

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>