

Europe and America Between the Wars
The Eschenburg Thesis Revised

I. Fascism

A. The Fascist Negotiations

B. Ideology and Goals

C. Style and Organization

D. Some Examples

1. Germany—National Socialist Democratic Workers' Party (NSDAP)
2. Ireland—Blueshirts (Army Comrades Assoc.)
3. Hungary—Arrow Cross
4. Latvia—Thunder Cross
5. Mexico—Silver Shirts
6. Poland—Falanga
7. Portugal—National Syndicalists
8. Romania—Iron Guard
9. South Africa—Gray Shirts
10. Spain—Falange Español
11. Yugoslavia—Ustaši (Insurgents)
12. Italy—Party of National Fascists (PNF)

II. Four Zones (Modified Eschenburg Thesis)

A. First Zone—Stable Democracies

1. democratic before 1914, industrialized, high rate of literacy
2. Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and U.S.

B. Second Zone—Unstable Democracies

1. democratic in form before 1914, agrarian economy, low rate of literacy
2. Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain

C. Third Zone—Authoritarian-Industrial States

1. authoritarian before 1914, industrialized, high rate of literacy
2. Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany, and Hungary

D. Fourth Zone—Authoritarian-Agrarian States

1. authoritarian before 1914, agrarian economy, low rate of literacy
2. Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, and Yugoslavia

Recommended reading:

- Theodore Eschenburg, “The Collapse of Democratic Regimes between the First and Second World Wars,” *The Road to Dictatorship: Germany 1918–1933*, London, 1962, pp. 7–23.
- Stanley G. Payne, *Fascism: Comparison and Definition*, Madison, WI, 1980.

III. National Socialist German Workers Party

A. Usual Reasons Given for Nazism in Germany

1. Logic of German History
 - a. authoritarianism
 - b. Hegelianism
 - c. militarism
 - d. Romanticism
2. National Psychosis—fatal flaw in German character
3. Nazi leaders—Psychopathic and/or Evil
 - a. Adolf Hitler
 - b. Heinrich Himmler
 - c. Hermann Göring
 - d. Paul Joseph Göbbels
4. Germany was betrayed by Weimar leaders
 - a. Friedrich Ebert
 - b. Gustav Stresemann
 - c. Kurt von Schleicher
 - d. Franz von Papen

B. Socio-Economic Considerations

1. Reparations
2. Hyper-Inflation in early 1920's
3. Sustained High Employment
4. Social Turmoil resulting from economic and political instability

C. Consolidation of Nazi Control

1933

January 30: Hitler appointed Chancellor

February 27: Reichstag fire resulted in emergency decrees

March 5: Reichstag elections: Nazi Party candidates receive 44% of vote

March 23: Enabling Act passed by Reichstag

March 31: Beginning of boycott of Jewish businesses

May 10: Burning of un-German, anti-German, and non-Aryan books

Nov. 12: Reichstag elections: Nazi Party candidates receive 92% of vote

1934

June 30: "Night of the Long Knives"

July 13: Hitler explains need for summary executions of June 30.

August 1: Law combining positions of president and chancellor

August 2: Death of President von Hindenburg

August 19: Plebiscite approved Hitler's assumption of presidency (88%)

Sept. 4: Nuremberg Nazi Party Rally: announcement of 1000-year Reich

1936

August: Germany wins 32 gold medals

D. Myth of Nazi Totalitarianism

1. "Wolf-robots killing lamb-robots"
2. Bottom-Up Nature of Decision Making in Third Reich
 - a. Domestic Decision Making vs. Foreign Policy and Military Decisions
 - b. "Final Solution of the Jewish Problem"
3. Self-Limiting Attitudes in Atmosphere of Terror