National Socialism and Hitler's Nazi Party

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German dictator Adolf Hitler (center) went to Munich on November 9, 1938, with 3,000 “old fighters” from all parts of Germany to commemorate the unsuccessful Nazi uprising of 1923. Ap Photo

National Socialism was an idea started by Adolf Hitler. It is also called Nazism. Hitler was the head of the Nazi Party in Germany. National Socialism was popular in Germany after World War I. The goal of the Nazi party was to destroy all enemies of the German people. This belief led to the start of World War II.

The origins of National Socialism

Germany was once called Prussia. Prussians modeled their lives after the army and tried to gain lots of land. At one point, Prussia was so big it took up much of Europe. Some Prussians thought their people, also called Germanic people, were better than other people.

Hitler was influenced by this history and by Austrian groups. Hitler hated eastern European people and the Jews. He tried to be an artist in Vienna, the capital of Austria, but he could not make any money. Vienna had people of many different ethnicities, but none of them wanted to buy Hitler’s paintings.
Germany was defeated in World War I. The defeat left Germans sad and frustrated. Hitler and the Nazis took advantage of those feelings. Germany was punished harshly after World War I. They had to give up land and money. In Germany, many families lost the money they had saved. Hitler told Germans they could get back at the people responsible for their hardship.

**The fear of communism**

Communist power grew in the Soviet Union (now Russia), which created fear in Germany and around the world. Hitler used those fears to win the support of many people.

Hitler understood how people think and what makes them angry and afraid. He made sure everyone could understand his message. Winning people over was more important to him than honesty.

Hitler said the Jews were evil and should be treated differently. National Socialism declared the Jews to be harmful to other Germans.

National Socialism rejected human rights, cooperation and peace. Instead, it said that people should follow orders. It also promoted the idea that not all races were equal and that strong races should rule the weak ones.
Totalitarianism and expansionism

The Nazi Party originated in 1919 and was led by Hitler from 1920. It took control of the German government in 1933. The Nazis stayed in power until 1945, when Germany was defeated by America, the Soviet Union, England and France at the close of World War II.

The history of National Socialism after 1934 can be divided into two parts. The first took place between 1934 and 1939. The Nazi party controlled all parts of life in Germany. The German people welcomed the Nazi government. Jobless people were given jobs and people were making money again after the Great Depression. Germans were aggressively proud of their country. They were eager to make Germany great again. These were key reasons for National Socialism’s popularity. Also, Hitler was successful in taking over land from other countries in the early years of World War II. This won him support from most Germans, even many who had been against him.

Jews were put in concentration camps

National Socialism maintained its power by manipulation. The Nazis held rallies. They were huge and designed to show power. The Nazis also used terror. Nazis said that Jews were the enemy of society. They had secret police and concentration camps, where Jews and other victims were sent. In these camps, the Nazi police treated people cruelly and brutally. The Nazis killed millions of Jews and other people during the Holocaust.

Germany invaded Poland and started World War II in 1939. Hitler wanted to have land for Germany to control the world. The Germans ruled over other people ruthlessly.

Nazism ends with Germany’s defeat in 1945

Nazism came to an end with Germany’s defeat in 1945. The war lasted nearly six years. Germany was divided until 1990. Parts of National Socialism stuck around in Germany after Hitler died. A small number of Nazi-related groups were formed in West Germany from the late 1940s. In the 1990s, gangs of neo-Nazi young people in eastern Germany staged attacks against Jews and people from other countries.