

GERMANY



AUTHORITARIAN STATE

HITLER

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EMERGENCE OF AUTHORITARIAN STATES

COUNTRY: GERMANY – HITLER

CONDITIONS – ECONOMY

Post-war depression; unemployment

Reparation payments from the Treaty of Versailles

When the French and the Belgians invaded the Ruhr in 1923, **hyperinflation** resulted, ruining middle-class savings **1925-29 - “Golden Years”** under Stresemann. The economy is improved by 1924 Dawes Plan with US loans. However, the agriculture never shared in the boom. This put the German economy in a dangerously dependent position.

1929 - Wall Street Crash. US loans (Dawes Plan) were withdrawn when the country’s economy collapsed. This led to economic crisis.

The democracy broke down in the desperate economic conditions and the Nazis were able to rise to power.

CONDITIONS – SOCIAL DIVISION

The unpopularity of the Weimar Republic meant that it faced violent uprisings from both sides of the political spectrum during 1919 and 1920

Left-wing opposition (the Spartacists)	Right-wing opposition (the Kapp Putsch)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5-12 January 1919 - 50,000 members of the post-World War One Communist Party (Spartacists) rebelled in Berlin - Led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht - Government was saved when armed bands of ex-soldiers (Freikorps) who defeated the Spartacist rebels - In the aftermath, communist workers' councils seized power all over Germany, and a Communist People's Government took power in Bavaria - May 1919: the Freikorps had crushed all of these uprisings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crushing the communists – Freikorps had saved the government - The terms of the Treaty of Versailles meant Germany's army had to be significantly reduced <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Freikorps had to be disbanded - During 13-17 March 1920, Dr. Wolfgang Kapp led a Freikorps takeover in Berlin - The regular army refused to attack the Freikorps - Kapp was defeated when the workers of Berlin went on strike and refused to cooperate with him

Aristocracy (elite):

- Generals and decorated war-heroes
- Industrialists (used arms production as a manner of supporting themselves economically)
- Landowners

Middle Class:

- Independent business owners
- Educated citizens such as nurses, doctors, economists and other social government workers
- ★ People with savings and those who had lent money (to the government) were the most badly affected by hyperinflation seeing that their money became worthless
 - Seeing that members of the middle class were the most severely affected by the economic struggles of the Weimar Republic, they drove society towards a more extremist party
 - Hitler and the Nazis rose to power

Working Class:

- Worked mainly in the industries and on the agricultural lands and mass production, and many of the workers class were in the army
- When the terms of the Versailles Treaty were introduced the majority of the working class were left unemployed and poor

NOTE: The role of the old Germany – the **Elite** (Aristocracy; rich landowners; industrialists; the Army...). The change of mind of the German **Middle Class** (due to the economic hardship – three “*depressions*” – 1. Post-War Depression; 2. Hyperinflation; 3. Wall Street Crash) and a split **Working Class** (SPD; USPD and KPD – especially after the Spartacist Upraise and the Bavarian Republic/Soviet in 1919)

Was Nazi Germany a continuation of the Authoritarian Old Germany?

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CONDITIONS – IMPACT OF WAR

Due to the threat of defeat, Kaiser Wilhelm tried to create a more liberal government but failed and eventually Friedrich Ebert signed an armistice in hope to end the war. This shocked the Germans, who believed they were winning. Nationalists believed the army were backstabbed and in June 1919 the Treaty of Versailles sparked up even more anger because of the 13% loss in territory by Germany in Europe as well as all its colonies.

Because of the Treaty of Versailles Germany (Especially the nationalists) wanted someone else to blame because of them losing 13% and 40 billion dollars of their territory and colonies in Europe. And as Hitler was in world war I himself he had knowledge of war. Food shortages led to radicalization and people started having extremist views.

Kaiser Wilhelm – liberal government failed

Friedrich Ebert armistice ended the war (shock)

Nationalists thought backstabbed in June 1919

CONDITIONS – WEAKNESS OF POLITICAL SYSTEM

Weaknesses of the political system

Germany had been ruled by Kaiser Wilhelm II.

1871 - Reichstag (elected parliament) → never properly developed, caused a lot of political tension. The Kaiser had pursued a *foreign policy* which eventually led to the German involvement in the First World War.

Right after the war, the Kaiser attempted to create a more **liberal government**.

→ led to chaos, strikes, etc. around the country. The German population were very unsatisfied.

- Kaiser was abdicated on the 9th of November 1918
- Republic had been declared

A **socialist government** had been installed under **Friedrich Ebert**, who signed an armistice to end the war.

→ New democratic constitution drawn up in Weimar:

Weimar Constitution

- Universal Suffrage - anyone over 20 could vote
- Reichstag - this was elected every 4 years.

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION - electors vote for a party rather than a candidate. The number of deputies in the Reichstag would, therefore, correspond proportionately to the number of votes that party received in the country as a whole (this was considered to be a **weakness**)

- Coalition governments were then produced, small parties gained representation.
- 14 coalitions between February 1919 and June 1928 → weakened the support that there had been for a democratic government

The **President** had a lot of power → elected every 7 years.

- Appointed Chancellor (who ran the government)
- Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution → could rule by decree in an emergency.

THREATS TO THE GOVERNMENT:

- **The Spartacist League** - led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. A radical socialist group, they attempted to overthrow the republic in January 1919.
- **Communists** in the Ruhr (March 1923) and in Saxony and Thuringa (1923).
- **The Kapp Putsch (1920)** - took place in Weimar in March. Wolfgang Kapp was a right-wing journalist, opposed the treaty of Versailles, had support from the Freikorps and Ludendorff.

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METHODS – PERSUASION AND COERSION

- In 1920, Hitler introduced the 25-point programme at a Nazi meeting. The 25-point programme was based around the ideas of Socialism and Nationalism
- In 1924, Nazis interrupted a political meeting held in Munich, where three Bavarian leaders were persuaded to agree to Hitler's plan to march on Berlin to establish a new government. However, one of the leaders immediately contacted the police and the march failed.
- As a consequence of the failed Munich Putsch, Hitler introduced the Führerprinzip which demanded obedience.
- In 1926, Hitler manipulated a meeting held by the NSDAP and turned it into a monologue instead. This led to Hitler taking control of the party once again and transform it according to his plan.
- The NSDAP adapted their ideology to both the left and the right.

METHODS – ROLE OF LEADERS

Nazi party

- Hitler - speaker, leader, figurehead, persuaded voters etc, important for propaganda.
- Goebbels - propaganda, speaker
- Göring - public hero because of his involvement in World War 1, former leader of the SA Himmler - leader of the SS

Weimar Republic

- Von Brüning – Chancellor
- Von Papen - Chancellor
- Von Schleicher – Chancellor
- Von Hindenburg - President, conservative.
 - All the chancellors struggled because they did not have a majority in parliament, this leads them to use article 48.
 - None of the Weimar leaders believed the Nazis posed a real threat and therefore did not do much to stop them, because they thought they could be used to stop the radical left.
 - Hindenburg and Von Papen offered the chancellorship to the Nazis to stop the leftist and did not expect any consequences.

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METHODS – ROLE OF IDEOLOGY

- Hitler believed that the Aryan people were superior to other races and used this to gain support as well as Lebensraum ideas...
- Jews were used as scapegoats
- In the 1930 election NSDAP won 107 seats in the Reichstag - 2nd biggest party in Germany

Nazi appeal

- Appealed to the country on issues concerning everyone. Such as wanting to overturn the Treaty of Versailles, scapegoating Jews and ending the Depression
- Won support from different sections of society. They promised the working-class jobs, decent wages and good working conditions. They promised the middle class (for them a threat) the destruction of Communism. Farmers were promised good prices for produces and women were promised familial values

Role of Ideology: Ideology was one of the main factor that brought to the rise of the Nazi party, because it attracted and inspired followers:

- The idea of Volksgemeinschaft was spread
- The superiority of the German race
- Anti-Semitism
- The cult of the Leader

Ideology of Nazism was vital in the belief of overthrowing the Treaty of Versailles as well as gaining popularity and eventually acquiring power

→ Nazism also took away the class difference and channeled all population energy in a single nationalistic expansion.

- In 1920 his 25-point programme set out the principles of nationalism, racialism, anti-Semitism and Volksgemeinschaft, It contained both socialism and capitalism so people had a reason to support the Nazis as they could relate with their ideologies.
- Hitler never really stuck to one set of beliefs, however they revolved around a strong sense of anti-Semitism, anti-Communism and lebensraum. Anti-Semitism and anti-Communism were emerging ideas at that time when during a time of hardship people needed someone to blame. Anti-Semitism had always been a popular ideology in Europe where the Jews were seen as misers due to their occupation, which was generally as moneylenders. Most of the time this meant that they were rich and successful again creating a lot of anger towards them. Hitler built on this and blamed the deterioration of Germany, the signing of the Treaty of Versailles and the many economic crises on the Jews. During a time of hatred and uncertainty the German people readily accepted, and even to some extent due to Hitler manipulation skills and use of scapegoats, this chance to blame their problems on someone else.
- Moreover, Hitler believed that Germany should only be then land of the pure Aryan Germans. This sense of importance that the Germans felt was a change to the usual subordination and defeat faced since 1919. The two ideas of Nationalism and Socialism were united in the idea of the 'Volk'. The community was everything to Hitler whereas the individual was nothing.
- The Weimar Republic appeared to be incapable of dealing with the Great Depression and the Nazi Party seemed to be the only chance of saving Germany from communism

METHODS – USE OF FORCE

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METHODS – PROPAGANDA

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CONSOLIDATION AND MAINTENANCE OF POWER

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USE OF LEGAL METHODS

USE OF FORCE

Nazi state fused the police with the SS and Security Service. (Sicherheitsdienst; SD).

- Two of the most radical and ideologically committed Nazi organizations.
- Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, also became the chief of all German police forces.
- His associate, Reinhard Heydrich of the SD.
 - Became at the same time the head of the Security Police, charged with safeguarding the Nazi regime.

In the months after Hitler took power.

- SA and Gestapo agents went from door to door looking for Hitler's enemies.
- They arrested Socialists, Communists, trade union leaders, and others who had spoken out against the Nazi Party; some were murdered.
- By the summer of 1933, the Nazi Party was the only legal political party in Germany. Nearly all organized opposition to the regime had been eliminated. Democracy was dead in Germany.

Night of the Long Knives.

- Many members of the SA, including its leader Ernst Röhm, were demanding that the Nazi party carry out its socialist agenda and that the SA take over the army.
- Hitler could not afford to annoy businessmen or the army, so the SS (Hitler's personal bodyguards) murdered around 400 members of the SA, including Röhm, along with a number of Hitler's other opponents like the previous Chancellor, von Schleicher.

Gestapo

- Nazi secret police force
 - Its job was to monitor the German population, for signs of opposition towards the Nazi rule.
 - Its actions weren't subjected to the legal system.

Sicherheitsdienst (SD)

- Intelligence gathering agency of the SS.
- Its responsibility was the security of Hitler, and other top Nazis.
- It was led by Reinhard Heydrich.

Between 1933-1939, around 225,000 Germans were convicted of political crimes and a further 162,000 were placed in 'protective custody' in prison without trial.

Many parties banned and political opponents imprisoned and/or killed. Nazi infiltration of state (local) governments, seized public buildings and newspaper offices. SA violence forced state governments to resign and were replaced by commissioners loyal to the Nazi party