

# Short answers\_ the rise of nazism in weimar germany (1919-1934)

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1. What factors allowed German National Socialism to become a mass movement and acquire power? Between 1918 and 1933, the German people were weary of the political and economic climates of the country (Fritzsche, 1998). During this period the Weimar Republic was in a state of disorder with unemployment levels reaching record highs and the great depression taking a toll of many individuals and families in a greatly divided nation. At the end of World War One, the German pride had been trashed, the nation having never been prepared for a defeat. Under the leadership of Hitler, the Nazi movement promised to unite the country, create employment, direct the country to economic recovery, and assert German nationalism, solutions that the country greatly needed (Fritzsche, 1998). Hitler's diplomatic successes in foreign nations also added to the appeal of the Nazi movement to the German people.

2. Explain the ideological beliefs of the German National Socialist movement.

The German National Socialist party was based on the ideology that the German people were superior to other people (Hitler, 1925). In this respect, the movement emphasized German nationalism. As noted by Adolf Hitler in his *Mein Kampf*, the movement was founded on the premise that the Aryan master race was superior to all other races and that other races were in conflict especially with the master race. More especially, the Nazi movement believed that Jews were a mixed race which had infiltrated many societies was behind the repression and exploitation of the master race.

Apart from its racial and anti-Semitic ideals, the Nazi movement was based on the need to expand Germany to provide more living space and resources

to the Germans (Hitler, 1925). The Nazi movement felt that Germany was overpopulated and the territory occupied by the Germans was not enough for the people's wellbeing, especially following the First World War. In this respect, Hitler noted that Germany's relationship with Russia would be friendly if the latter if only Russia agreed to the re-establishment of the borders created by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Nazis believed that communism and capitalism were both dangerous to the nation (Hitler, 1925). Communism according to the Nazis would dissolve private property and would aggravate class conflict among other reasons. On the other hand they believed that capitalism destroys nations because of Jewish influences, international finance, and dominance by big corporations. Totalitarianism was yet another ideal of the Nazi movement as it believed that individual needs were less important compared to those of the community. Hitler, the main brain behind the Nazi movement stated that order and national security superseded individual needs.

3. What forms of armed force, terror and repression did German National Socialism utilize to gain and consolidate power?

The Nazi movement under Hitler initially took a position that accommodated ownership of private property and capitalism as long as a private business adhered to the policies and goals of the Nazi state. Furthermore, the movement initially acted as if to accommodate those who held conservative ideals only later to turn violently against them. The Nazi movement also managed to consolidate its power by outlawing political parties and doing away with trade unions so that dissenting voices were weakened (Friedlander, 1995). By passing repressive laws such as the Enabling Act, the

Nazi movement managed to intimidate people who were non-Nazis and effectively gave Hitler the authority to personally make laws without having to consult anyone. The Nazi government reorganized the local government run by Blockleiters appointed by Hitler. The Nazi movement meted out violence against any person or group of people whom it perceived to be against the Nazi state or who held a contrary view (Friedlander, 1995). For example, more than 4000 opponents of the Nazi movement were arrested and subjected to a lot of persecution without undergoing trial. Even so the movement established courts that were presided over by judges who had to swear their allegiance to the movement, and not necessarily to justice.

#### References

Hitler, Adolf (1925). *Mein Kampf*.

Friedlander, H. (1995). *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA: University of North Carolina Press.

Fritzsche, P. (1998). *Germans into Nazis*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.