



City of Munich

# ThemenGeschichtsPfad

National Socialism  
in Munich

The thematic history trails (ThemenGeschichtspfade) are part of the cultural history trails series (KulturGeschichtspfade) published by the City of Munich

### Existing titles in the thematic history trails series:

Volume 1	Der Nationalsozialismus in München
Volume 1 Eng.	National Socialism in Munich
Volume 2	Geschichte der Lesben und Schwulen in München
Volume 3	Orte des Erinnerns und Gedenkens Nationalsozialismus in München
Volume 3 Eng.	Places of Remembrance and Commemoration National Socialism in Munich

For further information please visit:  
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You will find a list of existing and future publications in the cultural history trails series (KulturGeschichtspfade) at the back of this booklet.

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## Foreword

This thematic history trail, *ThemenGeschichtspfad*, is part of a series of cultural history trails (*KulturGeschichtspfade*), published by the City of Munich. Like the other cultural history trails, this route takes the reader on a tour of historically significant locations. Unlike them, however, it focuses not on a particular district but on the theme of “National Socialism in Munich” – a subject of central importance in the city’s history.

The City of Munich is aware of its special obligation to keep alive the memory of the Nazi era and its crimes and to inform citizens and visitors about it. After all, it was here in Munich that the rise of the National Socialist movement began after the First World War. Munich was also the scene of the attempted putsch of 1923 and of Hitler’s subsequent trial. Here Hitler found influential patrons who gave him entry

to bourgeois circles. And it was here in 1938 that Goebbels called for the nation-wide pogrom against the Jewish population. After the Nazis seized power in 1933, Munich was chosen by Hitler as the place to celebrate the cult of Nazism and given the titles “Capital of German Art” and “Capital of the Movement”.

This booklet, combined with the walking tour and the audio version (also available in English), which you can download from the internet, is intended to provide you with a comprehensive introduction to this period of the city’s history and to encourage you, whether you are a citizen or a tourist, to find out more about National Socialism – a subject of paramount importance for our democratic culture. The Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism, currently in the planning stage, will in future also make a key contribution to this endeavour.



Christian Ude  
Mayor of Munich

## Practical information

### The route:

Marienplatz – Max-Joseph-Platz – Odeonsplatz – Hofgarten – Briener Straße – Platz der Opfer des Nationalsozialismus – Karolinenplatz – Karlstraße – Katharina-von-Bora-Straße – Königsplatz – Platz der Opfer des Nationalsozialismus

➞ Please see the map at the back for the individual locations

**Start:** Marienplatz

**End:** Königsplatz / Platz der Opfer des Nationalsozialismus

**Duration:** approx. 1.5 – 2 hours on foot  
approx. 45 minutes by bicycle

### Public transport along the route:

Marienplatz	Suburban trains (S-Bahn, all lines); Underground (U3/6); Bus 52
Max-Joseph-Platz	Tram 19
Odeonsplatz	U 3/6, Bus 100
Königsplatz	U 2, Bus 100
Karolinenplatz	Tram 27

### For timetable information please visit:

[www.mvv-muenchen.de](http://www.mvv-muenchen.de)

### Addresses:

Pre-1945 addresses are given in italics in square brackets.



## The audio version of the *ThemenGeschichtspfad* (thematic history trail)

You can download the thematic history trail “National Socialism in Munich” as an extended audio version for your MP3 player free of charge from our websites:



[www.muenchen.de/tgp](http://www.muenchen.de/tgp)  
[www.ns-dokumentationszentrum-muenchen.de](http://www.ns-dokumentationszentrum-muenchen.de)

Wherever you see a headphones symbol  on the map just select the corresponding track on your MP3 player and you will hear more about the historical significance of this location. In addition to the information in the booklet you will also hear personal statements by survivors of the Holocaust, contemporary witnesses, experts and people who have devoted special attention to the subject of National Socialism in Munich.

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*With the kind assistance of the Medienzentrums München*

## National Socialism in Munich

A Historic Walk from  
Marienplatz to Königsplatz



## Marienplatz, Marienplatz 8, Marienplatz 15



### Munich – the “Capital of the Movement”

Munich is more closely associated with the early history and rise of the Nazi Party (the National Socialist German Workers’ Party or NSDAP) than any other German city. The route followed by this thematic history trail takes the visitor to places that were of major significance in the origins and history of National Socialism. After the Nazi leadership seized power in Berlin, Munich not only became a showcase for the cult of Nazism. From 1933 onwards it also became home to a system of persecution and repression of enormous reliability, efficiency and magnitude that in many ways served as a model for the Reich as a whole.

Between 1933 and 1945 the swastika flag, the symbol of the Nazi regime of terror, flew above the New Town Hall **1** on Munich’s Marienplatz **3**. The Nazi state changed life in the city fundamentally. On 2 August 1935 the honorary title “Capital of the Movement”

- 1** New Town Hall  
Marienplatz 8
- 2** Old Town Hall  
Marienplatz 15
- 3** Marienplatz



New Town Hall and Marienplatz during the Nazi era

Munich's mayor Karl Fiehler makes Hermann Göring an honorary citizen of the "Capital of the Movement" on 15 January 1943.



Munich's coat of arms from 1936 to 1945



was conferred on Munich by Adolf Hitler, who had already designated the city "Capital of German Art" in 1933. The regime thus emphasised Munich's role as an ideological reference point and as a centre of art and culture.

The local Nazi elite made enormous efforts to live up to the expectations of the Führer. In 1933 party functionaries, such as the clerk Karl Fiehler and the former stable boy Christian Weber, rose to occupy leading positions. They owed their careers in the local party apparatus primarily to their status as party veterans and to their proximity to Hitler. It was men like these who gave Munich the dubious distinction of pioneering the implementation of Nazi ideology, particularly the persecution of the Jews. Measures conceived and carried out in Munich were used as models for the Reich. In March 1933, for instance, one of the first concentration camps was

established in the neighbouring town of Dachau. This camp served as a prototype for the Nazi concentration camp system. On 9 November 1938 it was the "Capital of the Movement" that gave the signal for the brutal and centrally directed campaign of aggression against the Jews. What became known as the "Reichspogromnacht" ("Night of Pogroms") began with an inflammatory speech by Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels in the Old Town Hall 3.



Königsplatz after it became the city's central parading ground and venue for celebrating the Nazi cult in 1938





From Marienplatz via Kardinal-Faulhaber-Straße [Promenadestraße 1] and Prannerstraße 8 [16–23] to Max-Joseph-Platz



## The November Revolution, the *Räterepublik* and the Counter-Revolution 1918–19

Munich was a central scene of the revolutionary events of November 1918. Even before the republic was proclaimed in the capital Berlin, Kurt Eisner declared the end of the monarchy in Munich with his proclamation of the “Free State of Bavaria”. Following Eisner’s murder a *Räterepublik* (a Soviet-style republic of workers’ and soldiers’ councils) was proclaimed in April 1919. It was soon replaced by a second, more radical republic and a short time later brutally defeated by anti-republican forces.

Revolutionary governments were formed all over Germany in the course of the November Revolution. Their aims were rapidly to conclude a peace treaty and to bring about a thoroughgoing democratic and socialist renewal of the state and society in a country shattered by war. The end of the monarchy was

- 4 Memorial commemorating the murder of Kurt Eisner, metal plate set in the pavement  
Kardinal-Faulhaber-Straße [Promenadestraße 1]
- 5 Bavarian Parliament  
Prannerstraße 8 [16–23]
- 6 Max-Joseph-Platz

declared on 7 November 1918 in Bavaria and on 9 November in Berlin.

The post-war period of upheaval was particularly tension-laden in Munich. The new prime minister, **Kurt Eisner**, did not succeed in allaying the bourgeois-conservative camp's fears of a communist revolution. On **21 February 1919** Eisner was murdered in the street <sup>4</sup> by the right-wing reserve lieutenant Anton Graf von Arco auf Valley while on his way to submit his resignation to the Bavarian parliament <sup>5</sup> after losing the election. This triggered an escalation of the political crisis. On 7 April 1919 members of the Central

The November Revolution 1918: republican soldiers in front of the Bavarian Parliament, Prannerstraße



Council formed by the Munich workers' and soldiers' councils proclaimed a **Räterepublik**, whose leadership and political orientation were to change twice in the following weeks.

Less than a month later, on 1 May 1919, the short chapter of the *Räterepublik* was brought to an end by government troops summoned up by the Social Democratic Hoffmann government. Under the leadership of **Franz Ritter von Epp**, regular soldiers, Free Corps paramilitaries and anti-republican militias used the shooting of ten right-wing prisoners as a pretext for brutal action. Prominent leaders of the councils (*Räte*) were murdered or sentenced to long

Kurt Eisner (1867–1919). After the monarchy was abolished Eisner became the first prime minister of the new “Free State of Bavaria”.

Eisner was assassinated on 21 February 1919: the scene of the crime in Promenadestraße shortly after his murder.



The end of the *Räte-republik*: captured revolutionary soldiers being led away in front of the Residenz 6, May 1919

terms of imprisonment by right-wing judges. Probably some 650 people lost their lives in this counter-revolution. In order to restore “law and order” and to preclude any renewed flaring up of communist activities, local **militias** were created. These subsequently became the largest political “self-defence organisation” of right-wing parties and organisations in the Reich. After the Bavarian association of self-defence organisations was dissolved in mid-1921 its members reassembled in other anti-republican or paramilitary groups.



The Free Corps Werdenfels marching along Maximilianstraße, May 1919





## Maximilianstraße 4 [17]

### Anti-Semitism, the *Völkisch* Nationalist Milieu and Right-Wing Extremism

At the turn of the century Munich already offered an especially fertile breeding ground for National Socialism. Following defeat in the First World War, revolution and counter-revolution weakened the republican forces and strengthened anti-democratic, extreme right-wing tendencies. Bavaria became an anti-liberal and authoritarian “cell of order” (*Ordnungszelle*), thus favouring the emergence in Munich of an atmosphere of intolerance and anti-Semitism. This was exploited by early Nazi propaganda.

After the bloody end of the *Räterepublik* Munich became a **centre of opposition** to the young democratic state. An important figure for the extreme Right was **Gustav von Kahr**, who was elected Bavarian prime minister as the candidate of the Bavarian People’s Party in 1920. His aim was to make Bavaria an authoritarian “cell of order” and an antithesis

7 Headquarters of the Thule Society  
Maximilianstraße 4 [17]



Under Gustav von Kahr (1862–1934) Bavaria became a centre of opposition to the republic. Kahr created a “cell of order” in antithesis to Berlin.

Erich Ludendorff (1865–1937) became one of the leading figureheads of the right-wing camp.

to Berlin. This provided an ideal operating environment for a broad spectrum of nationalist, anti-democratic and reactionary forces. Erich von Ludendorff, the former first quartermaster general of the armed forces, also exploited the political climate in Munich to gather together members of the radical nationalist or *völkisch* milieu, and he became a figurehead for the enemies of the republic.

Among the network of those seeking to undermine the republic, an important role was played by the nationalist and racist **Thule Society** (founded in 1918), which had its headquarters at the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten in Maximilianstraße 7. Many of its members, who included Munich’s chief of police **Ernst Pöhner**, held prominent public offices. Among the Thule Society’s other members were **Karl Fiehler**, who later became mayor of Munich, the influential “racial theorist” **Alfred Rosenberg** and Hitler’s later deputy **Rudolf Heß**. Using Munich as their base, this secret organisation fought to overthrow the *Räterepublik* and later supported the rise of the Nazi Party.



The Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten in Maximilianstraße. This was where the Thule Society was founded in the early 1920s and also had its headquarters. Photo from the early 1930s.

Letterhead of the Thule Society, 1919



Political poster, c. 1919. The slogan reads “Get out, no anarchists here”.

The **reactionary climate in Munich** had its origins in the period around 1900. At that time the district of **Schwabing** was not only the centre of a bohemian artistic community but also home to adherents of an eccentric assortment of esoteric, irrational and nihilistic theories. Aggressive agitation by Nazi ideologists against an allegedly “un-German” culture caused liberal and progressive intellectuals like **Bertolt Brecht**, **Lion Feuchtwanger** and **Ödön von Horváth** to leave Munich during the 1920s for the more cosmopolitan capital Berlin.





## Platzl

### The Beginnings of the NSDAP and the Rise of Hitler

After the First World War numerous *völkisch* nationalist and extremist organisations came into being amid the reactionary atmosphere in Munich. One of these right-wing splinter groups was the German Workers' Party, founded in 1919, out of which the Nazi Party (NSDAP) emerged in 1920. The founding of the NSDAP marked the beginning of Hitler's rise to political power.

Adolf Hitler had originally come to Munich from Vienna – where he had absorbed the influences of the city's anti-Semitic milieu – in 1913 and eked out a living as a postcard painter. His plans for a career as an artist failed, however. After serving with the Bavarian troops in the First World War, he returned to Munich amid the revolutionary confusion of 1918–19 looking for a new field of activity. He found it in the city's growing right-wing extremist





Anton Drexler (1884–1942) founded the German Workers' Party in January 1919 together with Karl Harrer, a member of the Thule Society.

In September 1919 Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) joined the German Workers' Party, where he made his mark as a public speaker.

circles. Out of a diffuse mixture of anti-Jewish prejudices, anti-Marxist conspiracy theories and a *völkisch* nationalist mentality his ideological concepts began to take shape.

Hitler acquired his initial political skills in the anti-Jewish and anti-Marxist **German Workers' Party (Deutsche Arbeiterpartei or DAP)**, where, owing to his talents as a public speaker, he soon assumed a leading role. In order to differentiate itself from left-wing organisations the DAP was renamed the **National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei or NSDAP)** at a meeting in the Hofbräuhaus <sup>8</sup> in February 1920. The membership of the NSDAP grew enormously in the subsequent period. One of its most important instruments of power was the **Storm Troopers (*Sturmabteilung* or SA)**, a strong-arm group created to protect party meetings. This party militia was responsible for attacks on Jews and on people considered to be opponents of the Nazi movement. By July 1921 Hitler had succeeded in ousting the other leaders of the NSDAP. He was elected party chairman and granted extensive powers.



Within a few months Hitler had distinguished himself as the most important populist agitator of the right-wing scene in Munich. At mass gatherings he railed against the Berlin “fulfilment politicians” (whom he accused of bowing to the demands of the allied victorious powers), conjured up the spectre of the demon of Bolshevism and stirred up hatred against the Jews. As the personification of the anti-democratic, nationalist and racist thinking of these years, Hitler became a symbol of hope for those united in their contempt for parliamentarianism and democracy, in their invocation of the “spirit of 1914” and in their belief in the superiority of a German “master race”.

Propaganda tour of the NSDAP 1923: Hitler (2<sup>nd</sup> from l.), Christian Weber (1<sup>st</sup> r.)



## From Max-Joseph-Platz to Odeonsplatz



### Hitler's Attempted Putsch in November 1923

A key event in the history of the NSDAP was the failed putsch of November 1923. The restraint shown by the police, the courts and the state towards the anti-democratic enemies of the state favoured the rise of Adolf Hitler and his stylisation as the great hope for a "national renewal".

The conflict between the reactionary state of Bavaria and the Reich came to a head in 1923, when Hitler, judging the tense atmosphere to be favourable for an attempt to overthrow the republic and believing he had consolidated his political position, seized the initiative. On 8 November he disrupted a meeting being held by State Commissioner General Gustav von Kahr (the former Bavarian prime minister) in the **Bürgerbräukeller beer hall at Gasteig**. Kahr was also believed to be planning a coup,



The failed putsch of November 1923, glorified by the Nazis as the “March on the Feldherrnhalle”: Heinrich Himmler (centre, wearing glasses) at a road-block in front of the Ministry of War, intersection of Ludwigstraße and Schönfeldstraße.

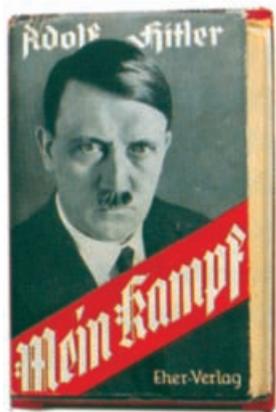
so in order to pre-empt him, Hitler called for a **putsch** and a “national revolution”. He declared the overthrow of the Bavarian government and forced Kahr and his associates, the commander of the Bavarian Army, Otto von Lossow, and the chief of the Bavarian police, Hans von Seißer, to join a provisional government.

A short time later, however, having recognised the putsch as an amateurish attempt, Kahr, Lossow and Seißer ceased to feel personally threatened and revoked the concessions they had made. In spite of this, on 9 November Hitler tried to go through with his plans by staging a demonstration. After marching from the Bürgerbräukeller across the Ludwigsbrücke and along **Residenzstraße** <sup>9</sup>, the putschists were stopped by Bavarian police units at the **Feldherrnhalle** <sup>11</sup> <sup>12</sup>. In the following exchange of fire fifteen putschists, four policemen and one innocent bystander were killed. Hitler managed to escape, but was arrested two days later.

The accused with their defence lawyers at Hitler’s trial in spring 1924 (in the centre Erich Ludendorff, on his right Hitler)



During his imprisonment in Landsberg Fortress Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf*, in which he outlined his ideological beliefs and his political programme.



Memorial to the dead putschists of 1923 (here: in the 1930s).

In February 1924 Hitler went on trial for high treason in proceedings lasting two months. But the biased attitude of the Bavarian justice authorities, in particular the judge Georg Neidhardt, who had already handed down a mild sentence to Graf Arco, turned the trial into a farce. The NSDAP was banned, and Hitler was sentenced to serve a minimum prison sentence of five years. The effect of Hitler's trial and imprisonment was to make him much better known, and he succeeded in making political capital out of his detention in the Landsberg Fortress. It was in Landsberg that he wrote *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), which later sold millions of copies. By the end of 1924 Hitler had been pardoned.

Nazi propaganda later reinterpreted the attempted putsch as a "March on the Feldherrnhalle", analogous with Mussolini's "March on Rome". An "eternal vigil" 11 was posted in front of the Feldherrnhalle round the clock, and passers-by were expected to give the Hitler salute. To avoid passing the Feldherrnhalle many Munich citizens took a detour through the Viscardigasse, which for this reason became popularly known as the "Drückeberggassl" (Dodgers' Alley) 10.





**Odeonsplatz – Ludwigstraße – Galeriestraße 4 – Hofgarten**



**Detour: The Regime’s Public Show of Power in the “Führer City”**

After 1933 Munich served as a showcase for the regime’s public demonstrations of power and propaganda. The Nazis wanted to compensate Munich for the loss of influence it had suffered when the regime’s centre of power shifted to Berlin by giving the city the “cultural leadership”. Gigantic urban redevelopment projects were planned. While modern artists were defamed as “degenerate”, the new rulers celebrated their philistine and backward-looking tastes in the “Capital of German Art”.

From 1933 Munich celebrated its role as the birthplace of the NSDAP with bombastic pageants. Especially on 9 November, which had been declared a public holiday to mark the putsch attempt in November 1923, the city centre became the stage for a lurid spectacle. Commemoration ceremonies were held on the evening of 8 Novem-

- 12 Feldherrnhalle Odeonsplatz
- 13 Day of German Art Odeonsplatz
- 14 “Degenerate Art” exhibition 1937 Galeriestraße 4

- 15 Haus der Deutschen Kunst Prinzregentenstraße 1
- 16 Widening of Von-der-Tann-Straße to lead up to the Haus der Deutschen Kunst Von-der-Tann-Straße



A procession along Ludwigstraße/ Odeonsplatz during the Day of German Art, 18 July 1937

ber in the Bürgerbräukeller, at the **Feldherrnhalle** <sup>12</sup> and as of 1935 also at the **Temples of Honour** on Königsplatz. The temples served as the central sites of the pseudo-religious party cult, for it was here in 1935 that the coffins of the “martyrs” of November 1923 were re-buried. The annual re-enactment of the “March on the Feldherrnhalle” culminated in a ritual-laden rally where the “racial community” was reminded of National Socialism’s origins in the “Capital of the Movement” and exhorted to keep the faith of the “martyrs” of 9 November 1923.

The Nazis demonstrated an acute sense of how to manipulate the masses. Rousing parades, night-time spectacles of light and pathos-laden appeals were all designed to convey to the public the regime’s special right to rule. Here the propagandists drew on the repository of ancient mythology, the Nordic sagas, the Middle Ages and the operatic world of Richard Wagner. All these elements could be seen at the annual **Day of German Art**. The mass parades of 1937–1939, which went through the city centre, passing a tribune of honour at Odeonsplatz <sup>13</sup>, were staged under the motto “2000 Years of German Culture” and used a mixture of Nazi ideology and nebulous ideas about Teutonic virtues and chivalry to portray in a theatrical way the claim of German cultural and intellectual superiority.



Poster for the Exhibition of Great German Art, 1937





The Haus der Deutschen Kunst (House of German Art) in Prinzregentenstraße 15 was intended to confirm that Munich really was the “Capital of German Art” – the honorary title Hitler bestowed on the city on the occasion of the foundation stone ceremony in October 1933. The exhibition building was opened ceremonially in July 1937, and the art that was subsequently exhibited here conformed to the Nazis’ ideas of Nordic-Aryan superiority and their pastoral and militaristic ideals.

The Haus der Deutschen Kunst in Prinzregentenstraße, designed by Paul Ludwig Troost, was inaugurated in 1937. This was the venue for the annual Exhibition of Great German Art until 1944.



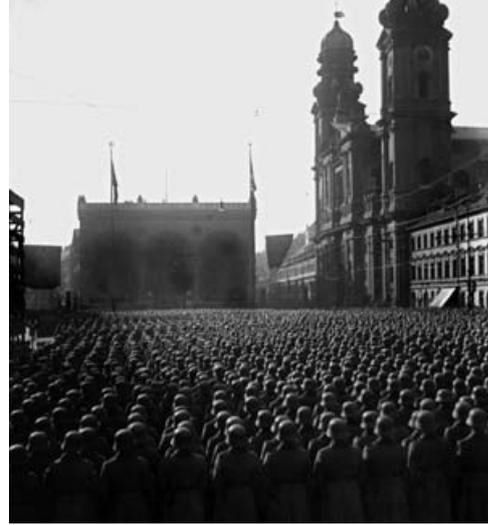
The exhibition of “Degenerate Art” was opened in Galeriestraße in 1937 to coincide with the opening of the Haus der Deutschen Kunst. It displayed works of art that were to be discredited as “degenerate”.

The propaganda exhibition of “Degenerate Art” 14, designed specifically to defame the artists of modernism, was held in the Hofgarten arcades in 1937. Their works were presented as evidence of the “cultural decay” that had taken place before 1933 and contrasted with supposedly “true German art”. Altogether 650 exhibits were displayed as “proof of degeneracy”, including works by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Franz Marc, Max Beckmann, Emil Nolde, George Grosz, Kurt Schwitters and Wassily Kandinsky.



Architectural plans for Munich: the eastern portion of the east-west axis, view from the "Monument to the Movement" to the new main railway station (model, 1940)

Munich was one of the five "Führer Cities" in the planned Greater German Reich, whose urban fabric was to be radically transformed. The **monumental plans**, which were drawn up in close consultation with Hitler himself, involved the construction of a grand avenue, the Great Axis, which was to be 2.5 kilometres long and 120 metres wide and lined with overdimensioned cultural and prestige buildings, as well as a six-kilometre east-west axis. The city was to be visually dominated by a huge dome structure for the new main railway station and a 200-metre-high "Monument to the Movement". The



Recruits being sworn in at the Feldherrnhalle, November 1935

planned completion date for the building work was 1950, but in fact only a few of these projects were ever actually built. Those that were include the redevelopment of Königsplatz with the nearby Nazi Party buildings and the widening of Von-der-Tann-Straße <sup>16</sup> to create a connection between the Haus der Kunst and the party headquarters on Königsplatz.

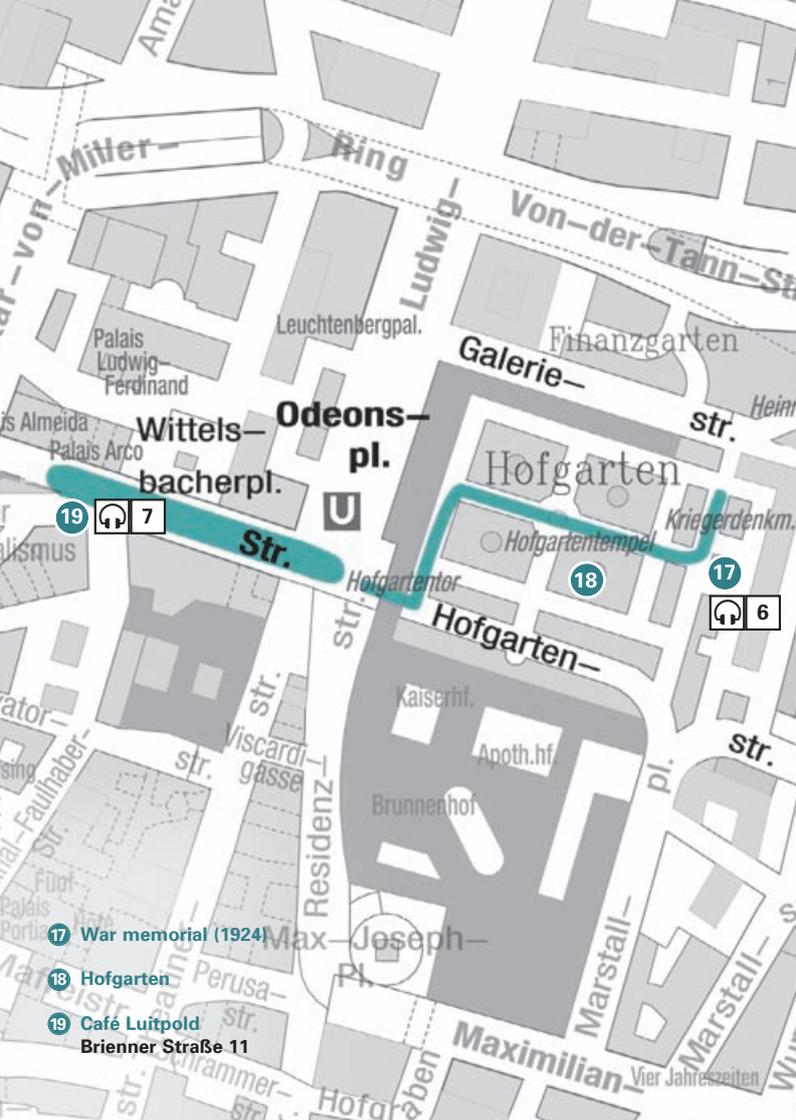


## Munich in the Weimar Republic – the Formation of the Nazi Movement

In the years following 1918 the aggressive struggle between revolution and counter-revolution affected Munich more deeply than almost any other German city, but the economic stabilisation of the mid-1920s calmed the political mood for a time.

When the NSDAP was re-founded in 1925, it initially pursued a strategy of electioneering in a bid to attain parliamentary legitimacy, albeit without ever renouncing the street violence of its storm-trooper mobs. The world economic crisis that followed the Wall Street Crash of 1929 plunged large sections of Munich's population into poverty and accelerated Hitler's rise to power.

The pre-war militarism of the Kaiser's Germany survived largely undented after 1918. Political culture and everyday life in the 1920s were marked by an increasing public presence of paramilitary groups. Armed street fighting and killings became customary channels



Café Luitpold in  
Briener Straße,  
here in the 1930s



of political struggle. Continued adherence to authoritarian militarism and glorification of the events of the war were decisive factors undermining the Weimar Republic, while the social and political crises widened the chasm between the state and citizens. The **Memorial 17** to the fallen of the First World War in the **Hofgarten 18**, which was inaugurated in 1924, was, for example, used repeatedly by right-wing circles as the backdrop for nationalistic commemorations.

After the horrors of war, revolution and inflation, bourgeois Munich entered a new phase of calm and stability in the mid-1920s. Art and culture flourished in Germany, and the products of a new mass culture became accessible to broader sections of society. The press, radio and cinema became part of everyday life. For many people, modest prosperity returned, so that restaurants such as the elegant **Café Luitpold 19** were well patronised by affluent customers.

After the ban on the NSDAP was lifted in 1925, Hitler set about systematically making it a party of the masses with the support of wealthy patrons. Hitler's contacts in business circles and high society enhanced his own personal standing and hence that of the party as well. In the wake of the **Great Depression**, the party's share of the vote rose to more than 18 percent in the Reichstag elections of September 1930, and in July 1932 the NSDAP became the strongest party in parliament for the first time.



Poster for the election  
of the Reich President  
in 1932



The NSDAP's party  
newspaper from 1920  
onwards was the  
*Völkische Beobachter*,  
published in Munich  
by the Franz-Eher  
publishing house.



## Munich's Bourgeoisie and the Rise of the NSDAP

Under the patronage of influential supporters and admirers, Hitler's rise led directly from the lumpen milieu of the beer halls to the salons of high society. Indeed, it was only with the financial support and social protection of these circles that the rise of the NSDAP in the Weimar Republic became possible.

The Munich upper and middle classes of the 1920s embraced a number of different cultural and intellectual milieus: a conservative Catholic urban bourgeoisie nostalgic for the monarchy and holding Bavarian separatist ambitions; a progressive liberal business elite that was able to identify more closely with the democratic reforms; but also other social groups that found common ground in their resistance to modernisation and in their nationalistic mindset. Many people had been shaken by the

20 Hugo Bruckmann's house  
Karolinenplatz 5

21 The "Brown House"  
Brienner Straße [45]

Karolinenplatz,  
c. 1930



devastation of the lost world war, the revolutionary upheavals and ensuing violent clashes and by economic instability. Consequently, even in bourgeois circles support grew for a Nazi movement that promised leadership by giving simplistic explanations of world affairs, pointing to scapegoats and propagating messianic visions of a future society.

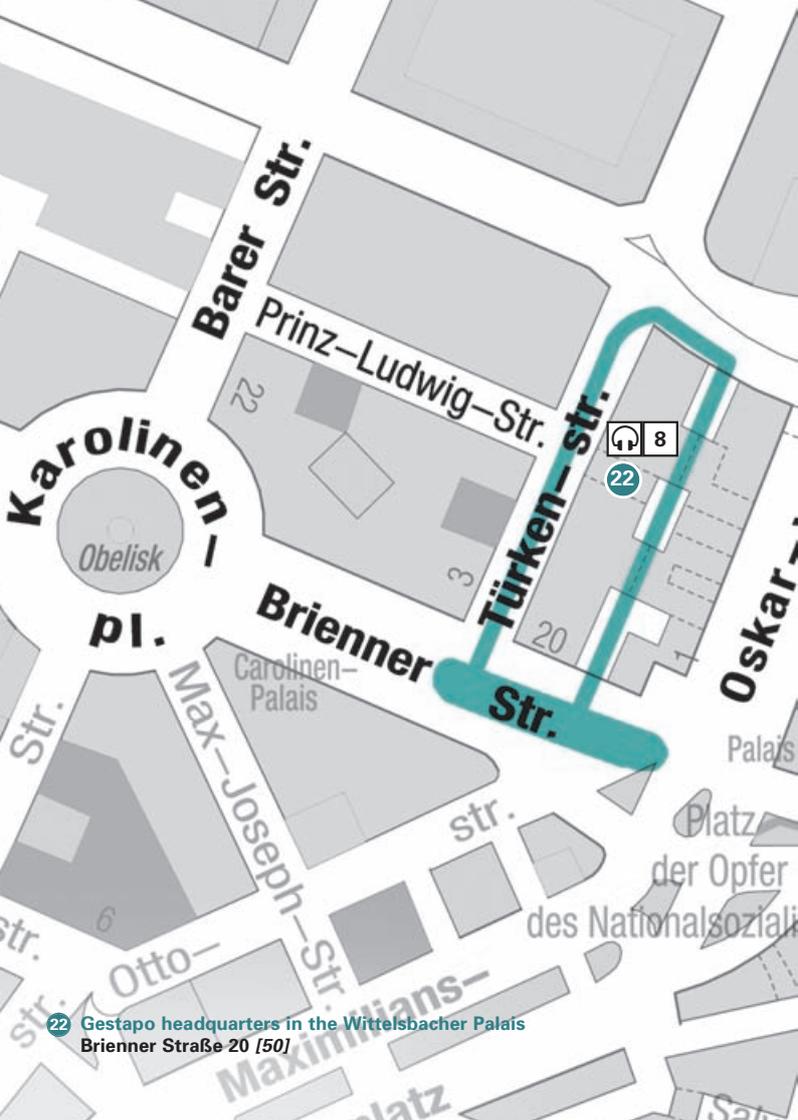
Hitler began to establish contacts with influential supporters and gain access to exclusive homes and salons early on. His contacts with influential and wealthy members of Munich's elite, such as the publishers **Hugo Bruckmann** <sup>20</sup> and **Ernst Hanfstaengl** or the piano manufacturer **Edwin Bechstein**, paved the way for Hitler's political advancement. Furthermore, it was the ladies of high society who opened the doors of their salons to Hitler and offered him their patronage. With benefactresses such as **Elsa Bruckmann** and **Helene Bechstein** vying for his favour, Hitler was able to gain introductions to numerous public figures, including Richard Wagner's daughter-in-law Winifred, who later became an enthusiastic supporter of the NSDAP. It was also in these circles

that Hitler met his later personal photographer **Heinrich Hoffmann**, who was to heavily influence Hitler's public propaganda image.

At the end of the 1920s donations from industrialists allowed the party to purchase Palais Barlow in the fashionable Brienner Straße. After being converted according to Hitler's personal wishes, the "**Brown House**" <sup>21</sup> served as the party's prestigious headquarters from 1930 on.

Palais Barlow was bought by the NSDAP in 1930 and converted into the party headquarters, known as the "Brown House". It housed the offices of various party organisations and high-ranking Nazi personnel, including Hitler's deputy Rudolf Heß and the head of the party's legal office, Hans Frank.

Anti-Semitic defamation – election poster of the Völkische Block appealing for the votes of workers, 1924.



## The Nazis Seize Power: Dictatorship and the Beginnings of Persecution

On 30 January 1933 Adolf Hitler was appointed Reich Chancellor at the head of a coalition government. Although the ministers from the NSDAP formed a minority in this government, Hitler was now able to extend his power without any notable resistance.

The Reichstag fire of 27 February 1933, the cause of which has never been satisfactorily explained, allowed Hitler to suspend basic rights. The Reichstag Fire Decree of 28 February 1933 marked the beginning of a wave of persecution of previously unknown proportions, to which numerous opponents of the Nazis in Munich fell victim. The passing of the Malicious Practices Act on 21 March 1933 and the Enabling Act on 23 March 1933 reinforced the foundations for Nazi policies of injustice, which soon revealed the regime's true

22 Gestapo headquarters in the Wittelsbacher Palais  
Briener Straße 20 [50]

Muzzling the Social Democratic press: occupation of the *Münchener Post*, 9 March 1933



character as a totalitarian dictatorship. Violent repression of dissenters became the order of the day. The police and courts abandoned the principles of a state based on law and instead became loyal servants of the Nazi leadership. The practice of arbitrary arrest and detention, known as “**protective custody**” (*Schutzhaft*), became a central instrument for combating opposition and resistance. In the neighbouring

town of **Dachau** Heinrich Himmler, the Reich leader of the SS and commandant of the Bavarian Political Police, had one of the first concentration camps built in March 1933. Its commandant, Theodor Eicke, made the camp into a prototype and model for the Nazi concentration camp system. Here prisoners from more than thirty countries – the regime’s political enemies, Jews, clergymen, homosexuals, Jehovah’s witnesses and Sinti and Roma – were detained under inhuman conditions, often for years. Following the principle of “extermination through labour” the Nazi programme of slave labour claimed countless human lives.

Concentration camp near Dachau, punishment roll-call, 1938



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The Wittelsbacher Palais: the notorious Gestapo headquarters (photo from 1940)

From 1933 onwards the **Wittelsbach Palais** in **Brienner Straße 22** was the headquarters of the **Bavarian Political Police**, which later became part of the Gestapo (**Geheime Staatspolizei** or secret state police). This regional headquarters of terror spread fear and dread among the population. Anyone resisting the regime in Munich fell into the clutches of the Gestapo. The carpenter **Georg Elser**, for example, who attempted to assassinate Hitler on 8 November 1939 by planting a bomb in the **Bürgerbräukeller**, was interned in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp after weeks of interrogations in Munich



and Berlin. He was later taken to Dachau, where he was shot by the SS shortly before the end of the war. The Gestapo officials in the Wittelsbacher Palais were also responsible for issuing orders to compile death lists and for dispatching the **deportation orders** that led to the annihilation of Munich's Jewish community.

Hans and Sophie Scholl and Christoph Probst, members of the "White Rose" student resistance group. The three were executed in Munich's Stadelheim prison in February 1943.



**Brienner Straße 26 [47], 26–28 [46–47] and 23 [11], Max-Joseph-Straße 2 [Maximiliansplatz 8], Max-Joseph-Straße 4 [6], Karlstraße 21**

## Gleichschaltung: Professional Organisations Are Brought into Line

The police, the courts, the civil service and local government, private corporations, the press and professional associations were brought firmly into line under the Nazi dictatorship. Judges and state officials could be appointed and dismissed at will, and a large number of NSDAP members rose to occupy leading positions.

The Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service (7 April 1933) contained a so-called “Aryan paragraph”, which allowed “non-Aryan” and politically undesirable officials to be dismissed from the civil service. Non-state organisations also adopted the Nazi guidelines in their personnel policy.

After the free trade unions were disbanded in May 1933, their assets were confiscated and many trade-union functionaries were arrested. They were

- 23 Local Branch of the German Labour Front of Munich and Upper Bavaria  
Brienner Straße 26–28 [46–47]
- 24 Antiquarian bookseller Rosenthal  
Brienner Straße 26 [47]
- 25 House of German Physicians  
Brienner Straße 23 [11]
- 26 Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
Max-Joseph-Straße 2 [Maximiliansplatz 8]
- 27 Reich leadership of the National Socialist Association of German Lecturers  
Max-Joseph-Straße 4 [6]
- 28 Association of National Socialist German Physicians  
Karlstraße 21

Rosenstraße in the city centre with flags for the Reichstag elections. End of March 1936.



replaced by the German Labour Front (DAF), whose goal was to bring together in a single organisation all “working Germans”, regardless of their training, social status or actual profession, and indoctrinate them with Nazi ideology. The DAF was made particularly attractive by the leisure activities and holidays offered by its “Strength through Joy” organisation (“Kraft durch Freude” – KdF). The headquarters of the Upper Bavarian branch of the DAF were located at Briener Straße 26–28 <sup>23</sup>, and in 1935 the KdF took over the business premises and house of the Jewish antiquarian bookseller Jacques Rosenthal at Briener Straße 26 <sup>24</sup>. Rosenthal was forced to sell the building to the Reich Leadership of the NSDAP for well below its value.

In 1933 Jewish doctors were deprived of their licences to practise under health insurance plans. From 1938 onwards they were only allowed to practise as “providers of treatment” for Jewish patients and not permitted to use the title “doctor”. The Association of Health-Fund Physicians of Germany, which had its Munich headquarters in the House of German Physicians <sup>25</sup>, inaugurated in 1935, and the Association of National Socialist German Physicians at Karlstraße 21 <sup>28</sup> played a key role in these measures. The members of these organisations included not only the ideologues of racially based medicine but also the advocates of medical experiments on humans, forced sterilisation and “euthanasia”.

The House of German Physicians: headquarters of the Association of Health-Fund Physicians of Germany in Briener Straße, 1938





After seizing power, the Nazis brought all professional organizations into line and disbanded the trade unions. Occupation of the trade-union headquarters in Pestalozzistraße on 9–10 March 1933

The regional **Chamber of Commerce and Industry** located on Maximiliansplatz 26 was “brought into line” immediately after the Nazis came to power, and in March 1933 it expelled its Jewish members. The chief executive of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry was also the regional economic adviser to the NSDAP. From 1938 onwards the Chamber was involved in the “**Aryani-**sation” campaign and in expropriating the owners of Jewish firms.

One of the responsibilities of the **National Socialist Association of German Lecturers**, founded in 1935 and located at what is today Max-Joseph-Straße 4 27, was to push for the dismissal of politically undesirable university lecturers, to run the universities according to dictatorial principles and to make the curriculum conform with Nazi ideology. The conditions for bringing the universities into line were favourable in Munich, for even before 1933 the National Socialist German Students’ Association at the Technical University had held almost half the seats on the Students’ Committee.





**Karolinenplatz 2, Barer Straße 7–11,  
Karlstraße 6 – 8, 10, 14, 16, 18**



## The Party Quarter – Society under Party Rule

The distinctive classical architecture of Königsplatz fitted perfectly the Nazi leadership's need for a grand setting for its activities. The NSDAP had already bought the Palais Barlow building near Königsplatz in 1930 and subsequently had it refurbished as the party headquarters (the "Brown House"). After 1933 a number of other key offices of the Nazi bureaucracy were housed in the area around Königsplatz.

Making society conform with Nazi ideals and achieving the bureaucratic centralisation, documentation and control of all areas of life by means of a powerful and all-pervasive state and party apparatus – these were the goals of the Nazi leadership's domestic policy. Although after 1933 the Nazi centre of power was moved to Berlin, key offices of the NSDAP and its associated organisations remained in Munich. The area around

- 29 National Socialist Women's Organisation/Reich Treasury Department (1938–1945)  
Karolinenplatz 2
- 30 Supreme SA Leadership, branch office (1934–1945)  
Barer Straße 7–11
- 31 Reich Central Propaganda Office of the NSDAP/branch office (1936–1945)  
Karlstraße 6–8
- 32 Reich Leadership of the SS/administrative office, SS court (1936–1945)  
Karlstraße 10
- 33 Reich Youth Leadership of the NSDAP (1936–1940)  
Karlstraße 14
- 34 Reich Leadership of the National Socialist German Students' Association (1936–1945)  
Karlstraße 16
- 35 Reich Press Office of the NSDAP/branch office (1938–1945)  
Karlstraße 18



The National Socialist Students' Association celebrates its tenth anniversary in January 1936 with a consecration of the colours in the Odeon, in the centre Rudolf Heß.

Day of German Youth – Hitler Youth rally at the Feldherrenhalle, 1933



Königsplatz became the central party quarter, where many party offices and Nazi organisations were housed in more than fifty buildings – from national offices responsible for the whole Reich down to regional branches. At times as many as six thousand people were employed here. Alongside the party administration itself – such as, for example, the **Reich Leadership of the NSDAP** in Briener Straße [45] (the “**Brown House**”) – the head offices of many Nazi organisations were located here, including the **Reich Youth Leadership** <sup>33</sup>, the Reich Treasury Department of the **National Socialist Women's Organisation** <sup>29</sup>, the Reich Leadership of the **National Socialist German Students' Association** <sup>34</sup>, the **Reich Leadership of the SS** (administrative offices and the SS court) <sup>32</sup>, the **Supreme SA Leader-**

**ship** <sup>30</sup> and central party institutions, such as the **Reich Central Propaganda Office** <sup>31</sup> or the **Reich Press Office** <sup>35</sup>.

These institutions and authorities were tightly organised and centrally controlled. They were generally structured along the same lines as the regional and district organisations of the NSDAP. The party used them to penetrate society and as highly effective instruments for bringing people into line ideologically and for keeping them under surveillance and controlling their private lives.



The Reich Press Office of the NSDAP at Karlstraße 18, 1938–1945





36 Regional Finance Administration  
Sophienstraße 6

37 Main Office for Local Government of the NSDAP  
Gabelsbergerstraße 41

38 "Modellhaus Adolf Rothschild"  
Briener Straße 12 [52]

## From Sophienstraße 6 to Briener Straße 12 [52]

### Jewish Citizens of Munich Deprived of Rights and Property, Deported and Murdered

For Jewish Germans, 30 January 1933 – the day Hitler became Reich Chancellor – marked the transition from a campaign of verbal intimidation to one of state-organised persecution. Munich had led the way with respect to so-called Jewish policy from an early stage and had shown particular zeal in conceiving and carrying out measures to ostracise Jews and deprive them of their rights, long before these practices came into effect in the rest of the Reich.

From 1933 onwards Jews were systematically excluded from all areas of public life. By 1 April 1933 – just two months after the Nazis came to power – centrally controlled violence was being perpetrated against Jewish individuals, businesses and institutions, and excesses were committed in Munich as well as elsewhere. In the period that followed



Nameplates of Jewish lawyers' offices plastered with anti-Semitic propaganda, Karlsplatz, 1 April 1933



Nazi propaganda, especially, made sure that orders to Jewish businesses declined. Citizens who patronised Jewish shops were abused in the street by uniformed officials or publicly denounced.

The “Aryanisation” carried out between 1933 and 1945 took the form of a looting campaign of enormous proportions. The chief instigator of this campaign from 1938 onwards, as well as its main beneficiary, was the state. Alongside the most important organ of regional authority, the *Gauleitung* of Munich and Upper Bavaria, the **Munich Regional Finance Administration** at Sophienstraße 6 <sup>36</sup> and the NSDAP's Main Office for Local Government in Gabelsbergerstraße <sup>37</sup> also played key roles in the unrestrained plundering of the Jews. The greed of the “Aryanisers” was directed

at private property, art collections and libraries, houses, flats and land, but also at commercial enterprises. A prominent example was the “**Modellhaus Adolf Rothschild**”, a dressmaker's and furrier's shop located at Briener Straße 12 <sup>38</sup>. Owing to a dramatic fall in sales, Adolf Rothschild was forced to stage a clearance sale in September 1938 and thus sell the business for well below its value. Although Rothschild himself managed to emigrate to London, most of his assets were confiscated.

From 1939 onwards many Jewish tenants were evicted from their flats to specially established “**Jewish houses**”.

The boycott of Jewish businesses on 1 April 1933 – Bamberger and Hertz, Kaufingerstr. 22





The burnt-out synagogue in Herzog-Rudolf-Straße, November 1938

Transit camp in Milbertshofen: from here Munich's Jews were deported to the extermination camps in the east, 20 November 1941.

Most of these were properties owned by Jews that had been taken over for this purpose. On the outskirts of the city, in Berg am Laim and Milbertshofen, two **transit camps** came into being, which served from the end of 1941 as clearing points for **deportations** to the death camps.

The pogrom of November 1938, known as the "**Kristallnacht**" (**Night of Broken Glass**), or "**Reichspogromnacht**", marked the beginning of the final murderous phase of the persecution of the Jews. Following the terrible events of 9/10 November 1938, which are today

recalled by a commemorative plaque in the Old Town Hall, the Jews finally lost all their remaining rights. They were forbidden to visit theatres, cinemas, restaurants, museums or parks. Their driving licences were withdrawn, their telephones were cut off and they were forbidden to keep pets or use public transport. This persecution redoubled Jewish efforts to emigrate, and by 1942 almost eight thousand of Munich's Jews had fled. However, starting in November 1941, close to three thousand citizens of Munich were deported to **Kaunas (Lithuania)**, **Piaski (Poland)**, **Auschwitz** and **Theresienstadt**, where they were murdered. Their memory is preserved by a commemorative plaque in the New Town Hall intended to express the sorrow and shame of the people of Munich and their horror at the silence that surrounded the persecution and deportations at the time.



39 Bavarian Protestant Church  
Katharina-von-Bora-Straße 13 [Arcisstraße 13]

40 Papal nunciature (until 1934)  
Brienner Straße [15]

Katharina-von-Bora-Straße 13 [Arcisstraße 13],  
Brienner Straße [15]



## Acquiescence and Resistance: The Church in the Nazi State

The role of the Churches and the clergy during the Nazi era was contradictory. Although some groups of Christians showed courageous resistance to the Nazis, high-ranking members of the clergy, in particular, remained silent in the face of the monstrous injustices being perpetrated. The Church leaders' reticence saved the Church from becoming involved in a conflict with the Nazi leadership that would have threatened its very existence, but at the same time it helped to shore up the regime.

The behaviour of Munich's Cardinal Michael von Faulhaber exemplified this ambivalence. In his sermons he distanced himself from Nazi ideology, and in 1937 he drafted the Papal encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* (With Burning Concern), a text that places him in the ranks of the general resistance to National Socialism. On the other hand, he avoided taking up any clear public

Until 1934 the Papal nunciature (the “Black House”) was located directly opposite the “Brown House” in Brienner Straße.



Hans Meiser, Bishop of Bavaria from 1933 to 1955, at the head-quarters of the Bavarian Protestant Church, 1934

position on the Nazi campaigns of violence and murder. Faulhaber’s commentary welcomed the new government, which, in his opinion, had “taken possession of power in a legal way unlike any revolutionary party”. His appraisal of the Nazis was certainly in tune with that of the **Vatican**, which in July 1933 concluded a **Concordat** with the German Reich, thus enhancing its international status. The chief author of the Concordat was **Eugenio Pacelli** (elected Pope Pius XII in 1939), the Vatican’s emissary to Munich until 1925. Moreover, from 1887 until 1934 the **Papal nunciature** (the “**Black House**”) <sup>40</sup> was located opposite the “Brown House” in Brienner Straße [15].

In the **Protestant Church** <sup>39</sup> **Hans Meiser**, the **Bishop of Bavaria**, who came to office in May 1933, was initially close to the regime. Not only did the Protestant Church “bring itself into line” and agree to follow the Führer, Meiser also showed sympathy for the “**German Christians**” (**Deutsche Christen**), a group with ties to the regime. Although Meiser distanced himself from this position in 1933–34 and went over to supporting the “**Confessing Church**”, which was critical of the Nazis, he professed to Hitler that he belonged

to his “most loyal opposition”. Moreover, there was no official protest by the Protestant Church against the injustices of the Nazi regime.

Nevertheless, Church **resistance** in Munich was not merely a marginal phenomenon. As a rule, though, resistance came not from leading or prominent Church functionaries but almost exclusively from the grass roots. Some courageous members of the clergy and lay people – such as **Rupert Mayer**, **Fritz Gerlich** and **Alfred Delp** – paid for their commitment with their health or their lives.



Pater Rupert Mayer (1876–1945) was a leading figure in Catholic resistance to the Nazis in Munich.



41 "Führerbau"  
Arcisstraße 12

42 Party Administration Building and Reich Treasury of the NSDAP  
Katharina-von-Bora-Straße 10 [Arcisstraße 10]

## Munich as an Arena for International Policies of Injustice

A central concern of the Nazi leadership was to overcome Germany's international isolation. The aggressive foreign policy it pursued to this end was designed to make the German Reich not only a dominant power within Europe but also a world power. Although foreign policy decisions were, of course, taken mainly in the capital Berlin, Munich also played an important role in the country's international ambitions.

Meetings with high-ranking guests from foreign states were held in the "Führerbau" (Hitler's office building) in Arcisstraße 41. Here the ground was prepared for important foreign policy moves – for example, in talks between Hitler and the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. Fascist Italy was Hitler's most important ally in his striving to make Germany a world power. The "Berlin-Rome Axis", which came into being in 1936, provided

Mussolini's state visit to Munich – Hitler and the Italian dictator in front of the Temples of Honour (in the background the "Führerbau"), 25 September 1937



both states with a vital basis for pursuing their expansionist interests. This was one of the reasons why Mussolini made several state visits to Munich. In September 1937 the Nazi regime used a visit by "Il Duce" for a display of national consciousness and military strength. This demonstration of combat-readiness went hand in hand with an aggressive German foreign policy, which included military intervention in the **Spanish Civil War** of 1936–37 and the **annexation of Austria** in March 1938.

At the height of the Sudeten crisis in Czechoslovakia a meeting was held in September 1938 attended by Hitler, Mussolini, the French Prime Minister Edouard Daladier and the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. This meeting, held in the "**Führerbau**", resulted in the conclusion of the

**Munich Agreement**, which was to have grave consequences: in a bid to achieve "peace in our time" Daladier and Chamberlain allowed themselves to be pressured into conceding the Sudetenland to Germany. This policy of appeasement represented a major foreign policy victory for Hitler.

The "**Führerbau**" and the **Party Administration Building** located on the south side of Brienner Straße 42, where the **files on NSDAP members** were kept, were built according to plans by the architect Paul Ludwig Troost (1878–1934). After 1957 the former "**Führerbau**" became the University of Music and Performing Arts. The former Administration Building has housed the Central Institute for History of Art since 1947.



The "**Führerbau**" of the NSDAP (left), completed in 1937, was the venue for the Munich Agreement.

The "**four powers conference**" (from I. Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler, Mussolini) on 29 September 1938 sealed the fate of the Sudetenland, handing it over to the German Reich. Great Britain and France hoped thus to avert war.



**Brienner Straße, Karolinenplatz (Barer Straße, Karlstraße, Katharina-von-Bora-Straße)**



## Munich, the Party Headquarters – Berlin, the Centre of Power

As the capital of the German Reich, Berlin was the political centre of the Nazi state. Munich, as the “Capital of the Movement”, served above all for the glorification of the NSDAP. It was also the home of the Reich leadership of the NSDAP. Other Nazi organisations and associations had either their headquarters or branch offices in the area around Königsplatz.

After 1933 Munich increasingly played a subordinate role to Berlin in the Nazi power system. Nevertheless, the “Capital of the Movement” remained the centre of the party’s bureaucratic apparatus. A number of influential party figures, like Rudolf Heß, the **Führer’s deputy** from 1936 to 1941, had their offices here. Martin Bormann, the **head of the Party Chancellery** from 1941 to 1945, occupied the former Papal nunciature 40, while the headquarters of

40 Staff of Hitler’s deputy, Rudolf Heß (1936–1941); Party Chancellery Martin Bormann (from 1941); Brienner Straße [15]

44 NSDAP Supreme Court/ administrative office (1935–1945) Karolinenplatz 4

45 Main archives, Reich organisational leadership, main personnel and organisational office of the NSDAP (1934–1945) Barer Straße 15

43 Central information board on the former party quarter; intersection Arcisstraße/Brienner Straße



Hitler's deputy  
Rudolf Heß  
(1894 –1987)

In the Temples of Honour the coffins of the “martyrs” of the failed putsch of 1923 were publicly displayed.



the Reich Treasurer of the NSDAP were in the Party Administration Building <sup>42</sup>.

The Führer's deputy (from 1941 onwards the **Party Chancellery**) was in charge of control and leadership functions vis-à-vis the party and the state – for instance, in racial and personnel policy. The huge bureaucracy headed by the Reich Treasurer (which at times employed more than 3,200 people) was not only responsible for managing and increasing the NSDAP's enormous assets, but also supervised the party's membership, which at the end of the war numbered around eight million.

The **Party Supreme Court** at Karolinenplatz 4 <sup>44</sup> was responsible for settling internal party conflicts and disciplining individual members whose behaviour might be damaging to the party. The Main Archives of the NSDAP, headed by Robert Ley <sup>45</sup>, were housed at Barer Straße 15. These archives played an important role in portraying the history of the party in pseudo-religious, mythological terms.

Between 1933 and 1938 the nineteenth-century ensemble on Königsplatz was modified to make the square a central parading ground and venue for celebrating the Nazi cult.





## Königsplatz, Arcis-/Katharina-von-Bora-Straße Ecke Brienner Straße



### Königsplatz: Showcase of a Dictatorship

No other place in Munich is so closely connected with the Nazi movement and its public shows of power as Königsplatz <sup>46</sup>. Its grand classicist ambience made the square the ideal backdrop for staging Nazi spectacles. In 1935 the square's appearance was modified considerably: it was turned into a parade ground and two Temples of Honour were built, along with other new buildings, on its eastern perimeter.

By virtue of its size and central location, Königsplatz had already become a gathering point for political meetings during the 1920s, and even before 1933 the NSDAP showed an interest in this public space so close to its "Brown House". As its membership and political significance grew, so did the party's need for ostentatious parades. In 1933 Königsplatz was the venue for one of the first



Military parade  
on Königsplatz,  
19 November 1938

major public demonstrations of power. During the nationally organised **book-burning** on 10 May 1933, works by Erich Kästner, Heinrich Mann, Karl Marx, Erich Maria Remarque, Kurt Tucholsky, Theodor Wolff and many others were burned here.

In 1935 twenty thousand granite paving slabs were laid on the square and it was equipped with a modern electrical system capable of providing theatrical lighting for public events. In Arcisstraße two Temples of Honour and two monumental party buildings flanked the whole ensemble. The square was thus turned into the central parade ground for mass rallies in Munich.

The newly built **Temples of Honour** <sup>47</sup> and the two central **party buildings** <sup>41</sup> <sup>42</sup> in Arcisstraße fundamentally altered the original architectural balance of the square. The coffins of the “martyrs” of the failed putsch of November 1923 were put on public show in the Temples of Honour, which served as the quasi-religious focus of the square. An “eternal vigil” was posted here round the clock. The Glyptothek (1830), the Propylaea (1862) and the Antikensammlung (built in 1845 and now a museum housing a collection of classical art) served from then on merely as a classicist backdrop.



Parade to mark 9 November, in the background the Propylaea from the era of King Ludwig I, 9 November 1935



The book-burning on Königsplatz on 10 May 1933



[Herzog-Max-Straße 3–7], [Herzog-Rudolf-Straße 3–5]



## Dealing with the Past – the Post-War Nazi Heritage

By the time the U.S. Army entered Munich on 30 April 1945 the city had been largely reduced to rubble. Later reconstruction efforts aimed to restore the city to how it had been prior to the Third Reich. Nazi-era buildings that had remained intact were assigned new functions and no attempt was made to draw attention to their former use. The question of how Munich should address its past therefore became a controversial issue that sparked many debates.

Air raids had a huge impact on the city and the lives of its citizens, with bombs destroying a large part of the city centre. American forces liberated Dachau concentration camp on 29 April 1945 and reached Munich a day later. The capitulation of the German armed forces on 8 May 1945 sealed the fate of the Nazi regime, and an American military government took control of Munich.

48 Liberal Synagogue (demolished 1938)  
Herzog-Max-Straße 3–7

49 Orthodox Synagogue (destroyed 1938)  
Herzog-Rudolf-Straße 3–5



The New Town Hall on Marienplatz served as the headquarters of the American military government.

The city centre in 1945 with the Frauenkirche in the background



After the war, former concentration camp inmates, forced labourers, POWs and refugees from the east gathered in Munich. Very few of Munich's Jewish citizens survived the concentration camps to return to the city. The **Jewish Community** <sup>48</sup> <sup>49</sup>, which had twelve thousand members before the Nazis took power, had only three hundred at the end of 1945.

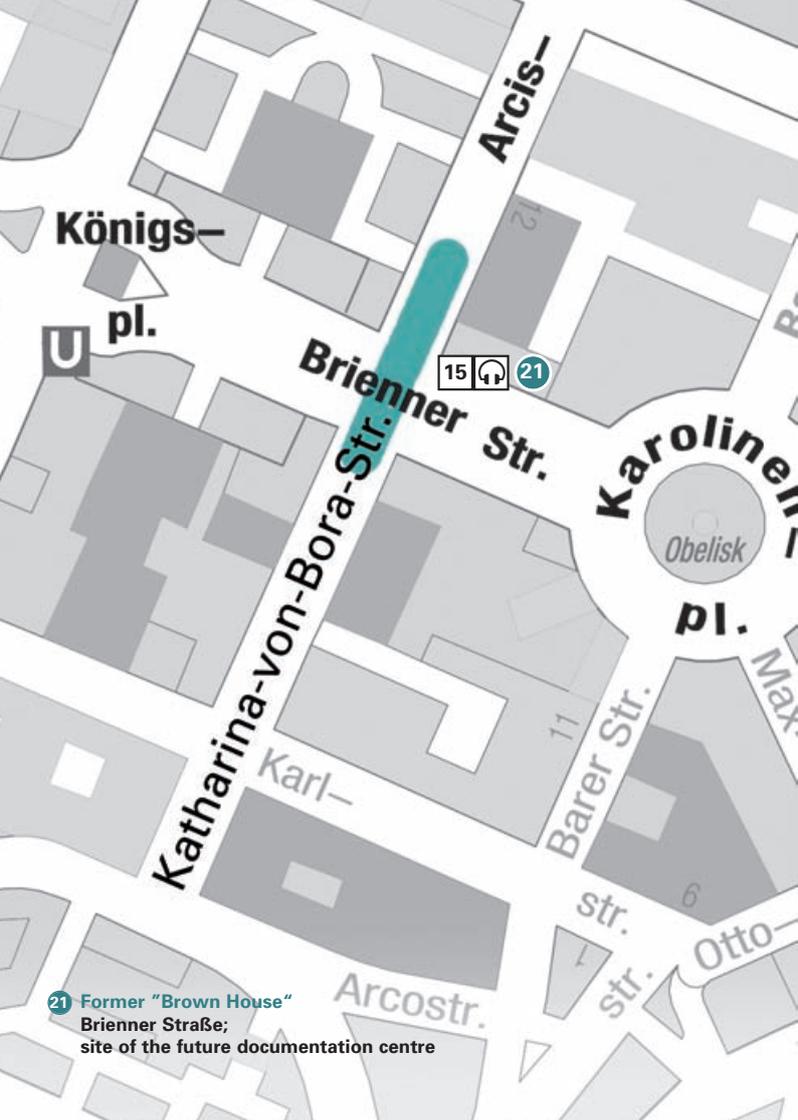
Today there is little visual evidence of the era of Nazi rule or the damage caused by the war. When the city was rebuilt, advocates of **reconstruction** of the pre-1933 architecture won the day. The Temples of Honour on Königsplatz were demolished by the American military government in 1947, although the pedestals were later declared historic monuments. The granite slabs that had been laid on Königsplatz in the mid-1930s were replaced with grass in 1988, restoring the square to its original appearance.



Commemoration at the Feldherrnhalle, 1947



A small plaque mounted in 1984 on the building now occupied by the Bayerische Landesbank (Bank of Bavaria), at the intersection of Briener Straße and Türkenstraße, states that this was the site of the Gestapo headquarters.



**21** Former "Brown House"  
Brienner Straße;  
site of the future documentation centre

## The Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism in Brienner Straße

Addressing the history of National Socialism in a manner designed to combat ignorance has in recent decades become a central aspect of the political and cultural identity of the Federal Republic of Germany. Today, more than ever before, the debate about the Holocaust and the Nazi regime are part of the German culture of remembrance, which is increasingly focusing on places associated with those responsible for Nazi crimes in addition to places connected with their victims.

The first efforts to document the city's Nazi past in the form of a public education centre date back to 1945. In 1989 the city council suggested establishing a "House of Contemporary History" on the site of the former "Brown House". This project was not pursued, however.



In 1947 the remains of the Temples of Honour were demolished in line with a directive issued by the Allied Control Council on 13 May 1946, ordering all Nazi monuments to be removed.

Not least as a result of efforts by individual citizens and citizens' initiatives, the idea was revived in 2001. The City of Munich and the Free State of Bavaria resolved to create a place in Munich to commemorate the history of National Socialism and to address the city's role during the Nazi era. Following some discussion, a decision was eventually taken to build a documentation centre as a place where citizens and other visitors could learn about political history. The location chosen for the new centre was the site of the former "Brown House" <sup>21</sup> (destroyed during the war) in Briener Straße at the heart of the former party quarter.

Between 2006 and 2008 the City of Munich, the State of Bavaria and the German federal government reached an agreement to split the cost of building the centre three ways. The winning design in the international architectural competition for the new centre was a plain, white cube-shaped building conceived to contrast with the surrounding Nazi-era architecture. An interdisciplinary academic team at the city's Department of Culture is currently working on a concept for the future exhibition and educational facilities at the new centre.

The centre will be built as a cooperation project by the City of Munich, the Free State of Bavaria and the German federal government. Following its inauguration, planned for the end of 2013, the Documentation Centre will be run by the City of Munich.

The winning design for the new building was submitted by the Berlin firm of architects Georg • Scheel • Wetzel. In addition to four floors of exhibition space it will also include educational facilities, a library and a hall for holding public events.



## Further information

### The Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism on the internet

For more detailed information please visit our website:

[www.ns-dokumentationszentrum-muenchen.de](http://www.ns-dokumentationszentrum-muenchen.de)

### ThemenGeschichtspfad (Thematic History Trail) "National Socialism in Munich"



The thematic history trail as a brochure, an enlarged audio version and a web presentation is available both in German and English.

[www.muenchen.de/tgp](http://www.muenchen.de/tgp)

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