

Illustrating nazi germany: triumph of the will and the great dictator

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



Triumph of the Will (1935), directed by Leni Riefenstahl and The Great Dictator (1940), directed by Charlie Chaplin, aim to paint a certain picture of Nazi Germany. They are both made for much different and much the same purposes and motives. When looked at closely these movies prove two different realities and times that cater to their intended audiences, while also giving a comprehensive view on Nazi Germany.

Since both of these movies are centered in Germany, that will be the starting point of my argument. But one must first understand the history and context to the time periods that were being recorded / depicted. This was a time of Nazi Rule. In some cases, power has just been established or is beginning to grow. It is at this time when Hitler's true plan is tested on the German people. His visions finally proved successful with the German people, but this was amid objection from the Vatican (the Catholic Church), The Protestant Church, German skeptics, and the Jews, Hitler grasped control of every aspect of Germany that he possibly could. He went from cloaking German culture with Nazi drapes, to planning and creating a new Nazi Church that was to be centered on Nazism and Hitler. Hitler Controlled the press, radio, and film in Germany, He Authorized the creation of a new education and science culture that reflected Nazi ideology and beliefs, He prompted these German teachers to join the National Socialist Teachers League. He endorsed the support of the arts, but only the art that trashed Democracy and that was easily understood (Hitler hated modern art; he thought it was degenerate, this was for the reason of his failure as an artist among such peers.). The Führer (Affectionate called by his nation of followers.), mobilized Germanys war economy and increased the country's economic production.

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He became absolute Ruler and Law throughout all of Germany, and derived the legality of his rule from a Despised Republican Constitution. Hitler ultimately mandated that everyone in his Third Reich should consider how he, The Führer, would react if he were in that situation and make our decisions accordingly. Logistically Hitler controlled his empire through, a board of cabinet members authorized to promulgate decrees, but only with Hitler's approval. This was the status of German society at the recording or depicting of these two films.

Triumph of the Will is one side of the Nazi story that was broadcasted and embodied by Adolf Hitler. Just as there are two sides to every story, so is there to this specific situation. Triumph of the Will depicts the prancing about of Hitler at a seemingly large Workers Party Rally. He is obliged for the opportunity through this conference, to prove the superiority of the German race. Most everywhere Hitler goes, he encounters adoring subjects to his rule, despite the class of German Jewish citizens who were being taken advantage of and increasingly persecuted every day. Referring to the beginning of the movie, one will find Hitler, arriving above Nuremburg, symbolized as a god coming from heaven (to save his Aryan people from the dangers of the Jew). The Führer increasingly considered himself to be a god. If not all at first but methodologically, he indefinitely worked out the logistics for the creation of his own Nazi Church. As mentioned just before, but again, for emphasis, Hitler portrayed himself increasingly as a god to the German people, that they should anticipate, emulate, and obey Him without question. Triumph of the Will documents and records the widespread support and

willingness for the Anti-Semitic ideology after it became popular. The persecution experienced by other groups and the persecution of Jewish groups aside, it makes sense why the Germans would follow and support Hitler, at this premeditated and calculated historical moment. Hitler provided Germany with a new hope out of the ashes of World War I, just when it needed it the most. This was following a period when The Treaty of Versailles had left Germany's reputation in tatters; Hitler's rise to power occurred mainly because of his capitalization on the German condition of the time.

The Great Dictator (1940) was written years later from Triumph of the Will (1935). Despite being themed similar to Triumph of the Will, The Great Dictator comes from a much different cultural context. In Contrast to Triumph of the Will, which commands a loyal audience of obedient German subjects, The Great Dictator caters to an audience of democracy loving Americans. This film aims to humor, educate, and infer things about Hitler and the Third Reich. Through its humor, the film infers things to be true about Hitler and his Nazi State. These things possibly did, or did not occur in Nazi Germany. The point here is to see the German Society as sad and corrupted, one which must be replaced with Democracy. As highlighted at the end of the movie, by Charlie Chapin playing "Hynkel" (themed after Adolf Hitler), He urges Americans and Germans to fight for a democratic cause. This plea comes in light of the film poking fun at the German State multiple times. He at times made the comedic light of the "common interest before self" ideology. What can be inferred about the film as seen from the ending is that The Germans, especially the Jews need to be rescued from this, flawed

society. The film sheds light into the stories of many Jewish individuals who all seem to be upstanding citizens, but at the end are taken advantage of because of their ethnicity. The look into concentration camps in this movie, though, is a somewhat inaccurate portrayal of the brutality of a real camp. The Americans could not have been discovered until after 1945.

Despite the difference in context between *Triumph of the Will* and *The Great Dictator* they both share things that unite them together. There is a common element in these movies and it is most definitely Hitler. In these movies Hitler is either justifying or criticizing his Reich through his actions and choices. Another common element is their shared propaganda elements. Both films aim to persuade and rally their people into some sort of action; rather it is in support of the Reich or against it. This is not to say there is nothing to gather from these observations'. Relative to the time in which each film was produced, they both were accurate depictions of some part of the Nazi Germany Society. When observed side by side, these films give a comprehensive view on Hitler's Third Reich.