The Pull of Nazism

Why Nazi ideas attracted support in 1930s Germany

SS24.HOS.5d "Explain why many Germans were actively drawn to Nazi ideology."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two Nazi promises and circle two conditions or beliefs that made those promises appealing. Put a star beside one detail that reveals the harm behind an appeal.

Promises, Belonging, and Fear

1 In 1932, a German voter might pass a closed factory on the way to a polling place. The Great Depression had left about six million Germans unemployed, and many others feared losing work or savings. Germany's democratic government, the Weimar Republic, struggled to ease the crisis. Nazis offered more than a complaint: they promised jobs, strong leadership, and swift action. Their message could attract people who thought democratic parties argued while families suffered. Hardship alone did not make someone a Nazi, however. Communists and other parties also won support, and many Germans rejected the Nazis.

2 National pride also mattered. After World War I, the Treaty of Versailles had assigned Germany responsibility for war damages, required reparations, and taken away territory. Nazi speakers promised to overturn the treaty and restore German power. They also claimed that a united "national community" would rise above class conflict. This promise had a cruel boundary: Nazi ideology defined belonging by race and targeted Jews, whom it falsely blamed for Germany's problems. Antisemitism had a long history in Europe, so this lie could find a receptive audience. Some supporters embraced the racism itself, not just the promise of recovery.

3 At rallies, banners, music, and carefully staged speeches made Nazi politics feel like a movement rather than an ordinary party. Posters and newspapers repeated simple messages, while Nazi groups offered some young people a sense of purpose and belonging. Fear helped too: people who dreaded a communist revolution could see the Nazis as defenders of order, even when Nazi street fighters used violence themselves. These attractions help explain why many people actively voted, organized, or campaigned for the party before Hitler became chancellor in January 1933. They do not excuse its attacks on democracy or its persecution of those it excluded.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why might the Nazi promise of jobs and swift action have appealed to some voters in 1932?

2. Why did the promise to overturn the Treaty of Versailles attract some Germans?

3. Why could the promise of a "national community" attract supporters, and what made that promise harmful?

4. How could rallies and fear of communism each lead someone to support the Nazis actively?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a museum is displaying a ticket to a Nazi rally held in 1932. Write a 70 to 90 word label explaining why someone might have wanted to attend. Connect at least two appeals from the passage, and distinguish Nazi claims from the harm caused by their racist ideology.

ANSWER KEY

The Pull of Nazism

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.HOS.5d

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two Nazi promises and circle two conditions or beliefs that made those promises appealing. Put a star beside one detail that reveals the harm behind an appeal. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why might the Nazi promise of jobs and swift action have appealed to some voters in 1932?	**About six million Germans were unemployed, and the democratic government struggled to ease the crisis. Some voters wanted leaders who seemed ready to act quickly.**
2	Why did the promise to overturn the Treaty of Versailles attract some Germans?	**The treaty required reparations and took away territory. Some Germans wanted to regain national power and pride.**
3	Why could the promise of a "national community" attract supporters, and what made that promise harmful?	**It offered unity across class lines, but Nazi ideology excluded people by race and falsely blamed Jews for Germany's problems. Some supporters embraced that racism.**
4	How could rallies and fear of communism each lead someone to support the Nazis actively?	**Rallies offered excitement and a sense of belonging. Someone afraid of a communist revolution might also support Nazis because they claimed to defend order, despite their own violence.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

This rally ticket suggests why a struggling voter might have attended in 1932. With jobs scarce and democratic leaders unable to end the crisis, Nazi promises of work and quick action could sound convincing. Music and crowds could offer belonging, while speeches about national strength appealed to people angered by the Versailles treaty. But the rally's excitement concealed the movement's racism: its supposed "national community" excluded Jews and blamed them falsely for Germany's troubles. Many Germans rejected that message.

Accept explanations that connect a specific Nazi appeal to a condition or belief described in the passage. Responses should treat Nazi claims as claims, not facts, and should not imply that all Germans supported the Nazis.