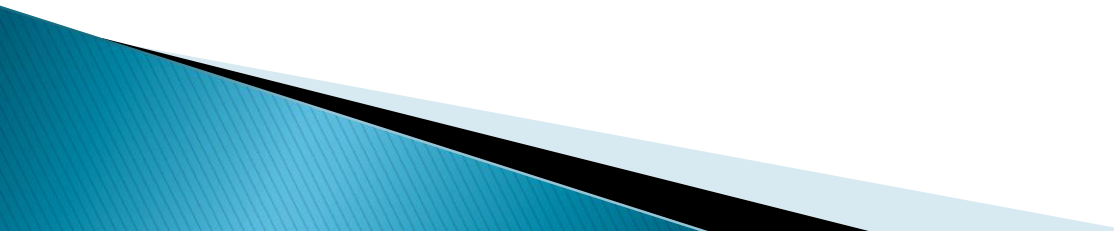



# The Great Dictator

Charlie Chaplin: 1940

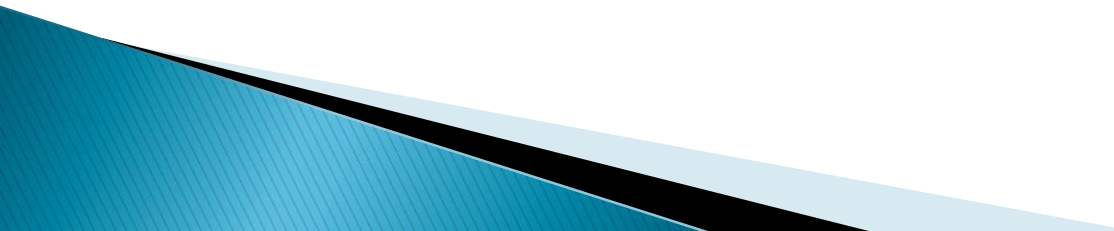
# Why he made the film

- ▶ This is Chaplin's first film with spoken dialogue.
  - ▶ Chaplin took great risks in lampooning Hitler, but was determined to confront him.
  - ▶ Chaplin said, "I did this picture for the Jews of the world. I wanted to see a return of decency and kindness."
  - ▶ Chaplin and Hitler could be doubles for each other physically. In addition, they were born in the same week of the same month of the same year: April 1889.
  - ▶ It was a huge gamble to parody both Hitler and Mussolini.
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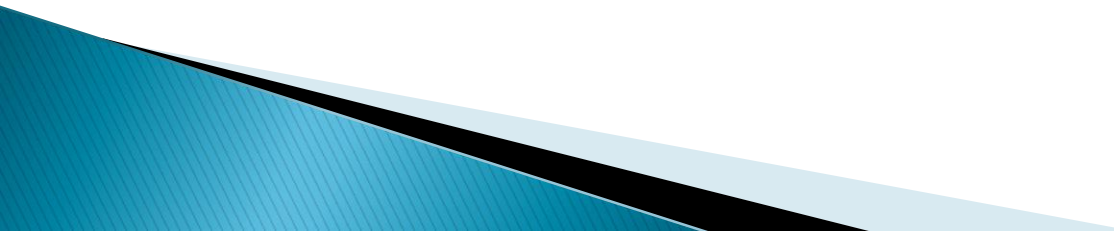
# Burning Mission

- ▶ Chaplin dared to confront Hitler publicly and ridicule him.
  - ▶ The final speech has Chaplin speaking not as any of his characters, but as himself.
  - ▶ Chaplin plays both Hitler and the Jewish barber.
  - ▶ Chaplin believed that if he could talk from his heart and get his plea for peace heard, then Hitler might even shorten the war.
  - ▶ After the Nazis took control of Germany and Austria , Hitler seemed unstoppable with his great theatrical rallies.
  - ▶ Many world leaders looked the other way.
- 

# 1931 Visit to Germany

- ▶ In 1931, Chaplin was mobbed on a visit to Berlin by adoring fans. The Nazis were furious, calling him a “disgusting Jewish acrobat.” Chaplin never denied being Jewish, although scholars debate whether or not he was, in fact, Jewish or half-Jewish.
  - ▶ Mussolini banned Chaplin’s films, and snubbed him when the actor visited Italy.
  - ▶ In 1938, Chaplin announced he would make the film. The British said they would ban it.
  - ▶ He made the film anyway.
- 

# Strictest Secrecy

- ▶ Filming began 6 days after war was declared in September 1939. Chaplin's wife, who was half Jewish, played the role of a Jewish woman in the Jewish Ghetto. Chaplin played the role of a Jewish barber, in addition to the dictator of Tomania, Adenoid Hynkle (who was meant to represent Hitler). Hynkle's political party is The Sons and Daughters of the Double Cross.
  - ▶ Anti-Semitism in the U.S. was also rampant during the time. Even Jewish directors opposed the film believing it would create further troubles for Jews in Europe.
  - ▶ Behind the scenes, U.S. President FDR sent Chaplin a message telling him that a film must be made.
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# 559 Days of Work

- ▶ It took well over a year to make the film. Meanwhile, Hitler had launched his Blitzkrieg, setting Europe in flames. This horrified Chaplin who considered withholding the film.
- ▶ Chaplin later said had he known the full horror of Hitler's crimes he would not have made the film.
- ▶ Final speech: "We think too much and feel too little. More than machinery we need humanity. More than cleverness we need kindness and gentleness. Without these qualities life will be violent and all will be lost . . . .To all those who can hear me I say, 'Do not despair . . .the hate of men will pass, and dictators die, and the power they took from the people will return to the people.'"