

KS3 History

Lesson 3 of an enquiry of 4 lessons.

The Great Depression

Enquiry: Why did fascists gain support?

Miss Porter



The Wall Street Crash

In October 1929, the USA's economy suddenly lost lots of its wealth. This event is known as the Wall Street Crash. The crash had a large impact on economies around the world. In Germany, the Wall Street Crash caused a banking crisis. German banks lost so much money that many had to close. As a result, many German people rushed to the banks to withdraw their money from their accounts. The collapse of the banking system in Germany caused an economic collapse in German industry and agriculture. Factory owners and farmers were forced to cut back production or close down their businesses, causing an economic **depression** in Germany.



The Great Depression

The period of economic instability following the Wall Street Crash has been referred to as the 'Great Depression'. In Germany, the depression had a disastrous impact on people's lives as many workers began to lose their jobs following the closure of German industries and farms. By 1933, over six million people were **unemployed** in Germany, including 40% of factory workers. As a result, people found it difficult to afford food, basic necessities and rent. Therefore, homelessness increased during the depression. Through desperation many people turned to violence and criminal activity increased in German cities during the 1930s. Moreover, many of the middle and upper classes suffered as the value of their property and savings crashed.



The Communist Party

Germany was a democracy, but Germany's elected government did not know how to deal with Germany's economic problems. This made the government very unpopular. As life continued to become harder, people began to abandon more moderate parties and look towards extremist parties to overcome their problems.

One extremist party was the Communist Party. The communists believed in sharing wealth and making everybody equal. Therefore, the communists appealed to the working class as they were hardest hit by unemployment and falling wages during the 1930s. The working class saw the communists as the party who would defend their rights and wages against their employers. Between 1928 and 1932, the Communist Party gained one million extra voters.



The Nazi Party

However, support for the Nazi Party grew even quicker than support for the Communist Party. The Nazi Party were an extreme political group in Germany, led by Adolf Hitler. Nazism was very similar to the Italian fascism. Hitler was a strong leader who had an organised and disciplined Party.

The middle classes and landowners were more likely to support the Nazis as they offered to protect their wealth and restore the economy. Moreover, the idea of a communist government scared the middle and upper classes as they did not want their money or land **confiscated**. The Nazis also gained support from leaders of big businesses and farmers as they believed Hitler would best protect their interests.



Hitler's rise to power

As a result of Hitler's promise to restore the economy, the Nazi Party gained further support throughout the 1930s. In 1932, the Nazi Party became the largest political party in Germany after gaining 38% of the votes to the German parliament. In January 1933, Hitler became chancellor of Germany, demonstrating how much support fascist ideas had gained during the Great Depression.



Glossary

Chancellor: The head of government in Germany

Confiscated: taken away

Democracy: a system of government by all the citizens of a country, where everybody has the right to choose their leaders by voting for them

Depression: a period when there is little economic activity and many people are poor or without jobs

Moderate: having or showing opinions about politics that are not extreme

Nationalistic: having the belief one's country is better than others

Unemployed: not having a job



Comprehension questions

1. When did the Wall Street Crash occur?
2. What impact did the Wall Street Crash have on Germany?
3. Why did the Communist Party gain support during the Great Depression?
4. Which groups of people supported the Nazi party during the Great Depression?
5. Challenge question - What fascist beliefs did the Nazi Party have?



Why did the Great Depression cause support for the fascists to grow?

Sentence starters	Key words
<i>During the Great Depression, fascist groups such as the Nazi Party began to gain more support.</i>	<i>Strong leadership</i>
<i>One reason why...</i>	<i>Restore Germany's economy</i>
<i>For example, ...</i>	<i>Wealth</i>
<i>Another reason why...</i>	<i>Savings</i>
	<i>Communism</i>
	<i>Middle classes</i>
	<i>Landowners</i>
	<i>Businesses</i>

