

Why were the Nazis so successful after 1929?

History - Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1919 - 1939

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The Wall Street Crash

In **October 1929**, the American **stock market collapsed** in an event known as the **Wall Street Crash**. Shares in companies plummeted, meaning banks and businesses lost billions of dollars.

As a result, there was a lack of demand for products, meaning businesses lost even more money. This resulted in many workers being **sacked** and a huge rise in **unemployment**. To make matters worse, this reduced the amount of global trade which lowered the demand for products.

America needed money and asked Germany to immediately repay their loans.



Impact on Germany

Fearing a repeat on 1923, many German people immediately withdrew their money from the banks. On the verge of collapse, the banks had to recall the loans they had provided to the businesses and farmers.

German **exports** had already massively declined meaning businesses were making less money. Facing financial ruin, many businesses either sacked their workers or lowered their wages. The **Great Depression** had arrived in Germany!

By 1933, 6.1 million Germans were unemployed compared to 1.3 million before the **Wall Street Crash**. Real wages for workers had declined by nearly 70% and there was a sharp rise in **crime** and **homelessness**.



The Weimar Republic's response

Successive Weimar governments failed to deal with the Great Depression. The initial **Muller** government (**1928-30**) failed to agree on how to help the unemployed workers. Muller wanted to increase the cost of **Unemployment Insurance** to help cover the out of work. The Reichstag disagreed and Muller resigned.

When **Brüning** became **Chancellor** he changed approach. He decided to reduce **public spending** and increase taxes, a move which angered the majority of the people. When the Reichstag disagreed with Brüning's policies, **President Hindenburg** stepped in and used **Article 48** to support his Chancellor. This made the Weimar Republic appear undemocratic.



Rise of the extreme parties

In the May 1928 elections, the **SPD** had nearly 3 times as many seats in the **Reichstag** as the **KPD** and **Nazi Party** combined. However, by 1932 this was no longer the case.

The Nazi Party became the most popular party in Germany and had amassed almost the same number of votes as the SPD and KPD combined. The failure of the Weimar Republic to solve the issues of the **Great Depression** created a severe lack of confidence in the Republic.

The Nazi Party specifically target this and appeared to be a strong alternative willing to make the changes the people desired.



Success of the NSDAP

By 1932, The NSDAP had become the biggest political party in the Reichstag. By 1933, Hitler had become **chancellor**.

The NSDAP became a success due to their campaign methods. Hitler travelled the country in an aeroplane to personally spread his message. This made the NSDAP look modern and rich. The fact he visited multiple cities showed that the NSDAP cared about its voters. In addition, the NSDAP used **propaganda** which carefully targeted specific demographics. They promised “bread and work” to the working class and played on the fear of communism to the middle class. The NSDAP catered to all the different demographics which made them more popular.



Glossary

Chancellor - The person in charge of running the German Parliament.

Exports - The goods made in a country which are then sold abroad.

Great Depression - A long and severe recession in the economy or market. This normally causes high unemployment and poverty.

Propaganda - Information of a misleading nature used to spread a political message.

Article 48 - Part of the Weimar Constitution which allowed the president to bypass the Reichstag to pass legislation.



Comprehension Questions

1. Why did support for the extreme parties increase after 1929?
2. How did Hitler's election campaign gain the NSDAP more support?
3. How did the SA help the NSDAP gain support?
4. Why did big business financially contribute to the NSDAP?
5. **Challenge** - Explain how a fear of communism made people support the NSDAP.

The fear of communism helped gain support for the NSDAP.

This is because ...

This caused greater support for the NSDAP because ...

Therefore, the fear of communism helped gain support for the NSDAP.

