Defying Hitler: main themes

1. Historical events that served as pre-condition for the rise of Nazism.

a. WWI: Nazi generation was propagandized, enthusiast spectator (fans at sports event.

b. Revolution 1918:

i. beginning of the failures of the left

ii. emergence of Nazism w/o a theory: Freicorp, youth groups, anti-semitism

iii. depoliticization of the masses: misunderstood and boring

c. French occupation of Ruhr 1923

i. patriotism: united as brothers ii. economic catastrophe

iii. apocalypse and everyday life iv. Ineffectual political parties

d. Stresemann times; 1924-29

i. refusal to accept the gift of freedom

ii. time of division: those that will be Nazis and those that won’t

e. Bruning government

i. ever more destructive economic reforms for the average German

ii. more repressive political reforms

iii. “need to give up freedoms to save freedoms” destroying the republic in order to save it

f. Nazi “revolution” of March 1933

i. triumph of evil ii. Hundreds of thousands joined

2. Gradual (and frequently not so subtle) concentration of power in the hands of Nazis until

they have total control.

a. political system: elections, legislation, violence, (unchallenged) illegal and unconstitutional acts

b. administration, law, police: legislation, elimination. Indoctrination, loyalty oaths, appointments

c. church: “elections”

d. information: elimination, violence, control

e. language: the destruction of language and the power to frame (Civil Code)

f. cooption of private space: parades, marches, greetings, speeches

g. terror (reality, hypocrisy, irony)

h. social construction of fear: the Jewish Question

i. the stability of ordinary life for the majority

j. male bonding

3. The failure of German institutions

a. political parties b. Supreme Court c. legal institution

d. Prussian Army e. Church

4. The failure of the German people

a. fear of individuality b. fear of challenging authority

b. Nazis not taken seriously d. for most nothing changed

5. At some point it was just (it will be too late) too late

a. individual resistance would be self destructive

b. go along, leave, or go to concentration camp