

Nazism, History, Causes, Adolf Hitler, Impact on the World

April 8, 2026 • vajiramandravi.com



Nazism, also known as National Socialism, was an extreme authoritarian ideology led by Adolf Hitler in Germany during the early 20th century. It combined intense nationalism, racial supremacy, antisemitism, anti communism and rejection of democracy. Nazism aimed to establish total control over society and promote Aryan racial dominance. It led to the rise of Nazi Germany, triggered World War II and resulted in the Holocaust, making it one of the most destructive ideologies in modern history.

Nazism Historical Background

Nazism emerged from post World War I instability, humiliation and political crises in Germany, especially under the weak Weimar Republic system.

- **Treaty of Versailles Impact:** The Treaty of Versailles imposed harsh terms on Germany, including loss of 13% territory, 75% iron, 26% coal and £6 billion reparations, creating deep resentment.
- **Collapse of German Empire:** Germany's defeat in **First World War** led to abdication of Kaiser and formation of Weimar Republic, which many Germans viewed as imposed and humiliating.

- **Weak Weimar Republic:** Frequent coalition governments, about twenty cabinets in short duration and misuse of Article 48 weakened democracy and increased instability, reducing public faith in parliamentary system.
- **War Guilt and Humiliation:** Germany was forced to accept responsibility for war damages, creating anger among citizens who blamed the Weimar leaders as “November criminals” for national disgrace.
- **Hyperinflation Crisis 1923:** Excessive printing of currency caused extreme inflation where one US dollar rose from 24,000 marks to trillions, destroying savings and creating economic chaos.
- **Rise of Political Radicalism:** Groups like Spartacist League and the Communist Party intensified unrest, while conservative forces demanded strong authoritarian leadership.

Nazism Causes

Nazism rose due to a combination of economic distress, political instability, fear and strong leadership that attracted mass support.

- **Great Depression Impact:** The Great Depression reduced German industrial production to 40% and unemployment reached 6 million, creating desperation among citizens.
- **Fear of Communism:** The success of the **Russian Revolution** created fear among elites, leading industrialists and conservatives to support Nazis against communist expansion.
- **Weak Democracy:** The immature democratic system failed to solve economic and political crises, making dictatorship appear as a stable alternative for many Germans.
- **Economic Hardships:** Farmers, middle class and small businessmen suffered due to falling prices, job losses and fear of proletarianisation, increasing attraction towards radical solutions.
- **Role of Hitler:** Hitler’s speeches, promises of national revival, jobs and pride turned him into a mass leader and strengthened the Nazi Party’s popularity rapidly.
- **Propaganda Techniques:** Nazis used slogans, rallies, newspapers and radio effectively to spread ideology, glorify leadership and create fear of enemies like Jews and communists.

Nazism Features

Nazism developed as a totalitarian and racial ideology with distinct features that controlled every aspect of life in Germany.

- **Totalitarian State:** The Nazi regime controlled politics, economy, media and personal life, abolished civil liberties and suppressed dissent through strict surveillance and terror mechanisms.
- **Aryan Supremacy:** Nazis promoted belief in Aryan racial superiority, justifying discrimination, exclusion and elimination of Jews, Roma, disabled and other minority groups.
- **Antisemitism Policy:** Jews were scapegoated for Germany’s problems and subjected to discrimination, violence and eventual genocide during the Holocaust, killing nearly six million Jews.
- **Militarization and Expansion:** Nazism emphasized rearmament, conscription and territorial expansion through Lebensraum, leading to aggressive invasions across Europe.
- **Propaganda Control:** Media, films, education and literature were used to shape public opinion, promote Nazi ideology and create a cult like devotion to leadership.

- **Führerprinzip Principle:** The leader principle placed Hitler above all institutions, making his decisions absolute and unquestionable within the state structure.

Adolf Hitler and Nazism

Nazism was closely linked with Hitler's leadership, personality and political strategies that transformed Germany into a totalitarian state.

- **Early Political Rise:** Hitler joined German Workers' Party in 1919, later transformed into Nazi Party and became its leader due to his strong organizational and speaking skills.
- **Mein Kampf Ideology:** While imprisoned after 1923 failed coup, Hitler wrote Mein Kampf outlining racial theories, anti Jewish ideas and expansionist goals.
- **Electoral Success 1932:** Nazi Party became largest political party by 1932, gaining mass support from middle classes, workers and industrialists.
- **Appointment as Chancellor:** In 1933, President Paul von Hindenburg appointed Hitler as Chancellor, allowing him to gain legal political power.
- **Enabling Act 1933:** This act granted Hitler dictatorial powers, enabling him to rule without parliament and eliminate all political opposition.
- **Establishment of Dictatorship:** Hitler banned parties, used SS and Gestapo to eliminate enemies and created a one party totalitarian regime controlling all aspects of society.

Nazism Impact

Nazism had devastating consequences for Germany and the world, reshaping global politics and human history permanently.

- **Economic Transformation:** Nazi policies reduced unemployment from about 6 million to 1.5 million by 1936 through public works and rearmament, though at the cost of freedom.
- **Cultural Suppression:** Books were burned, modern art banned and intellectual freedom destroyed as Nazis promoted only Aryan culture and ideology.
- **Holocaust Genocide:** Systematic extermination of Jews and minorities using concentration camps and gas chambers marked one of the worst human rights tragedies.
- **Second World War:** Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939 triggered global war causing over 60 million deaths and massive destruction across Europe.
- **Axis Alliance Formation:** Germany allied with Italy and Japan under Tripartite Pact to challenge global order and expand authoritarian influence worldwide.
- **Post war Consequences:** After 1945 defeat, Nazi leaders were tried, United Nations was formed and Nazism was banned globally as a warning against extremism.

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/nazism/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.