



Adolf Hitler: Historical Figure and The Psychology Of Power

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the personality of Adolf Hitler, one of the most significant and simultaneously controversial historical figures of the 20th century, his pursuit of power, and the political activities he carried out through it, based on a historical-political and psychological approach. Hitler's mental state, family environment, school experiences, and social interactions, shaped from childhood, are examined as the primary factors influencing his political worldview. Additionally, the article evaluates his oratory skills, ideological propaganda, activities within the Nazi party, and role in establishing a totalitarian regime. Throughout the article, the complex interplay between psychopathic traits in Hitler's personality, leadership ambitions, and historical circumstances is explored. The analysis is conducted using modern theories of political psychology and historical sources.

Keywords:

Adolf Hitler, political psychology, historical personality, totalitarianism, Nazism, leadership, 20th-century Germany.

Adolf Hitler was born into a peasant family and was of Austrian origin. He was the third son of A. Schicklgruber. He became the leader of the Nazi Party and the ruler of Germany, serving as the Führer (leader) and Chancellor of the Third Reich from 1933 to 1945. After World War I, riding the wave of fascism in Europe, he established an unprecedentedly tyrannical regime in Germany. By disguising his diseased imagination as a necessity for the German people, he achieved immense success, rearmed Germany, and significantly disrupted the structure of Europe. He launched World War II and brought European civilization to the brink of destruction.

Adolf Hitler was born in the small town of Braunau am Inn, located on the border of Austria and Germany. His parents were Alois Schicklgruber, a 52-year-old Austrian customs

officer, and Klara Pölzl, a 20-year-old peasant woman. Adolf's mother was a serious, pale-faced woman with large, attentive eyes, quiet and hardworking. Adolf loved his patient and devoted mother very much. Despite some saying he was "mentally unstable," she considered him her favorite child. She would often tell him he was different from her other children. Despite all her love, Adolf grew up to be irritable and domineering.

Psychologically, his mother unintentionally shaped him as a child who took out her frustrations with her own miserable life. Adolf feared his hot-tempered father – a cruel, uncompromising man who imposed his strict views on his children. Unhappy and lonely, Alois had been married three times and was addicted to alcohol. Young Adolf often had to bring his drunk father home. Later in life, he recalled that his father was an abusive and wasteful drunk

who squandered the family's money. This gloomy and harsh man regularly disciplined his children with a stick or leather strap. He would insult and humiliate his son. It is possible that Hitler's later merciless hatred toward others stemmed from his hatred for his father.

From a very young age, he realized the importance of siding with the strong.

In 1895, six-year-old Adolf began attending the public school in the small town of Fischlham, near Linz. His deeply religious mother sent him to a Benedictine monastery school in Lambach two years later, hoping her son would one day become a priest. However, he was caught smoking in the monastery garden and expelled from the school. Later, the family moved to Leonding, near Linz. There, young Adolf quickly distinguished himself in his studies. He stood out among his peers for his diligence and was a leader in all children's games.

From 1900 to 1904, he studied at schools in Linz, and from 1904 to 1905 in Steyr. His academic performance was average. At the age of 16, Adolf dropped out of school. For two years, he did nothing in particular, wandering the streets or spending time in libraries reading books on German history and mythology.

In September 1908, Hitler attempted to enroll in the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna for the second time, but failed again at the first stage. To continue receiving an orphan's pension, he kept this failure secret from his relatives. He changed his residence and began introducing himself as an "academic painter" or a "writer."

It is claimed that Hitler had a friendly relationship with Walt Disney. Allegedly, he even drew several of the dwarfs for the movie *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. This surfaced in the early 21st century when drawings of dwarfs along with a *Pinocchio* sketch were displayed at a museum in Norway, bearing Hitler's initials and his well-known signature.

Hitler's oratory skills were enhanced by his ability to modulate his voice, sometimes raising it several octaves for effect, creating a crescendo. This might have been a result of

damage to his throat caused by mustard gas during World War I.

He was known for being stubborn, self-willed, temperamental, and found it difficult to fit into the school environment. He was also not particularly hardworking. Based on many accounts, it is likely that Hitler already displayed psychopathic traits in his youth.

His favorite films were musicals featuring long-legged beauties (as described by his personal architect Albert Speer), films about King Frederick II of Prussia—a figure with whom he identified, comedies by the Marx Brothers, *King Kong* (1933), and, of course, Fritz Lang's monumental works, such as *Metropolis* and *Die Nibelungen*.

The only teacher Adolf admired was his history teacher, Leopold Poetsch—a passionate Pan-Germanist, admirer of Prussian King Frederick II and Chancellor Bismarck, who taught the boy to hate the Habsburgs and defend the cause of German nationalism. The knowledge Adolf gained from his lessons was mostly limited to facts "proving" the greatness and historical mission of the German people. Although his school certificate rated his history knowledge as merely "satisfactory," that did not stop Hitler later from boasting, "Even at school, I had learned to understand and respect history."

At that time, Adolf's only friend was August Kubizek, an assistant to a wall decorator, who, like Hitler, was deeply immersed in mysticism.

In October 1907, 18-year-old Adolf left his cancer-stricken mother and moved to Vienna to find his path in life. In 1908, his mother passed away. For the next five years, he survived on casual jobs and charity. In Vienna, Hitler learned to hate. Influenced by the works of Karl Lueger, he began to despise Jews, seeing them as "rats, parasites, and bloodsuckers." Moreover, he developed a hatred for democracy and found comfort only in his dream of a great and glorious Germany that would rise after the weak Habsburg dynasty was overthrown.

In a small café, he began delivering political speeches that attracted people by voicing hatred against those he despised. In 1913, he left Vienna and moved to Munich.

In February 1914, Adolf Hitler was summoned back to Austria for a medical examination to determine his fitness for military service. However, he was declared unfit due to physical weakness and exempted.

When World War I broke out in August 1914, he petitioned the King of Bavaria to be allowed into the army. He was accepted into the 16th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment, composed mainly of volunteer students. Initially, he served as a field medic, later working as a dispatch runner throughout the war.

During four years of war, Hitler participated in 47 battles and was wounded twice. The first injury came on October 7, 1916, when he was wounded in the leg and taken to a military hospital in Germany. The second injury was more severe—he was poisoned by gas, spending several weeks recovering in a field hospital.

His first military award was the Iron Cross Second Class (1914), and on August 4, 1918, he received the Iron Cross First Class. It was in this war that he learned about cruelty and how to use it.

In 1919, Adolf Hitler took on an espionage assignment aimed at fighting both the Treaty of Versailles and the new German democracy. In September of that year, he was tasked with gathering information about a group of elderly nationalists involved in the German Workers' Party (DAP). Hitler joined the party as its 55th member, and shortly thereafter became its 7th executive committee member. Within less than two years, he was elevated to the leadership of this small party, which would soon be renamed the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP).

The term "Nazism" is derived from the words "National Socialist." Hitler laid out the program of the party in 25 points, which emphasized anti-Semitism, extreme nationalism, Aryan racial superiority, hatred for liberal democrats, and the Führer principle (leader principle). He also gave the party its symbol, the swastika (a hooked cross), and adopted the greeting "Heil!" as the official salute.

He established two key paramilitary groups:

- The SA (Sturmabteilung), or Brownshirts, under Captain Ernst Röhm, a violent paramilitary force.

- The SS (Schutzstaffel), or Blackshirts, his personal elite guard.

On November 8, 1923, Hitler led the failed "Beer Hall Putsch" in Munich, an attempted coup. On February 24, 1924, he was convicted of treason and sentenced to five years in prison, but served only nine months in Landsberg Prison. There, he was given a comfortable room, where he dictated the first volume of his book "Mein Kampf" to Rudolf Hess. The book's core ideology was based on Social Darwinism.

By 1930, Hitler had become the undisputed leader of the nationalist movement.

On January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany. To solidify his position, he warned the nation of the threat of Red (Communist) terror. In 1934, Hitler merged the roles of President and Chancellor, becoming the absolute ruler of Germany. That August, he formally adopted the titles of both Führer and Chancellor.

Under Hitler, unemployment fell sharply. Large-scale humanitarian aid programs were launched for the needy. Mass cultural and sports events were promoted. The core of Hitler's policy was preparation for revenge over World War I.

To that end, Germany's industry was rebuilt, major construction projects were launched, and strategic reserves were created. Initially, the Communist Party, and later the Social Democratic Party, were banned. A number of other political parties were forced to self-dissolve. Trade unions were abolished, and their assets were transferred to the German Labor Front.

Opponents of the new regime were sent to concentration camps without trial or investigation. Anti-Semitism became a key part of Hitler's domestic policy. Mass persecution of Jews began. On September 15, 1935, Jews were stripped of their civil rights. In the autumn of 1938, a mass pogrom against German Jews was orchestrated.

The culmination of this policy was the operation known as the "Endlösung" (Final

Solution to the Jewish Question), aimed at the physical extermination of the entire Jewish population. First announced by Hitler in 1919, this policy culminated in the genocide of the Jews during World War II.

Soon after coming to power, Hitler declared Germany's withdrawal from the military provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. Tank divisions were formed, and military aviation was restored. The demilitarized status of the Rhineland was abolished.

Between 1936 and 1939, Germany, under Hitler's leadership, provided substantial support to Franco's forces in the Spanish Civil War. During this time, Hitler believed he suffered from a serious illness and would die soon, which pushed him to accelerate his plans.

He wrote a political will on November 5, 1937, and a personal testament on May 2, 1938. On January 2, 1939, Time magazine named Hitler "Man of the Year 1938". In the article dedicated to the title, the following words appeared:

"The Führer of the German people, the Supreme Commander of Germany's army, navy, and air force, and the Chancellor of the Third Reich – Adolf Hitler."

In March 1939, the remaining parts of Czechoslovakia were occupied, and Klaipėda (Memel territory), formerly belonging to Lithuania, was annexed. Soon after, Hitler raised territorial claims against Poland. However, he underestimated the reaction of Poland's allies – Great Britain and France – and the possibility of a broader conflict.

On August 23, 1939, Hitler signed the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact with the Soviet Union, agreeing to non-aggression between the two countries. On September 1, 1939, Germany's invasion of Poland marked the beginning of World War II. Later that month, after defeating Poland, Germany invaded Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Belgium between April and May 1940, and launched an offensive against France. By June, France surrendered.

In the spring of 1941, under Hitler's leadership, Germany occupied Greece and Yugoslavia, and on June 22, launched an invasion of the Soviet Union. However, starting

from late 1942, German troops began to suffer major defeats in both the Soviet Union and Egypt. By 1944, almost the entire Soviet territory had been liberated, and the Red Army entered Poland and the Balkans. At the same time, British and American forces liberated much of France. By late October 1944, the fighting had moved into the territory of the Reich.

On March 21, 1943, during Hitler's visit to an exhibition in Berlin showcasing captured Soviet military equipment, Colonel Rudolf von Gersdorff planned to detonate explosives and kill himself along with Hitler. However, the Führer left the exhibition earlier than expected, and Gersdorff barely managed to deactivate the detonator in time.

On July 14, 1944, British intelligence planned Operation Foxley, which aimed to assassinate Hitler, but the plan was never approved and not carried out.

On July 20, 1944, a bomb explosion occurred during an assassination attempt designed to kill Hitler and establish peace negotiations with the Allied forces. Four people were killed, but Hitler survived.

Nevertheless, this event caused serious damage to Hitler's health: his right hand was severely injured, the hair on the back of his head was singed, and his right eardrum was ruptured. According to testimonies collected by the Allied and Soviet counterintelligence agencies, on April 30, 1945, surrounded by Soviet troops in Berlin, Hitler committed suicide together with his wife, Eva Braun.

Soviet historiography claims that Hitler took poison, but according to witnesses, he shot himself. Another version suggests that Hitler bit into a cyanide capsule while simultaneously shooting himself with a pistol.

According to the accounts of Hitler's staff, after lunch on April 30, he said goodbye to those close to him, shook hands, and then went to his private quarters with Eva Braun. Shortly afterward, a gunshot was heard from the room. Hitler's valet, Heinz Linge, along with his adjutant Otto Günsche, Goebbels, Bormann, and Axmann, entered the room. They found Hitler's body lying on the sofa, wrapped it in a soldier's

blanket, and carried it to the garden of the Reich Chancellery, where the bodies were burned.

On May 5, 1945, the remains were accidentally discovered. Medical Colonel F. I. Shkaravsky led the commission of experts examining the remains. The identity of the remains as Hitler's body was confirmed by his dentist, Käthe Heusermann, who recognized the dental prosthetics. However, after returning from Soviet camps, she retracted her testimony.

In February 1946, the investigation department buried the remains identified as those of Hitler and Eva Braun at one of the NKVD's bases. When the territory of this base was to be transferred to the GDR, Andropov proposed to exhume the remains, cremate them, and scatter the ashes in the Elbe River.

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