



## The Fuhrer's Footsteps: Adolf Hitler's Rise to Power and the Establishment of Totalitarian Rule in Germany

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**Abstract:** *This research work adopts analytical and descriptive methods to examine Adolf Hitler's rule over Germany. The study explains Hitler's rise to power and totalitarian government using primary and secondary sources, including digital archives and scholarly literature. The study uses the Fuhrerprinzip to demonstrate Hitler's deliberate propaganda, coercion, and ideological brainwashing of governmental institutions and society. The analysis highlights the disastrous effects of uncontrolled authoritarianism, including dissent repression, marginalized group persecution, and democratic loss. The study shows power dynamics and totalitarianism's legacy by following Hitler from chancellor to absolute dictator. In historical point of view, this research reminds us of the need to protect democratic values and fight tyranny in all its manifestations.*

**Key Words:** Adolf Hitler, Fuhrerprinzip, Authoritarianism, Dictator

### Introduction

Adolf Hitler was a German politician and dictator. In addition to being a politician, Adolf Hitler was also a dictator. At the conclusion of a democratic election that took place in 1932, he emerged victorious in the election for the position of German Chancellor in 1933. His regime eventually became an unconstrained dictatorship, which he was able to accomplish over the course of time. One of the most infamous and loathed individuals in the annals of history is Adolf Hitler, who stands out as a prominent figure. After then, he became the subject of an uncountable number of novels, films, and television shows that were released throughout the course of the succeeding few decades. 1913 was the year when Hitler moved his headquarters to Munich. He was considered unfit for military service for Austria in February of 1914 due to a lack of physical stamina, and this decision was made regarding him. On the other hand, with the outbreak of World War I, he proposed to King Louis III of Bavaria that he be granted permission to engage in labor. After a day had passed, he received word that he would be granted permission to join the 16th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment. He was able to enlist on the regiment's roster. Subsequent to the conclusion of his training in October 1914, he was dispatched to Belgium, where he took part in the First Battle of Ypres at the time it was taking place. As a messenger for the headquarters, he was constantly deployed to the front lines during the duration of the war. He was granted the First Class in Iron Cross in August of 1918, which is an exceptional honor for a corporal, and he was awarded the Second Class in Iron Cross in December of 1914. Both of these honors were bestowed upon him. Both of these orders were bestowed upon him as a reward for his valor in the combat.

Immediately following the defeat that Germany suffered in May and June of 1919, Hitler entered politics in Munich as a result of the catastrophe. In order to fulfill his role as a political spokesman for the military party, he joined the Munich branch of the German Workers Group, which was a rather tiny organization. He was transferred to the propaganda department of party in 1920, and he quit the military to concentrate on increasing his position inside the party, which was retitled as National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers' Party or Nazi Party). As a component of an unchangeable natural order that characterized the "Aryan race" as the creative power of mankind, Hitler

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regarded the inequality that existed between other races, nations, and individuals as a fracture of this order. The Volk, which literally translates to "the people," was, in his opinion, the most natural group of people, along with the German people. He also believed that the German people were that group. Furthermore, he was of the opinion that the Weimar Government had failed to adhere to the premise that the state was formed with the aim of serving the people. He believed that this principle had been completely disregarded.

Despite the fact that Germany's liberal democracy was already vulnerable to a great deal of danger, Hitler was of the opinion that the most dangerous opponent of the Nazis was Germany's liberal democracy. Furthermore, he was of the opinion that Bolshevism was not appropriate for Germany since it was a product of Jewish people. He believed that this was the reason why it was not good for Germany. Karl Marx, who was Jewish, was the originator of Marxism, and Bolshevism was the most advanced philosophy of Marxism. Bolshevism was another name for Marxism. In addition to his belief in Marxism, he was of the opinion that Jews were the most horrible adversary of humanity and the worst possible example of wickedness. The period of time during which Hitler's anti-Semitism reached its zenith and reached its highest point is a contentious issue among historians. Throughout the course of the book *Mein Kampf*, the Jews were referred to as the "destroyer of culture," "a parasite within the nation," and "a menace." Following his ascension to power, Hitler assumed control of the country and established an absolute dictatorship. Through his persuasive efforts, he was able to persuade the president to give his blessing to the holding of new elections. Adolf Hitler, the ruler of Nazi Germany, was under the impression that his regime was the legitimate successor of two of the most powerful German empires that had existed in the long past. Hitler intended to establish his power as the Third Reich in order to position himself within the greater context of the history of Germany and Europe. He could do this by establishing his authority as the Third Reich.

## Problem Statement

An investigation of Adolf Hitler's rise to power and subsequent development of a totalitarian regime in Germany is the theme of this study. The research work focuses on the mechanisms through which Hitler wielded authority and controlled political and societal dynamics. The challenge that is addressed in this study is the problem that is examined. The purpose of this inquiry is to gain an understanding of the causes that contributed to Hitler's rise to power as Fuhrer. These factors include the deterioration of democratic institutions, societal discontent, and unpredictable economic conditions. In addition, the purpose of the study is to shed light on the repercussions of Hitler's authoritarian leadership, which included the repression of dissent, the persecution of marginalized groups, and the deterioration of human liberties. In order to shed light on the complexities of power relations and the lingering legacy of totalitarianism, the research intends to explore these subjects. The aim is to provide insights into the risks of unbridled authoritarianism as well as the need of protecting democratic norms.

## Methodology

The purpose of this research was to uncover the factual data of Adolf Hitler, and it was carried out utilizing an analytical and somewhat descriptive technique. Both primary and secondary sources provide a detailed coverage of all aspects of Adolf Hitler's reign as dictator of Germany. Through the entirety of the study investigation, the researcher ensures that they are adhering to the guidelines that are specified in the Turabian manual. The digital archives of Holocaust museums were subjected to an investigation and examination respectively. Reviewing a variety of books, journals, and articles in order to collect information and provide a detailed explanation was the method that was utilized in order to carry out an exhaustive investigation into the topic. For the purpose of carrying out the study, the guidelines that are given in the Turabian manual will be followed.

## Hitler as a Fuhrer of Germany

In his Third Reich, which ran from 1933 until 1945, Adolf Hitler used the moniker "Fuhrer," which is also written as "Fuehrer," to expressly denote his position of absolute control over Germany. The title "Fuhrer" is derived from the German word for "leader," but Adolf understood it to mean more than just a typical

head of state or administration. Benito Mussolini, the leader of the Italian Fascist movement and the eventual ruler of that nation in the 1920s, served as the inspiration for his vision of the Fuhrer. Fascists were ardent nationalists who believed that it was necessary to have an absolute populace that was united around a charismatic leader, and that national interests should take precedence over individual liberty.

During the first part of the 20th century, fascism had an effect on political groups and regimes all over the world, despite the fact that its origins can be traced back to Italy. In the same way that all tyrants do, Hitler believed that his word was law, and that whenever he changed his opinion, public policy would quickly follow. On the other hand, the Fuhrer's ability to act as a source of inspiration and motivation, as well as his power to represent the will of the nation and satisfy the demands of the people, provided him with a unique capacity to win followers and a responsibility to solve the challenges that the nation was facing and to steer it toward greatness. In the 1920s, Hitler gave an account of the relationship he anticipated having with members of the Nazi Party to one of his competitors. He stated, "For us, the Fuhrer is the Idea, so every party member need simply follow his or her orders." The Fuhrerprinzip, also known as the "leader principle," was created by him as a norm for the Nazis as early as July 1921. In his book, Hitler asserted that his tyranny would be long-lasting and would be passed on to the forthcoming Reich. As a result of the death of German President Paul von Hindenburg, Adolf Hitler, who was serving as Chancellor at the time, assumed the title of "Leader" and became the unchallenged dictator of Germany. The final vestiges of democratic rule in Germany were taken over by Hitler's Reich, and the German army professed its allegiance to the new leader of the country. With only one year having passed since the Fuhrer made the promise to his people that his Reich would continue for a thousand years, Nazi Germany came apart altogether.

In the vicinity of the Fuhrer, a cult of personality was established. In Germany, there were several photographs and portraits of Hitler that were displayed in various locations. The Hitler salute, which is made with the right arm completely extended and palm facing down, as well as the conventional greeting "Heil Hitler!" (or "Hail Hitler!"), became legally mandatory. Both of these salutes are given with the right arm fully extended.<sup>3</sup>)

Hitler's swift rise to power in Germany during the year 1932 was in part spurred by the populace's fury with the country's dismal economic status, its still-festering scars from the defeat of the Great War, and the severe terms of the Versailles peace accord. All of these factors contributed to Hitler's rise to power. Following the conclusion of World War I, Hitler, a talented orator, capitalized on the public's dissatisfaction with the Weimar Republic in order to rally support for his fledgling political organization. During the election that took place in July of 1932, the Nazi Party was able to secure 230 positions inside the government. When combined with the Communist Party, which came in second place, they were able to constitute more than half of the Reichstag.

When Hindenburg was running for president in February of 1932, Hitler began his campaign against him. Hitler was portrayed as Germany's young, vibrant, and modern leader in the propaganda effort that Goebbels was responsible for designing. This idea was driven home by Hitler's use of airplanes to fly from one location to another. In spite of this, he was unable to garner even half of the votes that Hindenburg received, and as a result, he was unsuccessful in winning the elections. Adolf was not granted the job of chancellor after winning the amended elections in 1932, despite the fact that he was the head of the party that had the most representatives in the government. The only reason he was given the opportunity was because the former two chancellors who had been nominated had failed to maintain control over the political and economic turmoil in consecutive terms, despite receiving support from conservative elites. When Hindenburg realized that there was no other viable alternative, he appointed Hitler as chancellor. This was the moment when he made his decision. Brüning got sacked by President Hindenburg in the year 1932. Papen, who succeeded him, served for a period of six months, whereas Schleicher, who succeeded him as chancellor, served for only two consecutive months. To enact practically every bill, Hindenburg had to invoke Article 48. Due to the fact that they gained 230 seats in 1932, the Nazi party was the most prominent political party at the time. It was in January of 1933 when Hitler took the oath of office as the chancellor of Germany. As of this moment, Hitler and his party were in leadership and in control of the situation.



Following the elections that took place in 1932, Hindenburg and von Papen were compelled to rule by emergency decree in accordance with Article 48 of the Constitution. As the Nazis gained more power, they made an offer to Hitler offering him the position of vice-chancellor in exchange for his help. Hitler was not interested in the role since he was interested in becoming chancellor. Detractors of Hitler put him in power with the expectation that they would be able to control "the Austrian corporal." Within the next two months, we will have gotten Hitler into such a difficult situation that he will squeal with frustration. He was not as capable as they had anticipated. The Reichstag, which was considered to be the symbol of democracy in Germany, was destroyed by fire on February 27, 1933. The edict that came to be known as the Reichstag Fire was issued on February 28, 1933, and it suspended all fundamental civil liberties. On February 4, 1933, Hitler's cabinet implemented emergency legislative authority in order to adopt a decree that was intended to ensure the safety of the German masses. Through the restriction of the press and the authorization of the police to prohibit political rallies and marches, this announcement caused a significant amount of disruption to the election campaigning process. It was merely a short-term solution; after the building housing the parliament was destroyed by fire on February 27, civil freedoms were abruptly and permanently curtailed. After some time, the SS, which was the elite guard of the Nazi state, eventually obtained unrestrained power.

Hitler blamed it on the Bolsheviks and used this as an excuse to begin a violent attack on the population. All that was required to accomplish this was for Hindenburg to put his signature on an emergency order that was prepared "for the safety of the people and the state." As stated in the decree, the following:

*"Restrictions on personal liberty, on the right of free expression of opinion, including freedom of the press; on the rights of assembly and association; and violations of the privacy of postal, telegraphic and telephonic communications and warrants for house searches, orders for confiscations as well as restrictions on property, are also permissible beyond the legal limits otherwise prescribed"*

During this time period, which marked the beginning of the reign of terror, thousands of political competitors, including Communists, Social Democrats, and other liberals, were eliminated from power. "Police personnel who use fire-arms in the execution of their responsibilities will, without regard to the repercussions of such use, profit from my protection; those who... fail in their job will be punished," stated Herman Goering, who gained authority as the new chief of police. Goering was the one who took over as the new chief of police. In January of 1933, Hitler was appointed chancellor, and he wasted no time in putting Article 48 to use in order to solidify his position as the sole ruler of Germany. Hitler was not the one who took the control and power but instead he was persuaded into taking the position by a backstage plot., as noted by historian Alan Bullock: "Hitler was elected to office in 1933 not as the result of an unstoppable national or revolutionary movement, nor even as the result of a popular vote triumph, but rather as a consequence of a poor political arrangement with the "Old Gang" that he had been denouncing for months".

When Hitler joined the OAP in 1919, he officially began his journey to authority. This path culminated in 1933, when the Reichstag passed the Enabling Act, which appointed Hitler to the position of ultimate authority. Today, Hitler is the most powerful person in the world. As a direct result of this action, Hitler was granted extensive authority and was subject to legally enforceable repercussions. The authority that had previously been held by the Reichstag was transferred to the Reich cabinet for a period length of four years. These responsibilities included the authority to enact laws, oversee the budget, provide approval to treaties, and initiate constitutional amendments. It was the responsibility of the Chancellor to draft the proposals for legislation that were approved by the cabinet and "might deviate from the constitution."

During the voting process, the Nazis employed various tactics, such as fear-mongering and extortion, in order to ensure the acquisition of votes for the Act. Although the Catholic Center Party supported it, the Social Democrats decided not to embrace the Enabling Act. "In this significant moment, we, the German Social Democrats, wholeheartedly commit ourselves to the principles of compassion and fairness, of liberty and socialism," party leader Otto Wells conveyed to Hitler. "No legislation can grant you the authority to eradicate ideas that are eternal and invincible!" In response, he expressed anger, stating, "You are now obsolete! - The prominence of Germany will ascend while yours will decline!" The toll of your demise has been announced! The Enabling Act was ratified by the Reichstag with a vote of 441 in favor and 84 against.



The Social Democrats voted all 84 votes that went against the majority opinion. Every member of the party who belonged to the Catholic Center voted in favor of it.

The dictator's ascent was a result of shortcomings in democracy and constitutional governance, rather than being attributed to democracy itself or the consequences of the Great Depression. Whenever democracy is unsuccessful, it is due to a deficiency in democratic principles. Hitler's rise to power halted the semi-democratic presidential system that the leaders of the Weimar Republic had gradually adopted, establishing the foundation for the Nazi regime, which was defined by its racial and totalitarian principles. The police regime founded by the Third Reich lacked all essential civil rights. During Hitler's initial two years as chancellor, he focused on implementing his "coordination" (Gleichschaltung) program. This policy aimed to align all sectors of society, such as culture, business, education, and law, with the objectives of the Nazi regime. By July 1933, the majority of political parties in Germany had either been dissolved or outlawed, resulting in the dominance of the Nazi party as the sole remaining political entity.

The Great Depression in Germany was caused by the policies of Hitler's Party, which aimed to achieve what other parties had failed to do: to alleviate the hardships faced by Germans and facilitate their reintegration into the workforce. It contributed to the enhancement of its reputation in the early 1930s. In his inaugural radio address as chancellor, Hitler made a commitment to eradicate unemployment in Germany within a span of four years. It would be a challenging endeavor. The number of Germans employed in permanent positions declined from 20 million in mid-1929 to 11.5 million in January 1933. By the start of 1933, at least 6 million Germans were unemployed.<sup>9</sup> Germany had limited exposure to popular governance and democratic systems. Many people believed that the German Democratic Republic, which had been in existence for 14 years, had fulfilled its purpose and that Adolf Hitler had assumed control. At this juncture, the economic hardships of the Great Depression, combined with the indecisive and self-interested approach of Germany's elected officials, brought the country's government to a standstill. The general populace was devoid of employment opportunities and sustenance, resulting in a state of extreme fear and anxiety as they desperately sought assistance.

The individual in authority was the one who had constructed his entire professional trajectory in politics by denouncing and endeavoring to dismantle the Republic. Hitler took his oath of office at approximately midday on January 30th. According to historian Richard Evans, Hitler's dictatorship benefited from favorable timing as several economic measures implemented by previous chancellors had started to increase employment rates by the time Hitler came to power. The Nazis also inflated official unemployment statistics to portray significant advancements to the public.

Immediately following Hindenburg's passing, Hitler made the announcement that he was both the Fuehrer and the Reich Chancellor. Because of the fact that the armed forces had pledged their devotion to him, his personal capabilities had now reached an unbounded level, and his destiny became similar to that of Germany. During its existence, which lasted from 1933 until 1945, the Greater German Reich adhered to the motto "Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Fuhrer" (which translates to "One People, One Reich, One Leader") and employed slogans such as "Hitler is Germany, and Germany is Hitler." The flag, along with all of the other symbols of the Weimar Republic, was eliminated, which marked the beginning of a new era in the history of Germany. It was clear that the swastika flag, which had been used by the Nazi party, had been adopted as the new flag of Germany. The introduction of Nazism and Nazi symbolism into both both personal and public life in Germany, as well as the revision or rewriting of textbooks to reflect the racist, pan-German ideology of Großdeutschland (Greater Germany), led to the dismissal of instructors who objected to the curricular Nazification. In addition, the Nazis founded the Gestapo, a secret state police force with 100,000 members who were independent of civil authorities, to compel popular allegiance to the state.

Hitler, the Head of State and Leader of the Reich, fully centralized government power to himself on January 30, 1934. He did this by eliminating Lander (federal republic) parliaments and transferred the responsibilities and management of the states to the Berlin central government (Act to reconstruct the Reich). Competitors in politics were put behind bars. Tens of thousands of Germans were executed for participating in various types of resistance between the years 1933 and 1945. Additionally, more than three million Germans were imprisoned or transported to prison camps for political reasons.



Hitler did not consider the liberal democracy that was already in danger of being destroyed and disintegrating for the German people to be the most formidable adversary of the Nazis. It was Marxism, the opposing Weltanschauung that placed an emphasis on internationalism and economic conflict (which, according to him, contained both social democracy and communism). He believed that the Jew, who Hitler regarded as a symbol of evil, was the most formidable adversary of humanity, going beyond the Marxist ideology. The moment when anti-Semitism became Hitler's most fervent and prevalent belief is a topic of contention among historians. In an essay that he wrote in 1919, he argued that organised legal opposition is the inevitable consequence of logical anti-Semitism. The plan must have as its ultimate objective the eradication of all Jews. On the other hand, new laws suppressed Jews and destroyed their civil and political privileges throughout the course of the subsequent few years, despite the fact that the Nazis made an effort to minimize their abuse of Jews during the 1936 Berlin Olympics (during which Jews from Germany were forbidden from competing).<sup>13</sup> The dictatorship of Hitler, in addition to its pervasive anti-Semitism, compelled educators all throughout Germany's educational system to join the party, burnt books, drove newspapers out of business, promoted the Nazi ideology through radio and film, and made an effort to firmly establish the Nazi culture as the dominant culture. The majority of the Nazis' harassment and elimination of Jews and other targets was primarily the responsibility of the Geheime Staatspolizei (GESTAPO), which was a division of the security service that expanded during this time period.

## Conclusion

While exploring Adolf Hitler's rule as the leader of Germany, an intricate story unfolds, showcasing a combination of political manipulation, social turmoil, and the strengthening of authority. This study employed a rigorous approach that involved analyzing both primary and secondary sources to investigate Hitler's rise to power. It revealed the specific methods he used to exert control and construct a regime characterized by total control. Hitler's rise to power was not simply a result of historical inevitability, but rather a deliberate manipulation, taking advantage of a population struggling with economic instability and despair.

The approach of Hitler revolved around his use of the Führerprinzip, a philosophy that stressed unwavering obedience to his leadership. This approach was similar to the cult of personality promoted by other fascist regimes during that time. By utilizing propaganda, pressure, and strategic alliances, Hitler skillfully managed the political environment, resulting in the demolition of democratic institutions and the consolidation of power under his control. The dictatorship he led was characterized by widespread anti-Semitism and the suppression of opposing views, illustrating the complete and absolute control held over all aspects of German life. The apex of Hitler's rule, represented by the destruction of the Reichstag and the creation of a centralized state machinery, highlights the catastrophic outcomes of uncontrolled authoritarianism and the lasting impact of a somber period in human history.

This research scrutinizes the complex dynamics of political ambition, societal turmoil, and ideological zeal that characterized Hitler's reign, highlighting the dangerous and oppressive era. By carefully analyzing historical facts, a clear and unsettling image develops of a leader who manipulated fear and prejudice to gain power, resulting in a legacy of destruction and hopelessness. As we contemplate this period of history, it serves as a clear reminder of the lasting significance of being watchful in protecting democratic principles and opposing the threat of tyranny wherever it emerges.

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