Earthquake Essay, Research Paper

Why did a dictatorship emerge in Germany in 1933 and not

before?

The Weimar Republic was bound to fail sooner or later given its weakness at birth and the

values it was associated with however as to why Hitler was able to take power in 1933

and not before is an interesting question that requires much thought and attention. It has

being proven throughout history that for extreme parties such as the NSDAP or the

Communist party to gain mass support there has to be an economic crisis. The Nazi party

was the one which eventually turned out ahead of the others, partly because of their

leader, Adolf Hitler and partly because of their wider appeal and superior organisation.

After it was proven that to rise to power through revolutions and coups (Spartacist revolt,

Munich Beer Cellar putsch) was not practicable, economic crises offered these groups

their only means to rise to power. There were economic crises in 1923 and during the

1929 – 1933 period, the earlier period was simply too early in the extreme parties histories

for them to gain any serious support however the later one provided these parties with real

opportunities to gain popularity. Statiscally, Hitler was most popular in 1932, yet it was in

1933 that he became chancellor, to explain this one must look at the political context of

the time which suggests that Hitler rose to power not because he was destined to as the

Nazi propaganda suggest but because he was greatly aided by circumstances and other

people?s errors.

The only secure way to power is legal and for a normal political party to rise to power it

must either get a majority in the Reishtag thus establishing it?s own government and leader

or set up an alliance with other parties so that between them they have a majority; extreme

groups failed to do this in the years preceding 1933 and that is why no dictatorship

emerged in those years. It is a fact that extreme parties need an economic recession to do

well during an election, in 1928, the NSDAP get 12 seats and the KPD 54 while in 1930,

the NSDAP get 107 seats and the KPD 77. The first years of the Weimar Republic, up

until 1923, were very unstable and could have profited the communists if they had chosen

the legal path to power, the NSDAP were still relatively small but also tried to seize power

with the Munich Beer Cellar putsch which failed miserably. A dictatorship did not emerge

from this period because of the difficulty involved in seizing power through a coup or

putsch; this was soon recognised by both Hitler after his period in prison and the

communists. During the 1923 – 1929 period these extreme groups did poorly in elections

as Germany under the influence of foreign loans and strong leadership from Stressmann

started to recover economically, however in 1929 with the Wall Street crash Germany

entered a period much worse than the 1923 recession where the main grievance had been

inflation. As 5 million Germans went to the streets in search of a job and nobody thought

it could get any worse the major banks closed down in 1931 and the Germans were even

worse off thus supplying the extreme groups with newly-found mass support so that

during the elections called by Br?ning in 1930 the Nazis get 107 seats, more than any

other party.

When, in 1933, Hitler finally becomes chancellor, it is not because he finally has a majority

in the Reichtag, in fact he had less seats than in 1932, it is because of Von Papen thirst for

revenge and other lucky circumstances without which the Third Reich may have never

existed. The affair which was to bring Hitler the chancellorship began in 1930 when

General Von Scleicher put Br?ning in power, he did this by convincing the president,

Hidenberg to appoint him and allow him to rule by presidential decree. Br?ning made the

situation worse by intensifying the economic crisis for particular political ends of which

one of them was to persuade the Allies that Germany could no longer pay reparations. He

also called for new elections in 1930 which was foolish considering it was in the middle of

an economic crisis and as he seemed to forget extremes become dangerously popular

during economic recessions. Hidenberg removed him in 1932. Von Scleicher?s next

puppet was Von Papen, again Schleicher convinced Hidenberg to allow Papen to rule by

presidential decree, however Von Papen proved to have opinions of his own and refused

to obey Von Schleicher who just a few months after Von Papen?s appointment decided to

persuade Hidenberg to stop using his emergency powers to support Von Papen, the result

was that Von Papen could no longer pass any laws or policies and was forced to step

down, the next chancellor was of course Von Schleicher himself. He recognised the

danger the Nazi?s presented but did nothing to counter it, after a while he started to lose

support among the industrialists and the army and finally Hidenberg who blamed him for

undermining the previous chancellor Von Papen who meanwhile, infuriated by Von

Scleicher?s tricks started to plot what would eventually bring down the Weimar Republic.

He asked Hitler if he would like to ally himself with the DVP (Papen?s party) and become

chancellor while he would be the vice ? chancellor however as part of the deal only 3 nazis

would be in the cabinet. He along with Hidenberg thought that Hitler was boxed in and

would become their puppet, how wrong they were! Thus Hitler was able to get the

chancellorship in 1933 and not before not because of his political genius but because of

other characters such as Von Papen and Von Scleicher.

? Nazism came to power as a result of as a result of miscalculation by conservative

politicians and the military after a large number, but by no means a majority of the

electorate, had put it in a position to contend for power ? (Salmon). The Nazis might have

had a wide appeal, a brilliant leader and an efficient and organised party but for the actual

victory it was down to lucky circumstances and greedy and vengeful men. Of course one

could have argued that the fall of the Weimar Republic was inevitable yet it didn?t fall

before 1933 and that was because of people and not social trends which would have

dictated that Hitler be chancellor before then so that this might go on to prove that

nothing is ever inevitable in history.

Bibliography

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