

# Nazi Germany

## The start of the Nazis:

### The German Workers' Party and the start of the Nazis:

- After fighting in World War One, Hitler returned to Munich and set on a path that eventually led him to become the leader of the Nazi party.
- (1919) Hitler joined the German Workers Party (DAP), a right wing political group led by Anton Drexler.
- (1920) Hitler became the party's leading public speaker and the head of propaganda.
- (1920) The group changed its name to the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP) - or the Nazis for short.
- (1921) Hitler was elected Party Chairman and the leader of the Nazis.

### Early Nazi beliefs - The 25-Point Programme:

- Under Hitlers leadership, the Nazi party quickly developed a 25-Point Programme. This was a list of policies the Nazis promised to introduce if it came to power. Below are the key beliefs contained in the 25-Point Programme:
- A strong Germany - the Treaty of Versailles should be abolished and all German-speaking people united in one country.
- Führer - the idea that there should be a single leader (called the Führer) with complete power rather than a democracy.
- Social Darwinism - the idea that the Aryan race was superior and Jews were "subhuman". The Aryan race refers to people of European descent, often people with blonde hair and blue eyes.
- Autarky - the idea that Germany should be economically self-sufficient.
- Danger - the idea that Germany was in danger from communists and Jews, who had to be abolished.
- Lebensraum - the need for 'living space' for the German nation to expand.

### The appeal of the Nazis:

- In the 1920's, the Nazi tried to appeal to a lot of different members of society. They had policies that were:
- Socialist:
  - Farmers would be given their land
  - Pensions would improve
  - Public industries such as electricity and water should be owned by the state
- Nationalist:
  - All German-speaking people should be united in one country
  - The Treaty of Versailles should be abolished
  - There should be special laws for foreigners
- Racist:
  - Jews should not be German citizens
  - Immigration should be stopped

- Fascist:
  - Focused on creating a strong central government
  - Government control of the newspapers

### The role and impact of the SA:

- In 1921 Hitler assembled a large group of unemployed young men and former soldiers known as the Sturmabteilung (the SA) as the Nazis private army. They gained the nickname "Brownshirts" after their brown shirted uniform.
- Their role was to protect Nazi party meetings, march in Nazi rallies and intimidate political opponents by breaking up their meetings.
- They began to intimidate voters into voting for the Nazi Party
- However, the Nazis were not the only organisation to have a paramilitary group. The communists had similar elements.
- By 1932, the SA had 400,000 members. This number swelled to an estimated two million by the time Hitler came to power in 1933.

### The Munich Putsch:

#### Causes of the Munich Putsch (1923):

- In November 1923, Hitler tried to take advantage of the hyperinflation crisis facing the Weimar government by trying to launch a revolution in Munich known as the Munich Putsch. Hitler saw this time as the perfect opportunity to take power, but poor planning and misjudgement resulted in failure and the subsequent imprisonment of Adolf Hitler.
- By 1923, the Nazi party has 55,000 members and was stronger than ever before, which gave Hitler the confidence to try and overthrow the Weimar government.
- In September 1923, the Weimar government had called off the general workers strike and German nationalists were furious with the government.
- Hitler had his own huge army of SA members, but he knew he would lose control of them if he didn't provide them with specific tasks to do.
- Hitler wanted to copy Mussolini - an Italian fascist leader - who had come to power in Italy in 1922 by marching in on Rome.

#### Summary of the Munich Putsch:

- Hitler collected members of the SA and told them to be ready to rebel. On the night of the 8th of November 1923, Hitler and 600 SA members bursted into a meeting with Kahr and Lasso (two nationalist politicians who had previously called off a rebellion) that was held at a local Beer Hall. Hitler forced them to agree to rebel while holding them at gunpoint- and then let them go home. The SA took over the army headquarters and the offices of the local newspapers.
- The next day, the 9th of November 1923, Hitler and the SA went into Munich. However, Kahr had called the police and army reinforcements who were ready in Munich. In a short scuffle, the police killed 16 members of the SA.
- Hitler fled, but was arrested two days later.

## Consequences of the Munich Putsch:

Short term failure	Long term success
The Nazi Party was banned, and Hitler was prevented from speaking in public until 1927.	He was sentenced to prison in April and was out by December. During this time he wrote "Mein Kampf" (My Struggle), a propaganda book setting out new Nazi beliefs. Millions of Germans read it and his ideas became very well-known.
Hitler was tried for treason and got sentenced to five years in prison.	As the judge gave him such a light sentence, it became clear that people in positions of authority had sympathy for Hitler and what he had tried to do.
	Hitler used the publicity to his advantage and he reorganised the Nazi party so it could take part in elections. He realised he could never come to power by revolution and that he would have to use democratic means.

## Development of the Nazi Party:

### The Nazi Party rebuilds (1924-1929):

- Once released from prison, Hitler committed the Nazis to democratic politics and he began to take part in elections, reorganise the party, strengthen his authority as leader and built up a national party structure.
- The party was growing in size - its membership had increased from 27,000 in 1925 to 130,000 in 1929. Despite this, the Nazis struggled to win seats in the Reichstag (German Parliament).

Election date	Seats won by the Nazis	Total number of seats in the Reichstag
May 1924	32	472
December 1924	14	493
May 1928	12	491

- **Structure:** the decision to pursue power through democratic methods meant the party needed a national structure to attract members, develop policies and campaign. Hitler put this in place in 1925.

HITLER  
 THE SS  
 LEADERSHIP CORPS  
 THE SA  
 PARTY MEMBERSHIP  
 HITLER YOUTH

- **Propaganda:** Hitler used his book "Mein Kampf" as a form of propaganda. He included specific points that would appeal to different members of society.