

Document Packet - Why Did the Nazis Come to Power?

Document 1



MAP 27.4 TERRITORIAL SETTLEMENTS IN EUROPE, 1919-1926

Document 2

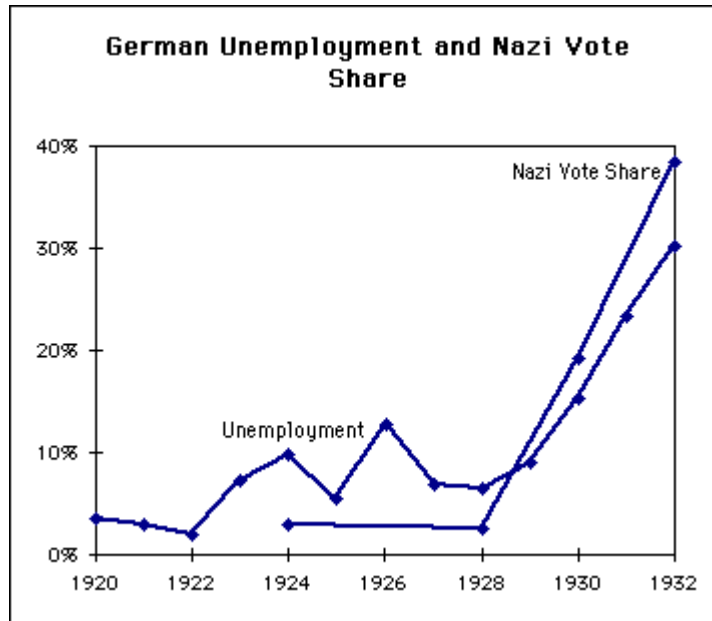


SOURCE: Europe in the Inter-War years from the German point of view.

Document 3



Document 4



Document 5

	<i>May 4, 1924</i>	<i>December 7, 1924</i>	<i>May 20, 1928</i>	<i>September 14, 1930</i>	<i>July 31, 1932</i>	<i>November 6, 1932</i>
Number of Eligible Voters (in millions)	38.4	39.0	41.2	43.0	44.2	44.2
Votes Cast (in millions)	29.7	30.7	31.2	35.2	37.2	35.7
National Socialist German Workers Party	1,918,000 6.6%	908,000 3%	810,000 2.6%	6,407,000 18.3%	13,779,000 37.3%	11,737,000 33.1%
German Nationalist People's Party (Conservative)	5,696,000 19.5%	6,209,000 20.5%	4,382,000 14.2%	2,458,000 7%	2,187,000 5.9%	3,131,000 8.8%
Center Party (Catholic)	3,914,000 13.4%	4,121,000 13.6%	3,712,000 12.1%	4,127,000 11.8%	4,589,000 12.4%	4,230,000 11.9%
Democratic Party (The German State Party)	1,655,000 5.7%	1,921,000 6.3%	1,506,000 4.9%	1,322,000 3.8%	373,000 1%	339,000 1%
Social Democratic Party	6,009,000 20.5%	7,886,000 26%	9,153,000 29.8%	8,576,000 24.5%	7,960,000 21.6%	7,251,000 20.4%
Communist Party	3,693,000 12.6%	2,712,000 9%	3,265,000 10.6%	4,590,000 13.1%	5,370,000 14.3%	5,980,000 16.9%

Document 6



SOURCE: Germany money, 1923.

Document 7

The French occupation of the Ruhr had swung German opinion to the Right. That encouraged Hitler and his Fascists in Bavaria and, on November 9th, they struck and tried a coup from the Right. But the Government of the Republic in Berlin at last acted against the Right also. Ludendorff and Hitler escaped and hid, while fourteen of their followers were killed. The stabilization of German currency followed with financial help from America, and things temporarily got on an even keel again. Here I end my story, for I am only relating what I saw and experienced in Germany and from now on I saw and experienced no more.

My years in Germany enabled me to see and report about the weakness of parliamentary and democratic institutions existing there after defeat in the First World War. The Majority Social-Democrats allowed themselves to become prisoners of the military reaction and of the Officers' Corps. The Communists lost their best and wisest leader, Rosa Luxemburg, by murder and deteriorated into a rabble which accepted orders from Moscow, and Moscow was quite ignorant of German affairs. The whole history of Germany during this time was one frightful tragedy which led to Armageddon Number Two.

I left Germany with a feeling of despair, the very opposite to what I had experienced when I left Russia with a feeling of hope and enthusiasm. But perhaps I was now getting more experienced and possibly more sceptical of humanity than I had been when I was in Russia. That does not, however, entirely explain my attitude. The fact was that I was beginning to feel that Germany had to go through another trial to get rid of her political past and become a modern democracy.

SECONDARY SOURCE: *My Three Revolutions*, Morgan Philips Price, 1969.

Document 8

Germany is in terrible condition this year. This is particularly true of the working masses, who are so undernourished that tuberculosis is having a rich harvest, particularly of adolescent children. Gambling in the mark has been the great indoor sport of the capitalists for months, and consequently food has increased by 25 to 100 per cent. I have lived in the homes of workers; they live on boiled potatoes, black bread with lard spread on it instead of butter, and rotten beer. In one hotel, the maid who built the fire fainted in our room. Exhaustion was the cause. We talked with her later and learned that she worked 17 hours a day and makes 95 marks a month - about 50 cents. She lives in the hotel, sleeping in one room with all the other maids - a tiny, dirty little place. They receive their food also - clothing they buy themselves - out of the 95 marks a month! This means they all become prostitutes and haunt the streets whenever they have time. Or they pick up "clients" in the hotel.

Here in Bavaria, I am in the stronghold of reaction. At night I am often awakened by the military commands and the march of men (Monarchists) who are training at night in the forests and in the mountains. It is a gruesome feeling - this secret training of men to kill other men. And these men being trained are peasants and working-men - not the class we usually think of. In Saxony the same thing occurs; there at night the men who are under training are also workingmen, but the leaders are Communists. And they are preparing to kill their kind also. Sometimes I see no difference between the two. What is this business everywhere - men preparing to murder their own kind for the sake of an idea? Not their own idea either, but that of men who use them as tools to set themselves in power. We only wait for the day when the two groups will start massacring each other. Both groups are bitterly opposed to passive resistance as a method; it isn't bloody or sadistic enough.

SOURCE: Agnes Smedley letter to Florence Lennon, December 31, 1921; another on August 11, 1923.

Document 9

What is the nature of a nation's internal power? Three things are involved: First, a people has intrinsic value in its race. That is the primal value. A people that has the best blood but does not understand it, squandering it, receives no protection from its intrinsic value. And the purity of blood means nothing if the nation can be persuaded of the absurdity that its blood is worthless. Such a deepest value can be present, but not recognized. Individual people today are placed in large groups that no longer enable them to see this value. To the contrary, their program almost claims that there is no value in blood. They see race as completely insignificant.

Second, internal power depends, aside from the value of blood, on the abilities that such a nation still has. A nation cannot be called impotent as long as it is able to produce the minds that are necessary to solve the problems crying out for solution. We can measure the greatness of a people by the minds it produces. That too is a value, but only when it is recognized as a value. If a nation has the ability to produce great minds a thousand times over, but has no appreciation for the value of these minds and excludes them from its political life, these great men are of no use. It can therefore collapse, in the best case perhaps passing on its inventions and ideas to the minds of other nations, teaching these nations, but no longer is it a nation called to lead itself.

The third value hidden within a nation is the drive to self assertion. A people that has lost this has almost given up its place in the world, in which each living creature owes its existence only to the eternal striving to rise higher. If a nation today proclaims the theory that it will find happiness in lasting peace, and attempts to live according to that theory, it will one day inevitably succumb to this most basic form of cowardice. Pacifism is the clearest form of cowardice, possessing no willingness to fight for anything at all.

The same person today who preaches limiting the number of children to the nation murders others so that he himself may live....

...62 million people have an impossible amount of land. There are 20 million "too many." This nation cannot survive in the long term. It must find a way out, which lies neither in the size of its population nor the amount of its territory. Divided in its energies, it must become the victim of those we all know to be our masters. Can that change in the coming years? No!....

SOURCE: Hitler in a speech at a Nuremberg Nazi Party rally in 1927.

Document 10

Exchange rates, US Dollar to Mark, 1918-1923

Jan. 1918	5.21	Mar. 1923	21,190.00
Jan. 1919	8.20	Apr. 1923	24,475.00
Jan. 1920	64.80	May 1923	47,670.00
Jan. 1921	64.91	June 1923	109,966.00
Jan. 1922	191.81	July 1923	353,412.00
April 1922	291.00	Aug. 1923	4,620,455.00
July 1922	493.22	Sept. 1923	98,860,000.00
Oct. 1922	3,180.96	Oct. 1923	25,260,000,000.00
Jan. 1923	17,972.00	Nov. 1923	2,193,600,000,000.00
Feb. 1923	27,918.00	Dec. 1923	4,200,000,000,000.00

SOURCE: Gerald D. Feldman, *The Great Disorder*, Oxford : UP 1997, p.5.

Document 11

The essential character of the November-Republic is to be seen in the comings and goings to London, to Spa, to Paris and Genoa. Subserviency towards the enemy, surrender of the human dignity of the German, pacifist cowardice, tolerance of every indignity, readiness to agree to everything until nothing more remains. This November Republic bore the stamp of the men who made it. The name 'November criminals' will cling to these folk throughout the centuries....

For us it was a filthy crime against the German people, a stab in the back of the German nation. The middle class could not take up arms against it because the middle class did not understand the whole revolution. It was necessary to start a new struggle and to incite against the Marxist despoilers of the people who did not even belong to the German race - which is where the Marxist problem is linked with the race problem, forming one of the most difficult and profound questions of our time....

SOURCE: Adolf Hitler, Munich, April 28, 1922 and speaking at his trial in Munich, February 26, 1924.

Document 12



SOURCE: *The Pillars of Society*, George Grosz, 1926.

Document 13

Fabricated version of the German defeat in World War I that gained popularity under the Weimar Republic. It claimed that the German army had not been defeated on the field of battle but rather that the home front had forced the military leaders to lay down their arms, as a result of the defeatist actions taken by the liberals, the Socialists, and the Jews. This fabrication was without any basis in fact, but it provided motivation for the Freikorps, the paramilitary organisations that sprang up. Both in the Weimar Republic and in the Third Reich, it was the version accepted by nationalist circles and by all those who sought revenge for Germany's defeat in the war and for the peace agreement that Germany had been compelled to sign. Much of the support for this falsehood and its propagation came from Gen. Erich Ludendorff, one of the outstanding German commanders in World War I, who in fact had taken the lead in pressing the German government to ask for an immediate cease-fire in the fall of 1918.

SECONDARY SOURCE: Definition of "stab-in-the-back" myth from:
www.history-of-the-holocaust.org/LIBARC/LEXICON/LexMain.html