

The Rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party Documents Analysis

Directions: On back, explain how each document helps the reader understand the appeal of Hitler and the Nazi Party for average Germans in the 1920s & 1930s. **DO NOT JUST SUMMARIZE DOCUMENTS.**

Document 1

German woman recalling the economic hardships of Germany in 1923 when she was a university student in Munich.

The whole population had suddenly turned into maniacs. Everyone, was buying, selling, speculating, bargaining, and dollar, dollar, dollar, was the magic word which dominated every conversation, every newspaper, every poster in Germany. Nobody understood what was happening. There seemed to be no sense, no rules in the mad game but one had to take part in it if one did not want to be trampled underfoot at once....The middle class was hurt more than any other, the savings of a lifetime and their small fortunes melted into a few [pennies]. They had to sell their most precious belongings for ten [million] inflated marks to buy a bit of food or an absolutely necessary coat, and their pride and dignity were bleeding out of many wounds. Bitterness remained for ever in their hearts. Full of hatred, they accused the international financiers, the Jews and Communists – their old enemies – of having exploited their distress. They never forgot and never forgave and were the first to lend a willing ear to Hitler's fervent preaching.

Document 2

Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 1925.

Germany will have to fight for its existence. It will neither obtain it by signatures on the Treaty [of Versailles], nor be able to defend its existence if the treaty is followed. For its existence and protection, it will need the very things that people today think they can do without. The more incomparable and powerful [Germany's] form and content will be, the greater will be the envy and resistance of its enemies. Germany's best defense will lie not in its weapons, but in its citizens; no fortress walls will protect it, but a living wall of men and women filled with supreme love of their fatherland and fanatical national enthusiasm....

It (the Nazi philosophy) by no means believes in an equality of races, but along with their difference it recognizes their higher or lesser value and feels itself obligated to promote the victory of the better and stronger, and demand the subordination of the inferior and weaker in accordance with the eternal will that dominates this universe.

Document 3

Nazi Ambassador to Canada in a pamphlet entitled "*I Had Given Him My Heart*," (1938) referring to his conversion to Nazism during a political rally in the early 1930s.

Hitler's words were like lightning. When he spoke of the disgrace of Germany, I felt ready to spring on any enemy...glancing around, I saw that his magnetism was holding these thousands as one...I was a man of 32, weary of disgust and disillusionment, a wanderer seeking a cause...a yearner after the heroic without a hero. The intense will of the man, the passion of his sincerity, seemed to flow from him into me. I experienced a feeling that could be likened only to a religious conversion...I felt sure that no-one who heard Hitler that night that he was the man of destiny...I had given him my heart.

Document 4

Austrian journalist. From "*Why the German Republic Fell*," 1935.

Seven million men and women (one third of the wage-earning people) were unemployed... the middle class swept away: that was the position about one year after the climax of economic crisis (1931). Despite their best efforts, the republican leaders had rapidly produced the most dreadful poverty.... In the first year of the crisis the number of Nazi representatives elected to the Reichstag rose from 8 to 107. A year later this figure was doubled. In the same time the Communists captured half of the votes of the German Social Democratic Party and the representation of the middle class practically speaking disappeared. In January, 1933, Hitler was appointed [Chancellor]; he attained power, as I said before, quite legally. All forms of democracy were observed until Hitler gained power. It sounds paradoxical but it was in fact absolutely legal.

Document 5

German Newspaper account of the Nazi Party Nuremberg Rally in September 1936.

"...We have witnessed many great marches and ceremonies. But none of them were more thrilling, and at the same time more inspiring, than yesterday's gathering of 140,000 political leaders (heads of various local Nazi party groups) who were addressed by the Führer (Hitler) at night, on the Zeppelin Meadow which floodlights had made bright as day.... Twenty straight columns cut across the square.... There are innumerable swastika flags flutter in the evening breeze, torn from the darkness by the floodlights, and providing a sharp contrast to the pitch black nocturnal sky. The Zeppelin Field proves to be too small. The stands will not hold the vast stream of people who are moving in with out pause....The Führer is there! Reich Organizational Leader Dr. Ley gives him a report of the men who are standing in parade formation...Dr. Ley speaks: 'We believe in a Lord God, who directs us and guides us and who has sent you, My Führer.' These are the final words of the Dr. Ley and are underlined by the thunderous applause that rises from 140,000 spectators and that lasts for minutes."

Explain how each document helps you understand the appeal of Hitler and the Nazi Party to average Germans
Document 1

Document 2

Document 3

Document 4

Document 5