the Germans. McKay (2009) pointed out that “Hitler’s mobilization was ultimately directed toward racial aggression and territorial expansion, and his sudden attack on Poland in 1939 started World War II” (p. 903). It is also important to point out what Hitler did while he was in charge. Hitler and his “Nazi state condemned all European Jews to extermination in the Holocaust” (McKay, 2009, p. 923). It has been estimated that by 1945 there had been 6 million Jews that had been killed as a result of Hitler and his Nazi state (McKay, 2009). This should be considered significant because their only fault was that they were of a different religion than what Hitler wanted. Hitler's actions affected over 6 million people to lose their lives because he did not like the Jewish religion. If the people would not have been Jewish then they would not have been killed. The only thing wrong with the Jewish people was their religion. On top of the 6 million people that lost their live Hitler affected the rest of the population of Germany as well. The way that Hitler affected the German people was that he took them to war with Poland which resulted in World War II. This should be considered significant because of one man’s views it resulted in an entire country going to war. This in turn means that the people of Germany would have suffered as a result of his action of going to war.

It can be argued that had the Great Depression of the United States not taken place Hitler would not have gained power. The Great Depression of the United States affected Germany's economy causing the population to lose faith in their current government. As a result of this lost faith it gave Hitler the opportunity to gain support and come into power. After he came into power he waged war against Poland, and brought in the Holocaust resulting in millions of innocent Jewish deaths.

Throughout history there are many things that have taken place that have helped shape the world into what it is today. Adolf Hitler was one man that helped shape the world into what it is today. Had it not been for the Great Depression, it is very possible that Hitler would not have come to power and affected so many lives in the process. However, as a result of the Great Depression, it resulted in many lives being affected because of Hitler coming into power.

**References**

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