

# Why was hitler able to dominate germany by 1934?

[People](#), [Adolf Hitler](#)



The S. A. was, essentially, the private army of the NSDAP. During the years of endemic violence in Germany after its defeat in the First World War until 1925, and again after 1930, after the prosperity brought by the Young plan evaporated with the Wall Street Crash of October 1929, such private armies were commonplace, and indeed necessary.

Many members of the S. A. had come out of the defeated German army, and were in effect mercenary thugs. The principal attraction of the S. A. to many of its members was not the political ideology of the party for which it worked (although a great many of them were probably Nazi sympathizers), but rather its pomp, regalia and display (the S. A. wore the uniform of the defeated German army, evoking patriotic spirit among both its members and the general public), which were used to great effect to boost party membership (indeed, this was one of the main aims of the S. A.) and to attract new sympathizers.

The main job of the S. A. was to provide security for the Nazi party, particularly at its rallies, which could easily have been ruined with the presence of a few hardcore opposition supporters intent on causing damage to their political enemies; equally, the S. A. was designed to disrupt the meetings of opposition parties, and to attack (physically, rather than verbally) their politicians, and, particularly when the Nazis were in power, the Jews.

The S. A. offered stability to its members, in a time at which unemployment was astronomically high; it also gave a sense of purpose to its more politically motivated members, who may well have felt that they were

fighting for the good of the Fatherland. Indeed, the ideologies of members of the S. A. varied widely, from the nationalist conservatives in the army whose views verged on the fascist, to those with strong socialist sympathies, such as Rohm, the leader of the S. A. until the 'Night of the Long Knives' in June 1934.

b. Explain the reasons why the Wall Street Crash was important to the success of the Nazis after 1929.

The main effect of the Wall Street Crash of October 1929 on the politics of Germany was the polarization of political opinion that it caused. The Crash caused the United States to recall the loans that it had made to Germany (and to other European powers, although they were less badly affected than Germany because they owed less money to the US, as Germany was being rebuilt almost entirely with US money after the war), thus causing economic chaos. A banking crisis led to a sharp drop in spending, causing businesses to go bankrupt, and thus causing mass unemployment. The people that lost out the most were the middle classes, as the very rich had enough money that they could get by easily, and the poor were mostly agricultural workers, who could survive by subsistence farming and selling their goods, which were essential to everyone.

Almost all of the more enthusiastic supporters of the democratic Weimar republic also came from the middle classes, and with the collapse in their way of life caused by the Wall Street Crash and subsequent financial crisis in Germany, the government inevitably shouldered much of the blame. With most of the government's support having evaporated, people inevitably

looked to alternative systems of rule - principally those at almost diametrically opposite ends of the spectrum: the nationalist ultra-conservative Nazi party, who promised to sort out the country, and the Communists and Socialists (Russia had been unaffected by the Wall Street Crash, owing to the fact that private ownership of land - and thus the mortgages upon which people in Germany had to default - was forbidden).

It is worth remembering that the Nazi party was not the only party to which people turned in the times of hardship after the Wall Street Crash. While the support for Weimar universally collapsed, both the Communists and Nazis gained seats in the September 1930 Reichstag elections (although the Nazis did so in far greater quantity - their number of seats rose by 983% in the elections, as opposed to the Communists' relatively meagre forty-three percent rise).

However, it is certain that this huge rise in popularity was caused, for the most part, by the middle classes deserting Weimar, and giving their support to the Nazi Party, which was, after all, far more respectable than the Communist Party. So convinced were many industrialists (notably the Thyssen and Schnitzler families) by Hitler's anti-communist promises that they gave large sums of money to the Nazi party, a fact which demonstrates the respect given to the Nazi Party by many people held in high regard.

While the Wall Street Crash was a principal factor in the rise of the Nazi party, it was by no means the only one. The death in October 1929 of Gustav Stresemann, the extremely able Chancellor, struck another blow to the Weimar government, contributing to its loss of popular confidence. He was

succeeded by Brüning, who imposed a rigorous economic policy of cuts, enforced by presidential decree from the aging von Hindenburg, which, although they may have been a possible solution to the economic problems of Germany, were deeply unpopular, and meant that still fewer middle class people supported the democratic system of government. His foreign policy, however, was remarkably similar to Hitler's - he talked of remilitarizing the Rhineland, and even of Anschluss with Austria.

The blaming of the Communists and consequent elimination of opposition in the next elections after the Reichstag fire was also an extremely important factor in the NSDAP's gaining a majority in the Reichstag and thus eventual power, with Hitler as Chancellor.

The Wall Street Crash was thus important to the rise of the Nazi party after 1929 because it resulted in an economic crisis in Germany, which precipitated a loss of confidence in the Weimar government from the middle classes. The hard times in Germany led to political polarization, and, while the Nazis were not the only beneficiaries of this, they certainly received a boost in their levels of support. However, it was not the only reason for their rise to power - the Reichstag fire and thus the elimination of opposition to the Nazi party, and before that, the death of Stresemann, both contributed to the NSDAP's rise to power.