How Did Hitler Come Into Power? Essay, Research Paper

Cause and Effect:

How did Hitler Come into Power?

A dichotomy is a division of two entities into mutually exclusive or contradictory groups. In Viva Zapata, it was mentioned that it?s not the laws that govern men, but men that govern men. There is no dichotomy present here because the two aren?t mutually exclusive at all. A country is only as strong as those who lead it, and the laws that govern it. Without strong and enforced laws, man wouldn?t have power. And without man, the laws wouldn?t have power. But, the people govern the land, and they are by far more powerful than the laws. They can create and destroy laws. They are the ones who enforce the laws. People don?t live their lives by the word of the law, but by the will of the people who make and enforce it.

When the Weimar constitution was enacted, there were several flaws. These flaws eventually led to the rise of Hitler, and the downfall of Germany. After World War II, the constitutions of West Germany, and France were more successful. They had very strong points and allowed for stable governments

The Weimar constitution was written under the guidance of Max Weber. He was a socialist, and tried to give the constitution all of the best aspects of the American constitution(\*1). In the Weimar constitution, the president wasn?t named as the head of the government(\*2). This task was given to the chancellor, who was a party member. Because the German government was in its infancy, and often deadlocked, parliament didn?t meet that often (\*3).

Weber had planned for this, and under Article 48, the president had emergency powers when parliament was not in session. These powers also wound up coming into effect whenever parliament was deadlocked. Some of these powers included in Article 48 were temporary dictatorial powers, defense minister or the chief of the army. The president had the right to interfere with the legislation of parliament, and dismiss the chancellor (\*4).

There were a few reasons as to why parliament was never in session. Weber had wanted proportional party representation, and every party had a place, no matter how small they were. Together, there were 28 parties in the German parliament(\*5). This prevented clear majorities and the two-party system never formed(\*6). And since the Germans wanted to model their constitution after the best qualities in the American constitution, this element should have been present in theirs.

Also many Germans weren?t used to the idea of peacefully resolving conflicts. They relied on the old ways, which involved the president making the decisions. To them, parliament was just ?the game of the parties.? They believed all of the power was in the president and Article 48(\*7).

Realizing the benefits of not keeping parliament in session, the presidents would use their power to settle disputes rather than parliament. Article 48 allowed the president to manipulate the system and achieve power. Friedrich Ebert was the first president under the Weimar constitution. He preferred to use his power rather than force parliament to settle their differences(\*8). When Hindenburg came along, he used presidential prerogative to appoint and dismiss chancellors. In his last years, there was an almost virtual suspension to parliamentary government(\*9). This led to Hitler, who used the process to become a dictator.

But, it wasn?t solely the miswriting of the constitution that caused Hitler to come to power. It had a lot to do with a division of East and West Germany. The Easterners had created war-anxiety (\*10), but the Westerners accepted peace (\*11). The East, filled with a caste system, hated the West for being so liberal. Uniting these two opposites under such tension was bound to cause disaster.

The ruling class in the East hated the West for being liberal and lacking spirituality (\*12). Civilization pulled Germany towards the West, but culture to the East. As Germany pulled to he West, it failed, but it prospered as it went to the East (\*13). The Easterners had always ruled Germany, and they were responsible for the war anxiety. But they blamed the Westerners for accepting peace. So, in the eyes of the Easterners, the Westerners became responsible for all the post WW I misfortunes (\*15).

Also, the people never believed that Hitler would gain such popularity. Both the Left and the Right completely underestimated Hitler (\*16). They believed that his only strength was as a great orator. They wanted to exploit this as much possible in order to increase their own party?s strength (\*17).

But Hitler had other plans. As stated in Mein Kampf, he believed that he would become a popular politician (\*18). In the fourth chapter, he stated that it was time to take over the East (\*19).

But Hitler?s popularity grew. As the left began to surge, the Nazi Party began getting more votes. At first, his support from the student academic population grew, but it was followed by an overall increase (\*20). By 1929, it was obvious that the party system was failing (\*21). Heinrich Bruning tried to rule by presidential decree based on Article 48, and when parliament disagreed, he disbanded them. As a result, the Nazis and Communists became the 2 largest parties in parliament (\*22).

We should examine the events right before Hitler came to power. He used his oratorical gifts to get Bruning out of power. He used sly and cunning techniques to take over the Prussian government. Hitler?s approval rating doubled and he received 37.2% of the vote (\*23). Eventually he became a chancellor, and the two other Nazis in parliament also held important positions. They now had the ability to use Article 48 (\*24).

On that date, Germany couldn?t turn back. Within a week, Hitler issued a decree that allowed the government to ban public meetings and newspapers. This was to break up any non-Nazi organization (\*25). He then enacted the ?Emergency Decree,? which gave the Nazis permission to ban freedom. This gave Hitler everything he needed to make a totalitarian state (\*26). But these lasted only until 1945. Hitler then brought in the Enabling Act, which gave the administration the right to legislate and change laws. It also transferred the power from the president to the chancellor (\*27).

Now we see how Hitler was able to come into power using the Weimar Constitution. Article 48 was a big flaw, which guided him right into power. But, the major flaw wasn?t Article 48, but the basis for the entire constitution. It was made while Germany was suffering from internal problems, and those weren?t taken into consideration. It also didn?t account for very minute details, which is why 28 parties were in parliament. While on the outside it appeared to be a very well written document, it never stood up to the test.

The post WWII constitutions of West Germany, and France were more successful than the Weimar Constitution. Constitution making is a thankless task. But, constitutions matter and are necessary. Weimar failed because it had a clumsy constitution (\*28).

The constitution of West Germany was a masterpiece in comparison to the Weimar (\*29). It was called the Federal Republic, and it succeeded because it had a balanced formation (\*30). It had a proportional representation system, which meant no party could form a homogeneous government. Most importantly, big decisions couldn?t be pushed through, especially unpopular measures made by powerful inter-party lobbies (\*31).

Konrad Adenauer wrote the Federal Republic, and he believed in the free market economy. It also encouraged trade unions, which Hitler had destroyed (\*32). Basically, Adenauer had tied West Germans economically, politically and militarily to culture (\*33). He had a fondness for France and realized that Germany?s future lay in France?s hands (\*34).

In 1958, de Gaulle wrote the new constitution for France. It contained direct universal election of the president (\*35). This president had strong powers, but he also had a symbolic role (\*36). It was determined to be the clearest, consistent, and most skillfully balanced constitution France had ever seen. It focused on only two parties; thus voters wouldn?t make some unambiguous choice. The executive could pursue parties consistently, and the head of state was given a direct mandate by bypassing the parties (\*37).

The French constitution was so well written that 23 years went by before there was a change in government philosophy (\*38). Even after a socialist was elected President, the constitution continued to work smoothly. This showed just how well it was written, and it showed that it would be around for a while (\*39).

Basically, without a strong constitution and government, countries collapse. The weak constitution and unbalanced government of Germany allowed Hitler to seize control. He knew how to manipulate people and how to motivate them into giving him what he wanted. Once everyone had learned form their mistakes, strong and stable governments formed.

People make constitutions. They are changed and manipulated and interpreted by people. This proves that man governs man, not laws. A man wrote the Weimar Constitution. A man wrote the Federal Republic. The laws of a nation are determined and written by a man, and a constitution is just a piece of paper to out them on.

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