

Good example of research paper on adolf hitler's power of words

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Adolf Hitler certainly had the power to mesmerize people when he took to the microphone and his writings have also influenced a great many people which facilitated his rise to power. A typical example would be a speech Hitler gave in September 1938 when addressing a party rally in Munich;

‘ The cultural evolution of a Volk resembles that of the Milky Way. Amongst countless pale stars, a few suns radiate. However all suns and planets are made of the same material and all observe the same laws. The entire cultural work of a Volk must not only be geared for the fulfilment of one mission but this mission must be pursued in one spirit’ (Kershaw, 1999)

This powerful statement echoes Hitler’s innate capabilities to create tension and whip up that tension to a frenzy. It was this mercurial quality which had people at an edge all the time and clearly demonstrated his grasp over their psyche and inner emotions.

Hitler was famous for his beer hall speeches and these were full of those populist themes which were so attractive to his audience. Hitler was playing on the sentiments of the Germans who were still recovering from the humiliation of the First World War and the repressive nature of the Versailles Agreement which Hitler used constantly as a rallying cry.

Several historians who have researched this period have observed the use of rhetoric by Hitler as a way of jacking up the tension and also mesmerizing his audiences. In a sense Hitler had the capability of putting audiences into a trance and these would then follow along. His earliest followers such as Rudolf Hoess and Baldur von Schirach always confessed to being completely mesmerized by the Hitler juggernaut.

Alfons Heck who was in the Hitler Youth describes the effect a speech by

Hitler had on him and his comrades;

" We erupted into a frenzy of nationalistic pride that bordered on hysteria.

For minutes on end, we shouted at the top of our lungs, with tears streaming down our faces: Sieg Heil, Sieg Heil, Sieg Heil! From that moment on, I belonged to Adolf Hitler body and soul" (Heck, 1934)

The manner of attack used by Hitler was usually two pronged; an assault on the Jews and a calling to arms for the rise of the old German glories from the time of Frederick the Great. This had immense popular appeal among those who felt downtrodden and betrayed by the spineless politicians which formed the Weimar government. Hitler was seen as a breath of fresh air for those who could not bear the humiliation undergone by the Versailles Treaty.

Hitler also pounced on the fact that the situation in Germany was going from bad to worse. Hunger and poverty had invaded the nation and the unemployment rate had shot up. Through his speeches, Hitler used several techniques to rouse the patriotic spirit which was embedded in the Germans and which had been laid waste by the outcome of the First World War. Additionally, Hitler's speeches attracted those who could not do otherwise and who felt betrayed by the political class thus ensuring that his popularity kept increasing.

Hitler's powerful magnetism attracted a number of undesirable personalities who would be important in his rise to power. Chief of these was the former pilot Hermann Goering who would rise to become the second in command of the Nazi Party. Other early converts included Ernst Rohm and Alfred Rosenberg who were instrumental in the setting up of the paramilitary force, the SA or the Sturm Abteilung which were better known as the brownshirts.

Hitler added the use of force to his power of words to continue rising up the power ladder.

Circumstances and the rise to absolute power

Germany was crippled through a severe economic depression which threatened to collapse the country in the 1920's. Hitler was seen as the perfect antidote to this terrible situation and while his public appearances were increasing in frequency. The result was that the National Socialists headed by Hitler won over 18 per cent of the vote and 107 seats in parliament in the 1930 elections which gave them prominent bargaining power.

A crucial episode in 1930 where Hitler used his power of words was the trial of two officers who had been charged with being members of the NSDAP. Hitler skilfully used this opportunity to call for democratic elections promising a democratic form of government which was supported by the army thus bringing the military under his wing.

The austerity which gripped the country in the late 1920's and early 1930's afforded Hitler another opportunity to use his power of words to target several strata of society. He began sending political messages to those groups which had been severely hit by the Depression and these included war veterans, farmers as well as the middle classes who from then on would support Hitler in droves.

The 1932 elections saw Hitler's National Socialists gain more than 35 per cent of the vote although this was not to form a government. However after some legal wrangling and supports from industry, Hitler was eventually appointed Chancellor to replace the ageing Paul von Hindenburg

After his rise to power, Hitler had the following words to say;

“ At the risk of appearing to talk nonsense I tell you that the National Socialist movement will go on for 1, 000 years! Don't forget how people laughed at me 15 years ago when I declared that one day I would govern Germany. They laugh now, just as foolishly, when I declare that I shall remain in power!”

This brief but astonishingly bold statement showed the delusion to which Hitler had now attached himself. However it was nothing short of remarkable that a political party which had once been outlawed was now commanding Germany and would drive onwards for European and eventual world domination. The seeds of all this lay in Hitler's capability to thrill the masses and make them do his bidding.

Hitler also had an old score to settle and that was with the Jews. After the Nuremberg Laws and various other racial discrimination incidents such as the Kristallnacht (Crystal Night in 1938), Hitler had this to say about the future of the Jews;

“ If the international Jewish financiers outside Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more into a world war, then the result will not be the bolshevisation of the earth, and thus the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe”.

Hitler was certainly making no bones about his desire to rid the world of Jewry by a systematic and effective campaign of mass murder. If what followed in the extermination camps was planned and methodically executed by others, the seeds of all this lay in Hitler's words whose power one cannot

deny.

However the power of Hitler's words had the most destructive of endings with a World war leaving over fifty million dead and a wholesale annihilation of minorities which included gypsies, Poles and Russians apart from the Jews. The terrible legacy of Hitler's statements and inflammatory political assessments is still around us although it has somewhat receded of late. Still the power of his words which unleashed such incredible forces of evil make Hitler one of the most hated figures of the 20th Century.

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