

# Hitler's Rise to Power and the Youth of Germany

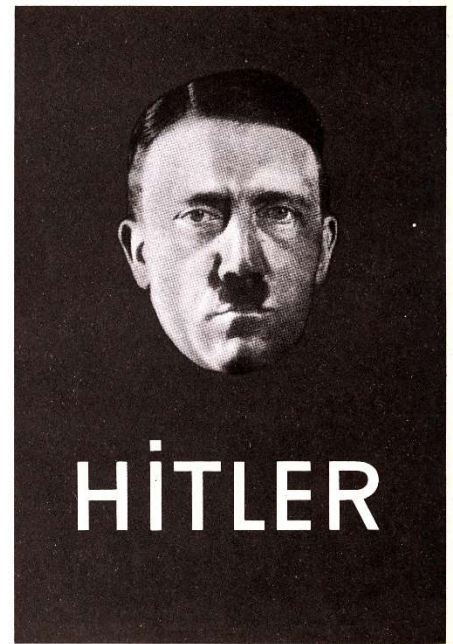
- In 1930, 70% of Nazi Party (National Socialist German Workers' Party, German: *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* or *NSDAP*) members were under the age of 40.

What does this mean?

Aryan – Believed to be a community<sup>1</sup> who were thought to have settled in prehistoric times in ancient Iran and the northern Indian subcontinent. The Nazi Party believed that the Aryans were a superior *race* of people that were forced from India and settled in the lands now known as Germany. The Nazi Party believed that German people were descended from this community and enacted racist policies to preserve what they saw as their claim to being an *Aryan Race*.

Propaganda - a message (using all kinds of different media) aimed at influencing the opinions or behavior of people.

- The Nazi Party made effective use of propaganda, including new media and technology available to them in the 1920s & 1930s, to spread their message across Germany:
  - Thousands of audio recordings of Hitler's speeches were put into circulation.
  - Hitler was the first political leader to use an aeroplane as transportation (Even though he didn't like air travel) – allowing him to cover huge distances in short periods of time.
  - Huge rallies were organized to encourage huge crowds to gather in support of the Nazi Party (Nuremburg Rallies).



Poster of Hitler used during the 1932 election campaign. What information is given?

<sup>1</sup> This belief is now disputed – *Encyclopedia Britannica* states “... a growing number of scholars have rejected both the Aryan invasion hypothesis and the use of the term Aryan as a racial designation, suggesting that the Sanskrit term *arya* (“noble” or “distinguished”), the linguistic root of the word, was actually a social rather than an ethnic epithet.” *Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Aryan." Encyclopedia Britannica, August 22, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Aryan>.*

- The *Sturmabteilung* (*Storm Division*, aka “*Brown Shirts*”), or **SA**, were created as a paramilitary wing of the Nazi Party in 1921. A group comprised of largely thuggish and “working class” men, by 1933 there were 2,000,000 members of the SA (compared to only 100,000 members Germany’s professional army).
- The *Schutzstaffel* (*Protection Squadron*), or **SS**, were created as a major paramilitary organisation under Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party in 1925. This group was largely comprised of middle-class, or upper-class men, who came under the leadership of Heinrich Himmler from 1929-1945. The SS would become the primary perpetrators of the Holocaust. Unlike the SA, the SS were exclusively loyal to Hitler.
  - Hugo Boss, a member of the Nazi Party since 1931 and supporter of the SS, was engaged to design the distinctive black uniforms of the regiment. The tailored uniforms were designed to appeal to men. Eventually, the Hugo Boss company produced uniforms for the SS, as well as the brown SA shirts, the black-and-brown uniforms of the *Hitler Youth*, the postal service, the national railroad, and later the German Army.
- Hitler knew he had to manipulate public opinion in order to take control of the country. Following the failed 1924 *Beer Hall Putsch* (attempted violent overthrow of the Bavarian Government), Hitler was “imprisoned” for 8 months. During this time, he dictated his book *Mein Kampf* – a book that outlined his vision for Germany and Nazism.
  - *Mein Kampf* declared that “... all effective propaganda must ... harp ... until the last member of the public understands what you want them to understand.”



“German ‘Nazi’ Swastika Flag,”  
 Digital Public Library of America,  
<https://dp.la/item/a35643d88465504cf3090c1211d69f5c>.

- Appropriated by Hitler as part of the “brand” for the Nazi Party, the swastika quickly becomes the preeminent Nazi symbol (and remains linked to this period of history in the minds of many nations to this day). The swastika (used by other right-wing groups at the time) was formally adopted by the Nazi Party in 1920.
  - The swastika is an ancient symbol used by civilizations across the globe (past and present).
  - Before its use by the Nazi Party, many Europeans associated the swastika with good luck, long life, and general auspiciousness.
- From 1924-1933, the Nazi Party’s popularity in Germany increased, particularly following the economic, social, and political collapse of Weimar Germany during the Great Depression.

NSDAP federal election results (1924–1933)<sup>[85]</sup>

Election	Votes			Seats		Notes
	No.	%	+/-	No.	+/-	
<b>May 1924</b> (as National Socialist Freedom Movement)	1,918,300	6.5 (No. 6)		32 / 472		Hitler in prison
<b>December 1924</b> (as National Socialist Freedom Movement)	907,300	3.0 (No. 8)	▼ 3.5	14 / 493	▼ 18	Hitler released from prison
<b>May 1928</b>	810,100	2.6 (No. 9)	▼ 0.4	12 / 491	▼ 2	
<b>September 1930</b>	6,409,600	18.3 (No. 2)	▲ 15.7	107 / 577	▲ 95	After the financial crisis
<b>July 1932</b>	13,745,000	37.3 (No. 1)	▲ 19.0	230 / 608	▲ 123	After Hitler was candidate for presidency
<b>November 1932</b>	11,737,000	33.1 (No. 1)	▼ 4.2	196 / 584	▼ 34	
<b>March 1933</b>	17,277,180	43.9 (No. 1)	▲ 10.8	288 / 647	▲ 92	During Hitler's term as Chancellor of Germany

Eberhard Kolb, *The Weimar Republic*, (New York: Routledge, 2005). Posted in Wikipedia.

Uh-oh – what happened here? What does this tell you?

- Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany (equivalent to prime minister) on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1933.

- The Nazi Government immediately starts making transformative changes to German society:

1919-1933

"I swear loyalty to the Reich's constitution and pledge, that I as a courageous soldier always want to protect the German Reich and its legal institutions, (and) be obedient to the Reich President and to my superiors."

Changing  
the Oaths  
– what  
does this  
do?



Soldiers in the German Armed Forces swearing an oath to Hitler in 1934

I swear to God this holy oath  
that I shall render unconditional obedience  
to the Leader of the German Reich and people,  
Adolf Hitler, supreme commander of the armed forces,  
and that as a brave soldier I shall at all times be prepared  
to give my life for this oath.

— Wehrmacht Oath of Loyalty to Adolf Hitler

1934-1945

- Herman Georing created the *Geheime Staatspolizei*, or *Gestapo*, in 1933 – reorganizing the various secret police services of German's largest state – Prussia – into what would become the official secret police of Nazi Germany. In 1934 the oversight of the *Gestapo* was given to Heinrich Himmler.
  - A culture of spying and reporting on fellow Germans is established - In essence, everyone was now an informant.
- *Dachau Concentration Camp*, formerly an unused gunpowder and munitions factory, is established by Heinrich Himmler near Munich in March 1933 for political prisoners of the Nazi Government.

- In April 1933, *The Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service* removes Jewish People from government service.
- In May 1933, the newly formed Nazi Government organized a huge book burning ceremony to rid Germany of Jewish, socialist, and other writers that they felt were against Germany.
  - *All Quiet on the Western Front* (the Netflix movie is based on this book) was banned. Why?
- In June 1933, Hitler introduced a bill to encourage Germans to marry and have children with other Germans. Loans were given to young married couples (these loans did not have to be repaid once the couple had 4 children).
- In July 1933 the Nazi Reichstag passes *The Denaturalization Law* which revokes the citizenship of Jewish People who had immigrated to Germany, as well as “undesirables.”
- August 2nd, 1934, saw Hitler merge the offices of party leader, head of state and chief of government into one, taking the title of *Führer und Reichskanzler*. He now had total power over the German State and Government.



*Hitler was appointed as Chancellor by German President Paul von Hindenburg in 1933. When President Hindenburg died in 1934, Hitler merged the presidency into his office and declared himself Führer und Reichskanzler.*

- *Night of the Long Knives*, or *Operation Hummingbird*, is a purge of the SA that occurs between June 30<sup>th</sup> and July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1934. Fearing the independence of the “thuggish” SA, including rumours that the SA leadership wanted to overthrow Hitler in an effort to create a purer form of Nazism, the *Führer* orders the killing of up to 1,000 members of the organization’s leadership by the SS. The SS became the premier paramilitary Nazi organization responsible for security, mass surveillance, and state terrorism within Germany and German-occupied Europe.
- In September 1935 *The Nuremberg Race Laws* exclude German Jews from Reich citizenship and prohibit them from marrying or having sexual relations with persons of “German or German-related blood.”
  - “Undesirables” as defined by the Nazi State begin to be sent to *Dachau Concentration Camp*.
- Joining the Hitler Youth (*Hitler Jugend*) and League of German Girls (*Bund Deutscher Mädel*) became mandatory for boys and girls over the age of 10. Children were schooled in Nazi Ideology and taught to report on adults who they were suspicious of – including their parents. By 1939, more than 82% of eligible youth (age 10-18) belonged to the *Hitler Youth* or the *League of German Girls*.<sup>2</sup>
- Capitalizing on an economy that was already recovering, the Nazi Government continued using *Pump Priming*, stimulating the economy by ordering huge construction projects (examples: building tanks, ships, and the *Autobahn*). These projects were paid for using deficit spending (spending more money than what the government was taking in through taxes).
  - The Nazi Government privatized many state industries (sold off industries owned by the government to private businesspeople), taxed imports, and tried to achieve national economic self-sufficiency.
  - The main economic goal of the Nazi Government was rebuilding the German military.
  - Unemployment in Germany was reduced from 6,000,000 in 1932 to 1,600,000 in 1936.

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<sup>2</sup> United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. “Hitler Youth.” Holocaust Encyclopedia.  
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/hitler-youth-2>. Accessed on November 15, 2023.  
 Created October 2021, updated 2023