German History Timeline:


9: Arminius

Arminius (German: Hermann”) defeats 3 Roman legions in the Teutoburg Forest. Thereafter, the Romans cease their attempts to expand their empire to the east of the Rhine River. A few battles that are held don’t change that.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arminius

In the fall of 9 AD, the 25-year-old Arminius brought to Varus a report of rebellion in northern Germany. He persuaded Varus to divert the three legions under his command (composed of the 17th, 18th and 19th legions, plus three cavalry detachments and six cohorts of auxiliaries) from the march to winter quarters to suppress the rebellion. Varus and his legions marched right into the trap Arminius had set for them near Kalkriese, the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest. Arminius’s tribe, the Cherusci, and their allies the Marsi, Chatti, Bructeri, Chauci, and Sicambri ambushed and annihilated Varus' entire army, totaling over 20,000 men. Recent archaeological finds show the long-debated location of the three-day battle was almost certainly near Kalkriese Hill, about 20 km north of Osnabrück. When defeat was certain, Varus committed suicide by falling on his sword. Arminius' success in destroying three entire legions and driving the Romans out of Germany was one of the most devastating defeats Rome suffered in its history, and a high point of Germanic power for centuries. Roman attempts to reconquer Germany failed, although the Romans managed to break Arminius's alliance and inflicted defeats and severe damage.
http://www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de/en/history.html

800 - 1499

800: Charlemagne

The ruler of the Frankish Empire is crowned Roman emperor by Pope Leo III. Later the Carolingian, who dies 814 in Aachen, is declared the "Father of Europe"

1452–1454: Invention of printing

Johannes Gutenberg (c. 1400–1468), inventor of printing with movable type, produces the first printed Bible in Mainz – roughly 180 copies

1493: Rise of the House of Habsburg

The regency of Maximilian I marks the rise of the House of Habsburg. For centuries it was one of the dominant aristocratic dynasties in Central Europe, supplied the majority of emperors and kings of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, and from 1504–1700 the kings of Spain

1500 - 1899

1517: Religious schism

The Age of the Reformation begins when Martin Luther (1483–1546) publicly declares his 95 Theses against the system of indulgences in the Catholic Church in Wittenberg

Luther remains a controversial figure because of his anti-Semitism that he displayed in writings and speeches later in his life. See:
1618–1648: Thirty Years’ War

Both a religious war and political conflict, the Thirty Years’ War ends with the Peace of Westphalia: The Catholic, Lutheran and Reformist faiths are recognized as equal.

1740–1786: Frederick the Great

During the reign of Frederick II, literary scholar and general, Prussia emerges as a European superpower. His rule is seen as exemplary for the age of “enlightened absolutism”.

1803: Secularization

The secularization of ecclesiastical rule and the dissolution of Imperial free cities by the Final Recess (Reichsdeputationshauptschluss) herald the end of the “Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation”.

See:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_mediatization

The Final Recess of the Reichsdeputation (German: Reichsdeputationshauptschluss Latin: Recessus principalis deputationis imperii) was a resolution passed on 25 February 1803 by the Imperial Diet of the Holy Roman Empire. It proved to be the last significant law enacted by the Empire before its dissolution in 1806.

(The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation ends in 1806)
1815: Vienna Congress: rearranges the European political map after the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte. Prussia receives back all its lands.

1848/49: March Revolution

The “German Revolution” begins in the Grand Duchy of Baden. Before long it spreads to the other states of the German Federation and leads to the first German National Assembly, which convened in the Paulskirche, Frankfurt/Main

DEVELOPMENTS towards the creation of Germany:

The Bismarck Reich

The following were the important stages along the path to German unity:

- The German-Danish war of 1864, fought jointly by Prussia and Austria.
- Prussia’s victory over Austria in the 1866 war, as a result of which Austria was excluded from the subsequent developments of the German state.
- The founding of the North German Confederation in 1867, with Bismarck as Federal Chancellor.

As Federal Chancellor, Bismarck worked towards achieving “smaller German” unity and, following a diplomatic conflict over succession to the Spanish throne, broke France’s resistance in the 1870-71 war. Patriotic
enthusiasm for this use of arms was also strengthened in the southern German states, which then allied with the North German Confederation to form the German Reich. On January 18, 1871, King William I of Prussia was proclaimed German Emperor in a coronation ceremony in Versailles.

In other words, the German Reich had not been created by popular decision “from below” but by a treaty between princes “from above”. The newly formed Imperial Diet (Reichstag) was elected by universal and equal suffrage. In addition, in Prussia and the other federal states there was a system of class suffrage dependent on income. Though economic success did strengthen the influence of the middle class, those that still called the tune in politics were the aristocrats, above all the army officer corps, where they dominated. In contrast to his far-sighted foreign policy, Bismarck, who was in office for 19 years, was at a loss to understand the democratic trends at home. He staged a bitter struggle against the left wing liberal middle class, political Catholicism and in particular the labor movement, which between 1878 and 1890 he effectively banned under the terms of the Socialists Act. Thus despite progressive, and for a long time even exemplary social legislation, large sections of the working class remained alienated from the state.

1871: Foundation of the Reich

On January 18 during the Franco-Prussian War Wilhelm I is proclaimed German Emperor in Versailles. The (second) German Reich is a constitutional monarchy. Shortly before the foundation of the empire the nation experienced an economic upswing known as the “Gründerjahre”

1900 – 1949

Developments towards WW I:

World War I
With regard to foreign affairs Germany under the young and inexperienced Emperor William II likewise got itself in deep water. He attempted to shorten the lead of the other imperialist great powers yet found himself increasingly isolated. At home the Social Democrats, the party with the most voters, continued to be more or less excluded from political power. It was not until the old establishment was defeated in World War I that they were given an opportunity.

It was a war that none of the powers involved consciously sought, even though tension had built up to such an extent in the Spring of 1914 that an armed solution to the various war aims of the European powers was considered a more or less welcome option. The Germans failed in their aim to quickly vanquish France. Yet after the Battle of the Marne both sides became embroiled in a gruesome war of attrition with an immense loss of human life and no clear military advantage, and which was no more than a senseless material battle. When the United States of America entered the war in 1917 this brought the turning point that had long been developing and which even the revolution in Russia and peace in the East could not halt. Political upheaval followed military defeat: as a result of the German revolution in November 1918 Emperor William II and the princes yielded their thrones. The disaster abroad led to the failed monarchy ceding to an alternative at home that it had been combating for decades, namely a republic.

Trigger: See our Notes in HWA 3
http://moderngermanculture.volasite.com

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Continued from:  
http://www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de/en/history.html

1914–1918: World War I

Emperor Wilhelm II isolates Germany from its neighbors and leads the country into the catastrophe of the First World War, which costs the lives of almost 15 million people. In June 1919 the Treaty of Versailles is signed, ending the war.

1918/19: Weimar Republic

On November 9, 1918 Social Democrat Philipp Scheidemann proclaims the Republic; Emperor Wilhelm II abdicates. On January 19, 1919 elections are held for the National Assembly.

Named after the National Assembly that convened in Weimar and drew up a new constitution, in the early years the young republic was formed and influenced by a parliamentary majority of Social Democrats, the German Democratic Party and the Catholic Center. Democracy was working. The Social Democrats had relinquished their revolutionary ideas of the early years and attempts to drive the revolution in a socialist direction were quelled. Private ownership of industry and agriculture remained untouched and the mostly anti-republican civil servants and judges retained their positions.

Yet as early as the 1920s it was becoming evident just how fragile support in the middle classes really was. Amidst general confusion in 1923, the economic crisis, inflation, the occupation of the Ruhr by the French and communist attempts to seize government all demonstrated that democrats were in a minority in Weimar. Ensuing economic recovery led to political pacification. In foreign affairs, Germany, having been defeated in the Great War, resumed its political place as an equal on the international stage among other things with the signing of the Treaty of Locarno in 1925 and accession.
to the League of Nations in 1926. With regard to the arts, science and culture some sections of the population were for a short time able to refer to the “golden Twenties”. It was a period characterized by an intense but brief flowering, since the fall of the republic could already be foreseen in the next economic crisis in 1929.

**Developments towards the Nazi Dictatorship:**

At the end of the 1920s, left-wing and right-wing radicals were able to exploit the horrendous unemployment rate and widespread economic misery. No more majorities capable of government were to be formed in the Reichstag, and the cabinets depended on the emergency powers of the Reich President to issue decrees, meaning it was possible to govern without the support of parliament. As early as 1925 a candidate from the right, former Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg succeeded Friedrich Ebert, a social democrat, as Reich President. Although he abided strictly by the constitution, he never developed a personal commitment to the republic. At the beginning of 1933, when the worst periods of crisis were already abating, members of the right-wing camp reckoned on being able to use the extremely anti-democratic Adolf Hitler for their own ends by transferring the office of chancellor to him. As a result of the economic crisis, his National Socialist movement had become the strongest political force in Germany, without however enjoying majority support neither among the population nor in Parliament. Despite the greatest of misgivings, Hindenburg nonetheless appointed him head of government and agreed to his demand to dissolve the Reichstag. The Nationalist Socialists seizure of power had thus begun.

Even in the election campaign Hitler intimidated his opponents with violence and persecution. Despite opposition from the Social Democrats he exerted tremendous pressure on those members of parliament who had not been arrested or had not fled to agree to an *Enabling Act*, which accorded
him almost unlimited political powers. Within just a few weeks the National Socialists had broken down all democratic barriers and replaced them with pseudo-legal structures. Hitler practically outlawed basic rights, banned trade unions and political parties (apart from his own), rescinded the freedom of the press and subjected those that disagreed to ruthless terror. Thousands disappeared without trial in concentration camps.

From the very beginning political persecution went hand in hand with racist mania. This was based on the myth of a “northern” race, and developed via thoughts about people being “unworthy of life”, because they did not conform to ideal perceptions about life, leading to systematic euthanasia. Whereas the latter was conducted covertly for fear of protest, anti-Semitic excesses were carried out in public. Before the eyes of the general public, Jewish citizens were excluded from everyday life, humiliated, removed from public office, threatened with their lives and ultimately systematically persecuted. In 1938, synagogues and other Jewish buildings were destroyed in a pogrom. In many cases it was beyond people’s imagination to imagine what the Nazi thugs did to the Jews who had been sent to concentration camps: “Extermination” by means of inhuman accommodation and exhaustion from work, medical experiments that showed no respect for human life, and ultimately in the final years the murder of all Jews, especially those in the conquered territories in the East, who fell into the hands of the regime. An estimated six million men, women and children were murdered in just a few years.

The German population’s response to what was happening was conflicting. On the one hand, they experienced unbridled violence and, on the other, successful policies from which they benefited. From the point of view of the unemployed, Hitler increased the speed of economic recovery, which had already begun before he came to power and would have given a boost to any
government, through widespread job creation programs that were used for propaganda purposes, not to mention an unprecedented policy of rearmament, which sooner or later would have driven the country to bankruptcy unless fresh funds were injected into the economy, for example through the exploitation of the conquered territories in the East. Success in foreign affairs, noticeably the return of the Saarland into the German Reich strengthened Hitler’s position. Other significant foreign policy events included, in 1936, German troops reentering the Rhineland, which had been a demilitarized zone since 1919, the annexation of Austria in 1938 and in the same year the granting of the Sudetenland by the Western powers to Hitler.

1933: National Socialism

The NSDAP gains the most votes in the Reichstag elections in 1932; on January 30 1933 Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor of the Reich. The National Socialist dictatorship begins with the “Enabling Act”

WW II

1939: Start of the Second World War

Through his invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939 Hitler unleashes the Second World War, which cost 60 million people their lives and devastated large parts of Europe and East Asia. The Nazi extermination policy results in the murder of six million Jews

Summary:

World War II

Increasing the territories of the German Reich was not enough for Hitler. He wanted more. In March 1939, he ordered German troops to occupy Prague and on September 1 of the same year he unleashed World War II by invading Poland. It lasted five and a half years, killed 55 million people and devastated much of Europe. In many countries the Germans were
considered to be ruthless occupiers. The area conquered stretched from the Atlantic coast in France to just short of Moscow, from North Norway to North Africa. The attack on the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941 marked the beginning of a merciless campaign of destruction in the East.

The entry of the United States into the war and the defeat of the German army at Stalingrad marked a turning point. When liberating occupied territories, the Allied troops encountered resistance groups, some of which were better organized than others. Even in Germany there had been acts of resistance against the Nazis by individuals or resistance groups throughout the years. They came from all walks of life. A bomb attack initiated by Graf Stauffenberg and other resistance fighters on July 20, 1944 failed: Hitler survived and had more than 4,000 people executed in retaliation. The war continued, claiming huge casualties on both sides, until the Allies occupied the entire German Reich. Hitler committed suicide on April 30, 1945 and a week later the darkest chapter in the history of Germany was brought to an end with the country’s unconditional capitulation.

1942: Wannsee Conference


Legalized discrimination against Jews began immediately after the Nazi seizure of power on 30 January 1933. Violence and economic pressure were used by the Nazi regime to encourage Jews to voluntarily leave the country. After the invasion of Poland in September 1939, the extermination of European Jewry began, and the killings continued and accelerated after the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. On 31 July 1941 Hermann Göring gave written authorization to Heydrich to prepare and submit a plan for a "total solution of the Jewish question" in territories under German control and to coordinate the participation of all involved government organisations. At the Wannsee Conference, Heydrich emphasised that once the deportation process was complete, the exterminations would become an internal matter under the purview of the SS. A secondary goal was to arrive at a definition of who was Jewish and thus determine the scope of the exterminations.

One copy of the Wannsee Protocol, the circulated minutes of the meeting, survived the war to be found by Robert Kempner, lead U.S. prosecutor before the International
Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, in files that had been seized from the German Foreign Office. The Wannsee House, site of the conference, is now a Holocaust Memorial.

1945: The Second World War ends

The capitulation of the German Wehrmacht between May 7–9, 1945 ends the Second World War in Europe. The four Allies divide the country into four occupation zones and Berlin into four sectors.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-semitism

The Holocaust

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocaust

The term holocaust comes from the Greek word holókauston, referring to an animal sacrifice offered to a god in which the whole (olo) animal is completely burnt (kaustos). For hundreds of years, the word "holocaust" was used in English to denote great massacres. Since the 1960s, the term has come to be used by scholars and popular writers to refer to the Nazi genocide of Jews. The television mini-series Holocaust is credited with introducing the term into common parlance after 1978.

The biblical word Shoah (also spelled Sho'ah and Shoa), meaning "calamity", became the standard Hebrew term for the Holocaust as early as the 1940s, especially in Europe and Israel. Shoah is preferred by many Jews for a number of reasons, including the theologically offensive nature of the word "holocaust", which they take to refer to the Greek pagan custom.

The Nazis used a euphemistic phrase, the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question" (German: Endlösung der Judenfrage), and the phrase "Final Solution" has been widely used as a term for the genocide of the Jews. Nazis used the phrase "lebensunwertes Leben" (Life unworthy of life) in reference to their victims in an attempt to justify the killings.

The Holocaust (from the Greek ὅλοκαυστος holókaustos: hólos, "whole" and kaustós, "burnt") also known as Shoah (Hebrew: שואה, HaShoah, "the catastrophe"); Yiddish: שורב, Churban or Hurban, from the Hebrew for "destruction"), was the mass murder or genocide of approximately six million Jews during World War II, a programme of systematic state-sponsored murder by Nazi Germany, led by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party, throughout the German Reich and German-occupied territories.
Of the nine million Jews who had resided in Europe before the Holocaust, approximately two-thirds were killed. Over one million Jewish children were killed in the Holocaust, as were approximately two million Jewish women and three million Jewish men. A network of over 40,000 facilities in Germany and German-occupied territory were used to concentrate, hold, and kill Jews and other victims.

**Ideology and scale**

In other genocides, pragmatic considerations such as control of territory and resources were central to the genocide policy. Israeli historian and scholar Yehuda Bauer argues that:

The basic motivation of the Holocaust was purely ideological, rooted in an illusionary world of Nazi imagination, where an international Jewish conspiracy to control the world was opposed to a parallel Aryan quest. No genocide to date had been based so completely on myths, on hallucinations, on abstract, nonpragmatic ideology—which was then executed by very rational, pragmatic means.

German historian Eberhard Jäckel wrote in 1986 that one distinctive feature of the Holocaust was that:

never before had a state with the authority of its responsible leader decided and announced that a specific human group, including its aged, its women and its children and infants, would be killed as quickly as possible, and then carried through this resolution using every possible means of state power.

The killings were systematically conducted in virtually all areas of German-occupied territory in what are now 35 separate European countries. It was at its most severe in Central and Eastern Europe, which had more than seven million Jews in 1939. About five million Jews were killed there, including three million in occupied Poland and over one million in the Soviet Union. Hundreds of thousands also died in the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Yugoslavia, and Greece. The Wannsee Protocol makes it clear that the Nazis intended to carry their "final solution of the Jewish question" to Britain and all neutral states in Europe, such as Ireland, Switzerland, Turkey, Sweden, Portugal, and Spain.

Anyone with three or four Jewish grandparents was to be exterminated without exception. In other genocides, people were able to escape death by converting to another religion or in some other way assimilating. This option was not available to the Jews of occupied Europe, unless their grandparents had converted before 18 January 1871. All persons of recent Jewish ancestry were to be exterminated in lands controlled by Germany.

**Extermination camps**

Main article: Extermination camp
The use of camps equipped with gas chambers for the purpose of systematic mass extermination of peoples was a unique feature of the Holocaust and unprecedented in history. Never before had there existed places with the express purpose of killing people en masse. These were established at Auschwitz, Belzec, Chelmno, Jasenovac, Majdanek, Maly Trostenets, Sobibor, and Treblinka.

Romani children in Auschwitz, victims of medical experiments

Medical experiments

Further information: Nazi human experimentation

A distinctive feature of Nazi genocide was the extensive use of human subjects in "medical" experiments. According to Raul Hilberg, "German physicians were highly Nazified, compared to other professionals, in terms of party membership."[26] Some carried out experiments at Auschwitz, Dachau, Buchenwald, Ravensbrück, Sachsenhausen, and Natzweiler concentration camps.[27]

The most notorious of these physicians was Dr. Josef Mengele, who worked in Auschwitz. His experiments included placing subjects in pressure chambers, testing drugs on them, freezing them, attempting to change eye color by injecting chemicals into children's eyes, and various amputations and other surgeries. [27] The full extent of his work will never be known because the truckload of records he sent to Dr. Otmar von Verschuer at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute was destroyed by von Verschuer. [28] Subjects who survived Mengele's experiments were almost always killed and dissected shortly afterwards.

He worked extensively with Romani children. He would bring them sweets and toys, and personally take them to the gas chamber. They would call him "Onkel (Uncle) Mengele."[29] Vera Alexander was a Jewish inmate at Auschwitz who looked after 50 sets of Romani twins:

I remember one set of twins in particular: Guido and Ina, aged about four. One day, Mengele took them away. When they returned, they were in a terrible state: they had been sewn together, back to back, like Siamese twins. Their wounds were infected and oozing pus. They screamed day and night. Then their parents—I remember the mother's
name was Stella—managed to get some morphine and they killed the children in order to end their suffering. [29]

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pogroms

A pogrom is a violent riot aimed at massacre or persecution of an ethnic or religious group, particularly one aimed at Jews. The term originally entered the English language to describe 19th- and 20th-century attacks on Jews in the Russian Empire (mostly within the Pale of Settlement in present-day Ukraine); similar attacks against Jews at other times and places also became retrospectively known as pogroms. The word is now also sometimes used to describe publicly sanctioned purgative attacks against non-Jewish ethnic or religious groups.[2][3][4][5][6]

Kristallnacht:

Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s5x_T22sRDk (Part 1 of 5)

Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5swylMJfrfo (Part 2 of 5)

Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEO6PfK4 (Part 3 of 5)

Comment (Bernhard Sulzer);

The events of Kristallnacht clearly showed to the world how dangerous and radical the Nazis really were. At this point however, the country itself was a dictatorship and even if someone opposed what was happening, it became extremely difficult to do something against it. This was combined with a radicalization of many Germans under Hitler. Especially children were indoctrinated to the Nazi ideology from a very early age on (Hitler Youth). It became very difficult for Jews to flee Germany. Many were simply not accepted by other countries.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hitler_youth

By December 1936, HJ membership stood at just over five million. That same month, HJ membership became mandatory for Aryans, under the Gesetz über die Hitlerjugend law. This legal obligation was re-affirmed in 1939 with the Jugenddienstpflicht and HJ membership was required even when it was opposed by the member’s parents.
Continued from:

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1945: The Second World War ends

The capitulation of the German Wehrmacht between May 7–9, 1945 ends the Second World War in Europe. The four Allies divide the country into four occupation zones and Berlin into four sectors.

1948: Blockade of Berlin

The introduction of the deutschmark in the Western occupation zones prompts the Soviet Union on June 14, 1948 to cut off access to West-Berlin. The Allies respond with an airlift dropping supplies to the population in West Berlin until September 1949.

1949: Birth of the Federal Republic of Germany

On May 23, 1949 the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany is proclaimed in Bonn. The first parliamentary elections are held on August 14. Konrad Adenauer (CDU) is elected Chancellor. On October 7, 1949 the division between East and West is completed when the Constitution of the German Democratic Republic comes into force.

1950 to present

1957: Treaties of Rome

The Federal Republic of Germany is one of the six nations to sign the founding treaties of the European Economic Community.

1961: Building of the Berlin Wall

East Germany cuts itself off on August 13, 1961 by erecting a wall through the middle of Berlin and the “Death Strip” along the border between the two Germanies.
1963: Elysée Treaty

The Treaty of Friendship between France and Germany is signed by West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer (right) and the French President Charles de Gaulle

1970: Brandt kneels in Warsaw

The gesture by West German Chancellor Willy Brandt (SPD) before the memorial for the victims of the uprising in the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw became a symbol of the German plea for reconciliation

1989: The Fall of the Wall

The peaceful revolution in East Germany leads in November 9 to the Berlin Wall coming down and with it the border between East and West Germany

1990: German reunification

On October 3, East Germany formally ceases to exist. Germany’s political unity is restored. The first general elections of the united Germany are held on December 2, 1990. Helmut Kohl (CDU) becomes the unified nation’s first Chancellor

2004/2007: EU Expansion

Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the fall of Communism, in 2004 eight Central and East European nations plus Cyprus and Malta joined the EU, followed in 2007 by Bulgaria and Romania

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Union

On 1 July 2013, Croatia became the 28th EU member.[45][46][47]