

Analyse the methods used and the conditions which helped in the rise to power of Adolf Hitler.

Definitions:

- Methods: Strengths of Hitler and Nazi Party
- Conditions: Weakness of Weimar government and Great Depression

Conditions of Weimar government

- From the beginning: weak genuine public support
- Lost the war despite Germans being promised victory → Already there is from the public (not exactly directed at previous rulers as the elites quickly pass on the governing power to the Weimar before they suffer the post-war consequences)
- Because of TOV → Viewed as November criminals for having 'stabbed' Germany in the back
- Harsh terms of treaty → German humiliation - resentment towards government

Ineffective political structure

- Proportional representation of Weimar constitution → Number of seats in party depends on % of votes they got during elections
- Therefore, no party gained majority in constitution
- Conflict of different ideologies among several parties → Hard to make decisions which everyone was satisfied with
- 1919 to 1929: 20 coalition governments in total → Government was divided and inefficient
- Seen by public as ineffective → Extremist ruling like authoritarian government thus more attractive

Limitation:

- Government still held on between 1919 to 1933
- Majority of Germans were repelled by extremist Nazi party's use of violence in the streets
 - 1923 Beer Hall Putsch
- Conditions not desperate enough to support extremist parties so quickly

Great Depression

Prior

- 1923 Hyperinflation
- Stresemann quickly solved it with Dawes Plan in 1924 - aimed to settle WW1 reparations problem
- Young Plan in 1929 replaced it
- Germany now heavily economically dependent on America, thus collapsed when America's economy crashed

Great Depression

- 1932: 6 million unemployed
- Prices shot up overnight

- Germans still sore about hyperinflation → all too ready to push the blame on government
- Basic necessities threatened – Desperate situation
- Nazi support increased → 3.0% in 1924 to 37.3% in 1932

Limitation:

- Nazis not the only extremist party → Hitler's abilities had to come into play to gain public support

Strengths of Hitler and Nazi Party

Ideology

- Lebensraum → restore German pride and power
- Social Darwinism → Preserve Aryan master race
- Anti-democratic → For conservative upper classes
- Anti-capitalist → For working class
- Attractive to different sectors of society – identify with as many people as possible in **desperate times** so as to maximise support base to rise to power

Relationship with elites

- Elites knew of Hitler's popularity with public → Elected him as Chancellor so they could directly control him and therefore his supporters
- Franz von Papen → Convinced President Hindenburg to elect Hitler as Chancellor
- Hitler was cunning enough to prevent them from manipulating him

Limitation:

- Contradiction in Hitler's ideology → Collective spirit vs anti-Communism
 - Conditions were desperate enough for public to readily accept whatever he promised them
- Nazi support decreased by 4.2% from July 1932 to November 1932
- Economic conditions improving – No need for extremist party