

Nazi Propaganda Lesson Plan

Central Historical Question:

How did the Nazi party convince 99% of Germans to vote in favor of the annexation of Austria?

Materials:

- Copies of Documents A-C
- Copies of Guiding Questions
- Nazi Propaganda PowerPoint

Plan of Instruction:

1. Before doing this lesson, students should have some background knowledge about the rise of the Nazi Party including the following:

- After WWI, under the Treaty of Versailles, Germany was limited to a very small army. Furthermore, Germany was forbidden from uniting with Austria (as it had during WWI).
- Many Germans were angry about the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. As Germany suffered economic collapse during the 1920s and 1930s, Germans began to look for a leader that could restore Germany to its former glory.
- After becoming Chancellor of Germany in 1933, Hitler began to challenge the Versailles Treaty. In March of 1938, German troops moved into Austria in order to annex Austria and unite the two countries under Nazi rule.
- In April of 1938, Germans and Austrians were given the opportunity to ratify the annexation in a public vote.

2. Introduce Inquiry: *When the votes were tallied, 98.9% of Germans and 99.71% of Austrians had voted to ratify the annexation of Austria. Even given the unpopularity of the Treaty of Versailles, this seems like an incredible margin of victory. This has led historians to closely examine the tactics that the Nazi party leaders used to ensure their desired result on the referendum.*

Today, you will look at a speech delivered by Hitler, a pro-annexation poster, and the actual ballot used in order to answer the question: How did the Nazi Party convince 99% of Germans to vote in favor of the annexation of Austria?

3. Hand out Document A and Guiding Questions:

- Students read the document and answer Guiding Questions.

- Share out responses.
- Ask students to point to specific details that make this speech an effective way to convince people to vote “yes” on the referendum.
- Some details that might come up:
 - “the will of the Almighty”
 - “future generations”
 - “German men shed their blood”
 - “this miracle”

3. Hand out Document B and Guiding Questions.

- Students examine poster and answer questions individually.
- Ask students to point to specific details that make this poster an effective way to convince people to vote “yes” on the referendum.
- Share answers and evidence from poster questions – Note: One way to encourage students to notice details of the poster is to go around the room and have each student identify a detail (no matter how small and whether or not it seems relevant to the message). This helps students notice things they might have overlooked.
- Some details that may come up:
 - All hands are white
 - Some hands seem to have wedding rings
 - Poster shows hands, but no faces
 - Poster shows a large group of hands
 - Poster has the word “Yes” written in big red letters with an exclamation point
 - Poster refers to Austria and Germany together as “Greater Germany”
 - The voting date listed on the poster is April 10

5. Hand out Document C and guiding questions:

- Students read document descriptions, review the document and answer guiding questions.
- Share answers and evidence from ballot.
- Ask students to point to specific details that make this ballot an effective way to convince people to vote “yes” on the referendum.
- Some details that might come up:
 - Different sizes of “Yes” and “No”
 - It asks two questions at once
 - Largest font is words “Adolf Hitler”

6. Discussion:

- Which document is a more effective piece of propaganda? Why?
- Do the different formats of each piece of propaganda change its effect?
 - You look at the poster
 - You hear the speech
 - You fill out the ballot
- What do these three documents demonstrate about the tactics that the Nazis used to gain the support of the German people?
- How did the Nazi Party convince 99% of Germans to vote in favor of the annexation of Austria?

Citations

Document A

Domarus, Max. *The Essential Hitler: Speeches and Commentary*. Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc., 2007, pg. 163

Document B

“Greater Germany” Propaganda Poster”. 1938. Retrieved November 15, 2012, from: <http://www.bytwerk.com/gpa/posters2.htm>

Document C

“Voting Ballot”. 1938. Retrieved November 15, 2012 from: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stimmzettel-Anschluss.jpg>

Document A: Hitler Speech

To justify the annexation of Austria, Hitler called for a public vote on whether the unification should stand. This is an excerpt from a speech he gave on April 9, 1938, the day before the vote. As Hitler points out in his speech, he himself was born, and grew up, in Austria.

When one day we shall be no more, then the coming generations shall be able to look back with pride upon this day, the day on which a great **Volk** affirmed the German community. In the past, millions of German men shed their blood for this **Reich**. How merciful a fate to be allowed to create this Reich today without a suffering.

Now, rise, German Volk, subscribe to it, hold it tightly in your hands! I wish to thank Him who allowed me to return to my homeland so that I could return it to my German Reich! May every German realize the importance of the hour tomorrow, assess it and then bow his head in reverence before the will of the Almighty who has wrought this miracle in all of us within these past few weeks.

Vocabulary:

Volk: Folk. Hitler used this word to refer to the all Germans in the world
Reich: Kingdom. This is the word Hitler used to refer to the country of Germany.

Document B: Poster

Below, is a poster encouraging Germans to vote in favor of annexing Austria. The caption reads “Greater Germany: Yes on April 10th.”



Document C: Ballot

Below is a voting ballot from April 10, 1938. The ballot text reads "Do you agree with the reunification of Austria with the German Reich that was enacted on March 13, 1938, and do you vote for the party of our leader Adolf Hitler?" The large circle is labeled "Yes," the smaller "No".



Guiding Questions

Document A

- 1) (Sourcing) When was this speech delivered? What is the purpose of this speech?
- 2) (Close reading) What did Hitler mean when he said, "I wish to thank Him who allowed me to return to my homeland so that I could return it to my German Reich!"?
- 3) (Close reading) What are 2 reasons Hitler gave for Germans to vote in favor of annexation?
- 4) (Close reading) What specific phrases are designed to convince a potential voter to vote yes on April 10, 1938?

Document B

- 1) (Sourcing) Why was this document created?
- 2) (Context) When did Germans vote on annexing Austria? When did German troops move into Austria?
- 3) (Close reading) What specific details of the image do you think were intended to convince voters to vote yes on April 10, 1938?
- 4) (Corroboration) What images in this poster relate to Hitler's speech?

Document C

- 1) How many questions did the ballot ask voters to vote on?

- 2) Why do you think is the circle for “yes” was bigger than the circle for “no?”

- 3) What specific details of the ballot helped to influence the voters’ choice?

***In the space below write a paragraph that answers the question:
How did the Nazi Party convince 99% of Germans and Austrians to support
the annexation of Austria?
(use evidence from all three documents in your answer)***