

NAZI ROOTS

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There has been a lot of "mystery" and "conspiracy theories" surrounding the rise of the Nazi party. Consequently, the following material outlines a very brief overview of the historical Nazi roots.

The German Workers' Party (DAP)

In the beginning of 1918, a party called the *Freier Ausschuss für einen deutschen Arbeiterfrieden* (Free Committee for a German Workers' Peace) was created in Bremen, Germany.

This party was one of several Völkisch movements, in Germany, which had emerged from Germany's defeat in World War I. The Völkisch movements' beliefs typically consisted of fervent patriotism for German folklore, local history, and a "back to the land" anti-urban populism. And as the Völkisch movement developed, it further combined "racial adoration" and anti-Semitism, and included additional ideas of anti-communist, anti-capitalist, anti-immigration, and anti-Parliamentarian principles. Consequently, these are the root ideas that fuelled the development of Nazism.

On 07 March 1918, Anton Drexler, locksmith, self-styled poet and member of the Thule Society, formed a branch of the *Free Committee for a German Workers' Peace* in Munich.

Drexler was encouraged to found the DAP by his mentor, Dr. Paul Tafel, a leader of the *Alldeutscher Verband* (Pan-Germanist Union), a director of the *Maschinenfabrik Augsburg-Nürnberg*, and also a member of the Thule Society, and his wish was for a party which was both in touch with the masses and nationalist, unlike the current middle class parties.

On 5 January 1919, in the Munich hotel "*Fürstenfelder Hof*", Anton Drexler with Gottfried Feder, Dietrich Eckart, and twenty workers from Munich's railway shops and some others met to discuss the creation of a new political party. The party was then founded as the *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (DAP - the German Workers' Party).

On 24 March 1919, Karl Harrer (a sports journalist and member of the Thule Society) joined the DAP to increase the influence of the Thule Society over the DAP's activities,

Note - The Thule Society (*Thule-Gesellschaft*), originally the *Studiengruppe für germanisches Altertum* ("Study Group for Germanic Antiquity"), was a German occultist and Völkisch group in Munich, named after a mythical northern country from Greek legend.

The Society is notable chiefly as the organization that sponsored the *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (DAP), which was later transformed, by Hitler, into the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi Party).

There is no evidence that Hitler ever was a member or attended the Thule Society. However, there was great enthusiasm among Thule members for Hitler, most notably Rudolf Hess and Dietrich Eckart.

The occultists believed that Hitler was the prophesied "redeemer of Germany". They were Hitler's first "disciples" and as such they contributed to his meteoric rise.

The Thule Society attracted about 250 followers in Munich and about 1,500 in greater Bavaria. However, the followers of the Thule Society were little interested in occultist theories, instead they were interested in racism, and combating Jews and Communists.

Early in 1920 Karl Harrer was forced out of the DAP as Hitler moved to completely sever the party's link with the Thule Society. From this point, the Thule society fell into decline, and it was dissolved about 1925 - well before Hitler came to power.

Like the Ahnenerbe section of the SS, and because of its occult background, the Thule Society has become the center of many conspiracy theories concerning Nazi Germany; however, all the theories remain in the realm of fiction, pseudoscience, and wishful thinking.

The Ahnenerbe was a Nazi German think tank that promoted itself as a "study society for Intellectual Ancient History." Founded on 01 July 1935, by Heinrich Himmler, Herman Wirth, and Richard Walther Darré, the Ahnenerbe's goal was to research the anthropological and cultural history of the Aryan race, and later to experiment and launch voyages with the intent of proving that prehistoric and mythological Nordic populations had once ruled the world.

At the time, the German Army was concerned that the DAP was a left-wing revolutionary group, and thus sent Adolf Hitler - one of its education officers - to spy on the organization and check things out.

On 12 September 1919, dressed in civilian clothes, Hitler went to a meeting of the German Workers' Party, which was attended by about twenty-five people in the back room of a beer hall in Munich.

Hitler discovered that the party's political ideas were similar to his own - the building of a strong nationalist, pro-military, anti-Semitic party, which would be made up of working class people; but he was unimpressed with the way the party was organized.

Although there as a spy, Hitler could not restrain himself, and when a member made a point that he disagreed with, he would stand up and make a passionate speech on the subject.

Because Anton Drexler was impressed with Hitler as an orator, he immediately invited him to join the party. At first Hitler was reluctant, but urged on by his commanding officer, Captain Karl Mayr, he finally agreed.

Hitler was the fifty-fifth person to join the German Worker's Party, and was immediately asked to join the executive committee.

Hitler's member number was 555 - numbers started at 501 to give the impression of larger numbers of members. For reasons unknown, Hitler's member number was later forged to be number 7.

In the ensuing weeks, Hitler brought several army associates into the party, including one of his commanding officers, Captain Ernst Roehm.

The arrival of Roehm was an important development as he had access to the army's political fund; and he arranged to transfer some of those funds into the growing DAP.

The German Workers' Party used some of this money to advertise and promote their meetings. Often, Hitler was the main speaker, and it was during this period that he developed his innate ability as a powerful, driven, and persuasive orator.

Consequently, Hitler's reputation as an orator rapidly grew, and it soon became apparent that people were joining the party because of him. This gave Hitler increasing power within the organization as the DAP knew they could not afford to lose him.

Early in 1920, Hitler was appointed as the party's propaganda manager.

It was Hitler who pressured that the party should change its name to the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP). He had always been opposed and hostile to socialist ideas, especially those that involved racial, religious, or sexual equality. However, following the disastrous First World War, socialism had become a popular political philosophy in Germany. This was reflected in the growth in the German Social Democrat Party (SDP), the largest political party in Germany at that time.

Consequently, Hitler redefined "socialism" by placing the word "National" in front of it; and declared that he was only in favour of equality for those who had "German blood", and Jews and other "aliens" would lose their rights of citizenship. Moreover, all immigration of non-Germans should be brought to an immediate end.

And thus it was that on 24 February 1920, the DAP was renamed the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP - National Socialist German Workers' Party) - the Nazi party came into being.

The 25 Points

With the assistance of party staff, Hitler drafted a party program consisting of twenty-five points. This platform was then presented at a public meeting at the Munich Hofbrauhaus beer hall on the evening of 24 February 1920 (the day of the founding of the Nazi party), with over 2,000 attendees:

1. We demand the union of all Germans in a Great Germany on the basis of the principle of self-determination of all peoples.

2. We demand that the German people have rights equal to those of other nations; and that the Peace Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain shall be abrogated.

3. We demand land and territory (colonies) for the maintenance of our people and the settlement of our surplus population.

4. Only those who are our fellow countrymen can become citizens. Only those who have German blood, regardless of creed, can be our countrymen. Hence no Jew can be a countryman.

5. Those who are not citizens must live in Germany as foreigners and must be subject to the law of aliens.

6. The right to choose the government and determine the laws of the State shall belong only to citizens. We therefore demand that no public office, of whatever nature, whether in the central government, the province, or the municipality, shall be held by anyone who is not a citizen.

We wage war against the corrupt parliamentary administration whereby men are appointed to posts by favour of the party without regard to character and fitness.

7. We demand that the State shall above all undertake to ensure that every citizen shall have the possibility of living decently and earning a livelihood. If it should not be possible to feed the whole population, then aliens (non-citizens) must be expelled from the Reich.

8. Any further immigration of non-Germans must be prevented. We demand that all non-Germans who have entered Germany since August 2, 1914, shall be compelled to leave the Reich immediately.

9. All citizens must possess equal rights and duties.

10. The first duty of every citizen must be to work mentally or physically. No individual shall do any work that offends against the interest of the community to the benefit of all.

Therefore we demand:

11. *That all unearned income, and all income that does not arise from work, be abolished.*
12. *Since every war imposes on the people fearful sacrifices in blood and treasure, all personal profit arising from the war must be regarded as treason to the people. We therefore demand the total confiscation of all war profits.*
13. *We demand the nationalization of all trusts.*
14. *We demand profit-sharing in large industries.*
15. *We demand a generous increase in old-age pensions.*
16. *We demand the creation and maintenance of a sound middle-class, the immediate communalization of large stores which will be rented cheaply to small trades-people, and the strongest consideration must be given to ensure that small traders shall deliver the supplies needed by the State, the provinces and municipalities.*
17. *We demand an agrarian reform in accordance with our national requirements, and the enactment of a law to expropriate the owners without compensation of any land needed for the common purpose. The abolition of ground rents, and the prohibition of all speculation in land.*
18. *We demand that ruthless war be waged against those who work to the injury of the common welfare. Traitors, usurers, profiteers, etc., are to be punished with death, regardless of creed or race.*
19. *We demand that Roman law, which serves a materialist ordering of the world, be replaced by German common law.*
20. *In order to make it possible for every capable and industrious German to obtain higher education, and thus the opportunity to reach into positions of leadership, the State must assume the responsibility of organizing thoroughly the entire cultural system of the people. The curricula of all educational establishments shall be adapted to practical life. The conception of the State Idea (science of citizenship) must be taught in the schools from the very beginning. We demand that specially talented children of poor parents, whatever their station or occupation, be educated at the expense of the State.*
21. *The State has the duty to help raise the standard of national health by providing maternity welfare centres, by prohibiting juvenile labour, by increasing physical fitness through the introduction of compulsory games and gymnastics, and by the greatest possible encouragement of associations concerned with the physical education of the young.*
22. *We demand the abolition of the regular army and the creation of a national (folk) army.*
23. *We demand that there be a legal campaign against those who propagate deliberate political lies and disseminate them through the press. In order to make possible the creation of a German press, we demand:*
 - (a) *All editors and their assistants on newspapers published in the German language shall be German citizens.*
 - (b) *Non-German newspapers shall only be published with the express permission of the State. They must not be published in the German language.*
 - (c) *All financial interests in or in any way affecting German newspapers shall be forbidden to non-Germans by law, and we demand that the punishment for transgressing this law be the immediate suppression of the newspaper and the expulsion of the non-Germans from the Reich.*

Newspapers transgressing against the common welfare shall be suppressed. We demand legal action against those tendencies in art and literature that have a disruptive influence upon the life of our folk, and that any organizations that offend against the foregoing demands shall be dissolved.

24. We demand freedom for all religious faiths in the state, insofar as they do not endanger its existence or offend the moral and ethical sense of the Germanic race.

The party as such represents the point of view of a positive Christianity without binding itself to any one particular confession. It fights against the Jewish materialist spirit within and without, and is convinced that a lasting recovery of our folk can only come about from within on the principle:

COMMON GOOD BEFORE INDIVIDUAL GOOD

25. In order to carry out this program we demand: the creation of a strong central authority in the State, the unconditional authority by the political central parliament of the whole State and all its organizations.

The formation of professional committees and of committees representing the several estates of the realm, to ensure that the laws promulgated by the central authority shall be carried out by the federal states.

The leaders of the party undertake to promote the execution of the foregoing points at all costs, if necessary at the sacrifice of their own lives.

The Nazi party was now officially open for business.

Symbol

In the summer of 1920, Hitler chose the symbol of the Nazi party, the swastika. The symbol was not new and was not something the Hitler had invented, but was found even in the ruins of ancient times. Hitler had seen the symbol each day as a boy when he attended the Benedictine monastery school in Lambach, Austria. The ancient monastery was decorated with carved stones and woodwork that included several swastikas. The swastika had also been seen around Germany among the Freikorps (soldiers for hire), and had appeared before as an emblem used by anti-Semitic political parties.

However, when a black swastika was placed inside a white circle on a red background, it provided a powerful, evocative, and instantly recognizable symbol that immediately helped the Nazi party to gain impetus and popularity.



The symbol of the Nazi party uses a right-facing swastika - and the red and black colours represent *Blut und Boden* (blood and soil). Interestingly, black, white, and red were the colours of the old North German Confederation flag, which was created by Otto von Bismarck, based on the Prussian colours black and white, blended with the red and white of the medieval Hanse cities.

Hitler described the symbolism involved: *"In the red we see the social idea of the movement, in the white the national idea, in the swastika the mission to struggle for the victory of Aryan man and at the same time the victory of the idea of creative work, which is eternally anti-Semitic and will always be anti-Semitic."*

By the end of 1920 the Nazi party had approximately three thousand members.

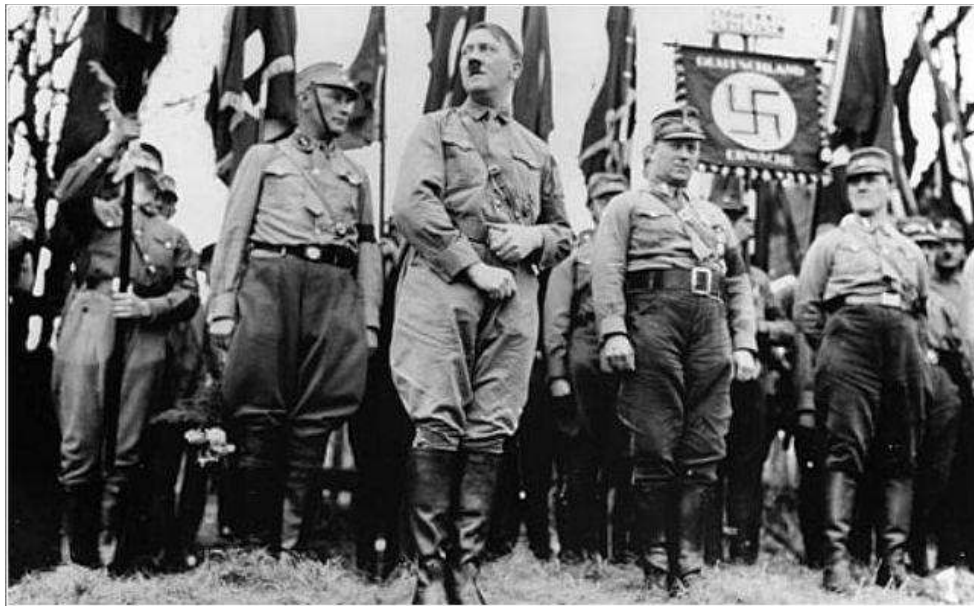
On 29 July 1921, Hitler ousted Drexler from the party, and assumed leadership and total control. At this time, Adolf Hitler was introduced as Führer of the Nazi Party, this this the first time that the title of Führer was publicly used to address him.

The SA

The term *Sturmabteilung* or SA stormtroop(er)s predates the founding of the Nazi Party, and originally comes from the specialized assault troops used by Germany in World War I.

From Hitler's 1919 launch into politics, the precursor to the SA, friends and associates of Hitler, had acted informally and on an ad hoc basis as meeting security and to forcefully quell any hecklers. The SA and the other Nazi paramilitary groups, that would follow, were considered "support groups" to the Nazi Party as a whole, and all members of these groups had to first become regular Nazi Party members in good standing. However, it was possible for a Nazi Party member not to join a paramilitary group, but to simply serve as a regular Nazi.

On 24 February 1920, Hitler announced the party's Twenty-Five Point program at a mass meeting of some 2000 persons at the Hofbrauhaus. When protesters tried to shout Hitler down, his army friends, armed with rubber truncheons, ejected the dissenters - the basis for the SA had now been formed and blooded.



Hitler leads an SA unit in a Nazi Party parade in Weimar, 1931

The "Hitler Youth", organized in 1921, was a Nazi youth corps group whose members were not actually Nazi party members; however, as such they were in training to be so.

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