

# The rise of nazism in germany

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The rise of Nazism in Germany during the 1930's was not an inconceivable happening, considering the causes and effects in play at the time. Under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, the popular acceptance of what was later to be Nazism was overwhelming. Nazism's evolution was methodically planned, and boldly executed. The word Nazism is defined by The Concise Columbia Electronic Encyclopaedia as " the ideology and policies of Adolf Hitler and the National-Socialist German Workers' party from 1920-1945. " Subsequently, a Nazi is defined as a member of the National-Socialist German Workers' party led by Adolf Hitler.

Nazism had its earliest roots in another " ism". This is Nationalism, the sharing of a common pride, belief and loyalty by a singular group of people of a nation. However, it was this sincere form of Nationalism that was later warped, and used against the majority of the German people by Adolf Hitler for their apparent good. Hitler deceived them and they deceived themselves, all due to the ideal timing and chain of events. Prior to and during World War One, Germany was a powerful nation with colonial interests in Africa and Alsace-Lorraine.

Germany was a centre of learning, culture, medicine and industry. The German government was a Parliamentary form, called the Reichstag. This system was efficient and yielded positive results for the people. Germany fielded a large and well-equipped army, led for decades by Generals of the Aristocracy. This all changed after Germany lost World War One, and especially after that fact was repeatedly emphasized. Due to the army's defeat, there was a loss of more than 3 million soldiers and unaccountable

civilians. This meant the passing of most of an entire generation of workers, fathers, husbands and sons.

Consequently, there came a loss of faith in the country's leadership. When the Treaty of Versailles' terms were being discussed, Germany was not welcomed, the country's leaders were needed only for their signature. They were expected to agree to the terms without question, which they ultimately did. The Germans referred to the treaty as a Diktat, which meant dictated peace. This reflects the feeling of the German people about being disregarded by other countries.

Field Marshall Hindenburg said the following: " In the event of resumption of hostilities we can... defend our frontiers in the east. In the west, however, we can scarcely count on being able to withstand a serious offensive... The success of the operation as a whole is very doubtful, but as a soldier I cannot help feeling that it is better to die honourably than accept a disgraceful peace. " This was the general public opinion; nobody approved of the treaty, but if they did not accept it, they could no longer survive the combined powers of The United States, Great Britain and France, along with Belgium and other relatively small European countries.

Even if the thought was there to not sign the treaty, the country had no choice because the consequences were too debilitating. This implied to the German people that Germany, in its present state, was a worthless country that can be pushed around by the others, and was unable to defend itself. The psyche of the people further worsened beginning in 1922 due to the French, who had invaded Germany because the country failed to make its

second reparation payment. The French took over the most industrialized area, the Ruhr Valley, where they assumed possession of coalmines, railways and factories.

To add to the fact that the German country was losing their largest source of wealth to another country that stole the area, prices were quickly rising as an effect. The price of a loaf of bread rose from half a mark in 1918 to 201,000 million marks in 1923. The Germans were unable to feed themselves and their families because of this hyperinflation. This caused more deaths and suffering among the people and further disappointed them. In 1923, Hitler made his first attempt to overthrow the German government.

He was supported by many and began a Putsch, an attempt to seize power by force, in Munich. The government had Hitler arrested for treason and sentenced to five years in prison. Although he served only nine months of his sentence, he had enough time to gather his thoughts and organize the plan he would need in order to rise to power over German people. During this time he wrote Mein Kampf, which was the beginning of his explanation of his hopes and dreams for Germany. His time away from society was just what he needed and without it, would probably not have become the dictator he later became.

When Hitler came out of prison, he began offering the people what seemed to be an attractive alternative to their suffering. Some of his alleged goals were to ensure the abolition of the Treaty of Versailles, cease non-German immigration, the abolition of income unless it was earned through work, increase profit sharing and to allow only members of the

German nation to work as newspaper owners, editors, and journalists and radio broadcasters. Hitler's ten goals had a goal of themselves, to make German people feel appreciated, important, and superior.

This certainly appealed to a population of desperate individuals who would have accepted just about anybody as a leader. Not only were the people gaining hope because they saw a new face, but this face was willing to change Germany in their favour, he wanted Germany to be a better place for them. Hitler's exaggerations certainly improved his odds of becoming a dictator. The economy played an important role in Hitler's rise. As the economy became more unstable, the Nazis won more seats in the Reichstag. In 1924, as the economy was unstable due to the French invasion, the Nazis had 32 seats.

The number dropped in 1924 to 14 seats, as the economy slowly recovered and then again in 1928 to 12 seats, as the recovery process sped up. However, in 1930, as the world was suffering due to 1929's stock market crash, the party owned 107 seats. Then, in 1932, the number rose once again to 230 seats as massive unemployment became a harsh reality. In January 1933, Hitler came to power legally. The most important move he made was the passing of The Enabling Laws. This allowed Hitler to make laws without having them approved by the Reichstag.

This is when Hitler truly became a dictator. Hitler's rise to power can be accounted for by his luck of appearing at a time when the people of his country were discouraged and desperate, and his twisted, determined drive. Hitler took advantage of the times and without them being what they were,

he would have never become a dictator. He united the German people by assigning to them a common foe, and a goal, to rid themselves of this foe. He allowed for his people somebody to blame and resent, which took the hatred away from its original destination, the German government.

The death of a generation of men, the loss of a war, the harsh terms of the Treaty of Versailles, mounting inflation, the worldwide economic crisis, the lack of faith in the past government and Hitler's deceiving promises are the causes of his rise to power. He was a frightfully determined man who managed to leave Germany in a state worse than it was when he promised to improve it, without ever losing the faith of his followers. The Nazi party, led by Adolf Hitler had dreams of a thousand year Reich. Thankfully, Nazism lasted only twenty-five years. At the end of World War 2, the Nazi party was outlawed.