

Nationalism was ~~only~~ an important factor of the failure of democracy in Germany in the period 1918-1934, especially when combined with a significant economic crisis such as the Great Depression in 1929.

The Weimar Republic had never been popular in Germany & the main ^{reason for} ~~cause of~~ this was nationalism. From ~~th~~ its very beginning, democracy was associated with everything that was wrong with Germany - especially the ~~def~~ Germany's defeat in World War I. The very first thing that the democracy had to do was sign the armistice on the 11 Nov. 1918. The blame for Germany's 'shock' defeat ~~was~~ lay with the politicians who later became known as the 'November criminals' as a result of Ludendorff's 'stab-in-the-back' legend, which claimed that Germany's defeat was a conspiracy to do with the new democracy.

The aim of the 'stab-in-the-back' legend was to shift the blame from the army & place it on the democracy. It worked. The German public felt betrayed by the government. The betrayal went further when in 1919, the new Weimar government signed the Treaty of Versailles. As a result of this, Germany lost territory, its army & navy were scaled down & worst of all, Germany had to accept the war guilt clause, saying that Germany was guilty & had to pay reparations - a total of \$40 billion (decided upon in 1921).

The German public longed for the government they had before, when Germany was not 'guilty'. One of the main problems in the Weimar Republic was that they did not effectively remove ~~their~~ opposition to the democracy. Teachers, the judiciary & civil servants all were all strongly nationalistic & strongly anti-democratic.

For example, '^{left}right' criminals were treated much more harshly than 'right' criminals. Even if the charge was murder, people on the 'right' would generally either be found innocent ~~to~~ or receive a lighter sentence than people on the 'left'. Teachers also taught ~~of the dangers of~~ against the democracy - yet nothing was done to suppress this opposition.

In the period from 1924 - 1929, also known as the Stresemann period, things seemed to settle down. Inflation & the hyperinflation of 1923 had been dealt with & survived & under the Dawes Plan, the economy was flourishing. However, it was not as positive as it seemed. An aspect of the Dawes Plan involved reduced reparations so that Germany could continue to pay them off. This upset the German people greatly because Germany was

still paying the reparations & as a result, ~~they~~ Germany was still accepting that they were guilty & had something to repay.

So while ~~the~~ Germany appeared to be flourishing - especially in ~~the~~ theatre, architecture & art - underneath the facade, the German population still believed that their government had & still was betraying them.

Then came the Depression of 1909 when things really began to fall apart. Unemployment was high, food was scarce & the government was ~~unstable~~ clearly unstable. At the same time as the instability of the government was being so evidently demonstrated, the Nazi Party, with Hitler as its leader, was demonstrating control & stability. There were numerous marches through the streets where the Nazis all wore brown shirts &

were in a perfect, orderly formation. The Nazis stood in stark contrast to the Government. People who saw the marches got a sense of the order that the Nazis would be able to impose if they were the head of the government.

In addition to the visual appeal of the Nazis, the public were able to attend ^{party} rallies where they would hear Hitler speak.

Hitler spoke of nationalism & of tearing up the treaty of Versailles, which is exactly what the people wanted. It is important to note that people tend to turn to more radical parties during times of crisis. In addition to the Nazis were the Communist parties on the left whose support had also increased as a result of the depression. However more people turned to the Nazis. Why? It was because

The nationalistic sentiment had always been ~~was~~ a part of the German people. The ideas that Hitler was expressing were similar to those held by a number of German people. Hitler's strategies for returning order seemed logical & there were only very vague hints towards what would come later at this point in time, that ^{the} people did not pick up on as a result of their desperation. Hitler ~~who~~ had spoken for a number of years against the Treaty of Versailles but interestingly, the Nazis never gained a ~~reg~~ majority in Parliament. Perhaps this fact demonstrates the German public's lack of faith in the democratic system.

The Nazi party offered the people a return to the 'old' Germany - a Germany that was

not guilty, did not have to pay reparations. This sentiment had been evident in the German people ever since the Republic was established in 1919.

Therefore, as ~~nature~~ this nationalistic sentiment had always been a part of the German people, it was only natural that they turn towards a ~~part~~ party that spoke of this very sentiment in a time of crisis & not towards a government that to the German people seemed determined to destroy a 'great' nation & prevent it from ever returning to its former glory.

Hence, nationalism was an important cause of the failure of democracy

in Germany in the period 1918-1934.