Hitler Essay, Research Paper

Hitler Named Leader of Nazi Party By early 1921, Adolf Hitler was becoming highly effective at speaking in front of ever larger crowds. In February, Hitler spoke before a crowd of nearly six thousand in Munich. Hitler was now gaining notoriety outside of the Nazi Party for his rowdy, at times hysterical tirades against the Treaty of Versailles, rival politicians and political groups, especially Marxists, and always the Jews. The Nazi Party was centered in Munich which had become a hotbed of ultra right wing German nationalists. Slowly, they began looking toward the rising politician, Adolf Hitler, and the growing Nazi movement as the vehicle to hitch themselves to. Hitler was already looking at how he could carry his movement to the rest of Germany. The Party was still run by an executive committee whose original members now considered Hitler to be highly overbearing, even dictatorial. To weaken Hitler’s position, they formed an alliance with a group of socialists from Augsburg. Hitler rushed back to Munich and countered them by announcing his resignation from the Party, July 11, 1921. They realized the loss of Hitler would effectively mean the end of the Nazi Party. Hitler seized the moment and announced he would return on the condition that he was made chairman and given dictatorial powers. Meanwhile, an anonymous pamphlet appeared entitled, “Adolf Hitler: Is he a traitor?” It attacked Hitler’s lust for power and criticized the violence prone men now surrounding him. Hitler responded to its publication in a Munich newspaper by suing for libel and later won a small settlement. The executive committee of the Nazi Party eventually backed down and Hitler’s demands were put to a vote of the party members. Hitler received 543 votes for, and only one against. At the next gathering, July 29, 1921, Adolf Hitler was introduced as F hrer of the Nazi Party, marking the first time that title was publicly used to address him. Hitler Becomes Dictator After the elections of March 5, 1933, the Nazis began a systematic takeover of the state governments throughout Germany, ending a centuries old tradition of local political independence. Armed SA and SS thugs barged into local government offices using the state of emergency decree as a pretext to throw out legitimate office holders and replace them with Nazi Reich commissioners. For Adolf Hitler, the goal of a legally established dictatorship was now within reach. This law would hand over the constitutional functions of the Reichstag to Hitler, including the power to make laws, control the budget and approve treaties with foreign governments.. The emergency decree signed by Hindenburg on February 28, after the Reichstag fire, made it easy for them to interfere with non-Nazi elected representatives of the people by simply arresting them. As Hitler plotted to bring democracy to an end in Germany, Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels put together a brilliant public relations display at the official opening of the newly elected Reichstag. On March 21, in the Garrison Church at Potsdam, the burial place of Frederick the Great, an elaborate ceremony took place designed to ease public concern over Hitler and his gangster-like new regime. Dressed in their handsome uniforms sprinkled with medals, they watched a most reverent Adolf Hitler give a speech paying respect to Hindenburg and celebrating the union of old Prussian military traditions and the new Nazi Reich. Finishing his speech, Hitler walked over to Hindenburg and respectfully bowed before him while taking hold of the old man’s hand. Later that same day, Hindenburg signed two decrees put before him by Hitler. The second decree signed by the befuddled old man allowed for the arrest of anyone suspected of maliciously criticizing the government and the Nazi party. A third decree signed only by Hitler and Papen allowed for the establishment of special courts to try political offenders. On March 23, the newly elected Reichstag met in the Kroll Opera House in Berlin to consider passing Hitler’s Enabling Act. If passed, it would in effect vote democracy out of existence in Germany and establish the legal dictatorship of Adolf Hitler. Brown-shirted Nazi storm troopers swarmed over the fancy old building in a show of force and as a visible threat. Before the vote, Hitler made a speech in which he pledged to use restraint. Hitler needed 31 non-Nazi votes to pass it. Meanwhile, Nazi storm troopers chanted outside. Otto Wells, leader of the Social Democrats stood up and spoke quietly to Hitler.

Hitler was enraged and jumped up to respond. Interestingly, the Nazi party was now flooded with applications for membership. These latecomers were cynically labeled by old time Nazis as ‘March Violets.’ In May the Nazi party froze membership. The Nazi Gleichschaltung now began, a massive coordination of all aspects of life under the swastika and the absolute leadership of Adolf Hitler. Under Hitler, the State, not the individual, was supreme. Bureaucrats, industrialists, even intellectual and literary figures, including Gerhart Hauptmann, world renowned dramatist, were coming out in open support of Hitler. Among them – writer Thomas Mann, director Fritz Lang, actress Marlene Dietrich, architect Walter Gropius, musicians Otto Klemperer, Kurt Weill, Richard Tauber, psychologist Sigmund Freud, and Albert Einstein, who was visiting California when Hitler came to power and never returned to Germany. In Germany there were now constant Nazi rallies, parades, marches and meetings amid the relentless propaganda of Goebbels and the omnipresent swastika. Germans Elect Nazis Adolf Hitler and the Nazis waged a modern whirlwind campaign in 1930 unlike anything ever seen in Germany. Hitler traveled the country delivering dozens of major speeches, attending meetings, shaking hands, signing autographs, posing for pictures, and even kissing babies. Joseph Goebbels brilliantly organized thousands of meetings, torchlight parades, plastered posters everywhere and printed millions of copies of special editions of Nazi newspapers. For Hitler, the master speech maker, the long awaited opportunity to let loose his talents on the German people had arrived. In his speeches, Hitler offered the Germans what they needed most, encouragement. Hitler offered something to everyone; work to the unemployed, prosperity to failed business people, profits to industry, expansion to the Army, social harmony and an end of class distinctions to idealistic young students, and restoration of German glory to those in despair. The name of the Nazi party itself was deliberately all inclusive – the National Socialist German Workers’ Party. All of the Nazis, from Hitler, down to the leader of the smallest city block, worked tirelessly, relentlessly, to pound their message into the minds of the Germans. It was a stunning victory for Hitler. Overnight, the Nazi party went from the smallest to the second largest party in Germany. It propelled Hitler to solid national and international prestige and aroused the curiosity of the world press. On October 13, 1930, dressed in their brown shirts, the elected Nazi deputies marched in unison into the Reichstag and took their seats. When the roll call was taken, each one shouted, “Present! Heil Hitler!” They had no intention of cooperating with the democratic government, knowing it was to their advantage to let things get worse in Germany, thus increasing the appeal of Hitler to an ever more miserable people. Now, for the floundering German democracy, the clock was ticking and time was on Hitler’s side.