Adolf Hitler ?A Man Of Power? Essay, Research Paper

Adolf Hitler

“A Man of Power”

One of the most prominent names in the history of the world is Adolf Hitler. Adolf Hitler’s impact on the twentieth century is much more than any other man. Whether this impact is considered good or not, it does not matter. Hitler’s influence on the world, although not a good one, is unquestionable. Many leaders have had inspirations of ruling the world, but few of those leaders have had the strength or power to even attempt world domination. But Hitler was one of those few, his ability to lead a group into a fight for immoral purposes, and total control over Germany led to his dominance. Hitler’s promise to Germany to bring the country back to a major power status lured the country into his rule. Germany had visions of power and greatness, and Hitler was the leader who was going to accomplish that for them. So with power in mind, Germany followed Hitler’s lead, which led to the annihilation and almost extinction of the Jews in Europe. We have all heard the horror stories of the concentration camps, and the events that were a part of World War Two. It is sad to say, but only a man who had great intelligence and leadership qualities could lead such a battle. No man before Hitler reigned in so much power, and no man after him has even come close. Although his actions were not justified, Hitler became the most dominant man in the world.

Adolf Hitler was born on April 20, 1889 in the Austrian town of Braunau. He was the fourth child of Alois Schickelgruber and Klara Hitler. Two of his siblings died from diphtheria when they were children, and one died shortly after his birth. Hitler’s father was a customs official, illegitimate by birth, which was described by his housemaid as a “very strict but comfortable” man. When Hitler was a child, his mother gave him love and affection. When Adolf was three years old, the family moved to Passau, along the Inn River on the German side of the border. A brother, Edmond, was born two years later. The family moved once more in 1895 to the farm community of Hafeld, 30 miles southwest of Linz. Another sister, Paula, was born in 1896, the sixth of the family, supplemented by a half brother and half sister from one of his father’s two previous marriages. Following another family move, Adolf lived for six months across from a large Benedictine monastery. The monastery’s coat of arms’ most salient feature was a swastika. During this time in Hitler’s childhood, his dream was to enter the priesthood. While there is evidence that Hitler’s father regularly beat him during his childhood, it was not unusual for discipline to be enforced in that way during that period (Davidson 58-67). So you can see that Hitler’s childhood was very unbalanced.

By 1900, Hitler’s talents as an artist surfaced. He did well enough in school to be eligible for either the university preparatory “gymnasium” or the technical/scientific Realschule. Because the Realschule had a course in drawing, Hitler accepted his father’s decision to enroll him in the Realschule. Hitler would not last long there, partially because of illness, and partially because he was not doing well grade wise. So he dropped out of school at the age of sixteen.

In 1906, Adolf was permitted to visit Vienna, but he was unable to get into the art school there. Hitler spent six years in Vienna, living on a small income from his father and an orphan’s pension. Virtually penniless by 1909, he wandered Vienna sleeping in bars, flophouses, and shelters for the homeless, including those financed by Jewish philanthropists. It was during this period that he developed his prejudices about Jews, his interest in politics, and debating skills. However, Vienna was a center of anti-Semitism, and the media’s portrayal of Jews as scapegoats with stereotypes did not escape Hitler’s mind-set. Seeking to avoid military service, Hitler left Vienna for Munich, the capital of Bavaria. But the police would soon come to his door bearing a draft notice from the Austrian government. The document threatened a year in prison and a fine if he was found guilty of leaving his native land with the intent of avoiding military service. Hitler was arrested on the spot and taken to the Austrian Consulate. Upon reporting to Salzburg for duty, he was found “unfit…too weak…and unable to bear arms.”(Davidson 70-75)

Hitler’s passions against foreigners soon would grow. He got caught up in the patriotism of World War I, and enlisted in the Bavarian army. After less than two months of training, Hitler saw his first combat. Hitler narrowly escaped death in battle several times, and was eventually awarded two Iron Crosses for bravery. He rose to the rank of lance corporal but no further. But it is here where Hitler would learn the traits necessary for battle. Hitler would have to recover from injuries many times, and was actually temporarily blinded in battle. But after four years in the trenches, communist-inspired Jews weakened the stature of Germany. This would lead to the hatred of Jews among the Germans, and soon bring about Hitler’s plan (Duffy 25-35).

The nazi party was soon after established, and with the loss in the war, the German government was changing. A constitution was written providing for a President with broad political and military power. The loss of the war left the Germans unhappy, especially with the terms of the treaty. The terms of the treaty were humiliating to most Germans, and led to a rallying cry for those who like Hitler believed Germany was ultimately destined for greatness. Soon after the war, Hitler was recruited to join a military intelligence unit, and was assigned to keep tabs on the German Worker’s Party. At the time, the party had only a handful of members. It was disorganized and had no program, but its members expressed the same views as Hitler’s. Hitler saw this party as a way to reach his political beliefs. His growing hatred of the Jews became part of the organization’s political plans. Hitler increased the party’s popularity, often advertising the party’s meetings in anti-Semitic newspapers (Davidson 104-110).

The turning point of Hitler’s career occurred at one of the meeting held for the party. Hitler’s emotional delivery of a motivational speech captivated his audience. Through word of mouth, donations poured into the party’s treasury, and attracted hundreds of Germans eager to hear the young, forceful leader. Hitler would continue to make such speeches to attract more supporters. Hitler electrified the audience with his motivational speeches. The motivation Hitler used was to bring Germany to power. He said he would act on the loss of World War I, and redeem Germany’s status. Jews were the principal targets of Hitler’s Plan to compensate for the losses in World War I. Hitler pushed the idea that the Jews were at fault, and something must be done to revamp Germany’s stature (Davidson 115-123).

Also adding to Hitler’s plan, were revoking the Versailles Treaty, keeping war profits, revoking civil rights for Jews, and expelling those Jews who had emigrated into Germany after the war began. The Jews were a major part of Hitler’s plans, and the blame of the Jews only increased. Inflation, political instability, unemployment, and the humiliation in the war, were all problems that the Jews played scapegoat too. Hitler’s party was gaining an audience, and the name of the party was changed to the National Socialist German Worker’s party. The red flag with the swastika was adopted as the party symbol. And Hitler was now at full force.

A local newspaper that appealed to anti-Semites was on the verge of bankruptcy, and Hitler raised funds to purchase it for the party. With the new paper, and the growing problems of the country, the Nazi party began drawing thousands of new members, many of whom were victims of the inflation and found comfort in blaming the Jews for this trouble. Economic problems usually lead to political problems, and Germany was no exception (Duffy 81-86). With the economic problems, and the recent downfall of Germany, the people wanted an answer. And they saw this intelligent sounding man as the answer. The people were in a bad situation, and they saw Hitler as the way out. So with few options, the people followed Hitler’s rule hoping he would bring them back to greatness.

With this rise in popularity, Hitler saw his opportunity. Hitler held a rally to proclaim a revolution. The day after the rally he led 2,000-armed Nazis in an attempt to take over the Bavarian government. The rally was resisted and put down by the police, after more than a dozen were killed in the fighting, Hitler suffered a broken and dislocated arm in the melee and was arrested and was imprisoned. He received a five-year sentence. Hitler served only nine months of his five-year sentence. And while in prison, he wrote the first volume of Mein Kampf. It was partly an autobiographical book but also detailed his views on the future of the German people. There were several targets of the vicious diatribes in the book, such as democrats, Communists, and internationalists. But he reserved the brunt of his attacks for the Jews, whom he portrayed as responsible for all of the problems and evils of the world, particularly democracy, Communism, and internationalism, as well as Germany’s defeat in the War (Simpson 37-42).

In the book Hitler wrote that the Jews were the German nation’s true enemy, and that they had no culture of their own. He said the Jews were an anti-race and they were ultimately the lowest race. On the contrary, the German people were of the highest racial purity and they were destined to be the master race, according to Hitler. To maintain that purity, Hitler believed it was necessary to avoid intermarriage with subhuman races such as Jews and Slavs. Germany could stop the Jews from conquering the world only by eliminating them. By doing so, Germany could also find living space, which was much needed at the time. This living space, Hitler continued, would come from conquering Russia and the Slavic countries (Simpson 37-42). Hitler’s plans sounded good to the German people, because his plans would solve their problems and bring power to Germany.

A second volume of Mein Kampf was published in 1927. It included a history of the Nazi party to that time and its program, as well as a plan on how to obtain political power. While Mein Kampf was crudely written and filled with embarrassing remarks, it enlightened its target, those Germans who believed it was their destiny to dominate the world. The book sold over five million copies by the start of World War II. Once released from prison, Hitler decided to seize power constitutionally rather than by force of arms. Hitler spoke to mass audiences, calling for the German people to resist the connection of Jews and Communists, and to create a new empire that would rule the world for 1,000 years (Simpson 95-96).

Hitler’s Nazi party captured 18% of the popular vote in the 1930 elections. In 1932, Hitler ran for President and won 30% of the vote, forcing the eventual victor, Paul von Hindenburg, into a runoff election. A political deal was made to make Hitler chancellor in exchange for his political support. He was appointed to that office in January 1933. Upon the death of Hindenburg in August 1934, Hitler was the consensus successor. With an improving economy, Hitler claimed credit and took the position as dictator, having succeeded in eliminating challenges from other political parties and government parties. The German industry was built up in preparation for war. By 1937, he was comfortable enough to put his master plan, as outlined in Mein Kampf, into effect. Calling his top military aides together, he outlined his plans for world domination. Those who objected to the plan were dismissed. And the world was now about to endure Hitler’s plan of domination (Davidson 220-225).

Hitler ordered the takeover of Austria and the Sudetenland in 1938. Hitler’s army invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, sparking France and England to declare war on Germany. A Blitzkrieg (lightning war) of German tanks and infantry swept through most of Western Europe as nation after nation fell to the German war machine. Several early victories after the invasion of the Soviet Union were reversed with crushing defeats at Moscow and Stalingrad. The United States entered the war in December 1941. By 1944, the Allies were now at full force, and bombing was destroying German cities. And Italy, Germany’s major ally under the leadership of Dictator Benito Mussolini, had fallen. Several attempts were made on Hitler’s life during the war, but none were successful. As the war appeared to be inevitably lost and with his followers having doubts, Hitler killed himself on April 30, 1945 (Duffy 115-120).

We can all agree that Hitler’s master plan was corrupt. And that it is to the world’s benefit that Hitler was not able to accomplish his master plan. But we must also notice that Hitler is a man who had a great amount of power, and came as close as anyone to dominating the world. Although his beliefs and actions are defiantly corrupt, Hitler’s effect on the world is enormous. Hitler fought for the German culture that he loved, and influenced the Germans into fighting with him. His motive for fighting was not justified, but he proved he was man who had to be dealt with. His impact on the world is arguably more than that of any other single man. Although his impact did not improve the world, Hitler can still be considered the most dominant man in the history of the world.

1. Davidson, Eugene. The Unmaking of Adolf Hiltler. Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1996.

2. Duffy, James. Target Hitler. Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group Inc., 1992.

3. Simpson, William. Hitler and Germany. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

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