

other culture, which is why he claimed to be so optimistic about Germany's future.

This message of National Socialism as a moral ideal and a spiritual crusade was appealing to many, many Germans—and especially the young. By 1925 the party membership in the north was mostly young: two-thirds of the members were under thirty years of age, and in a few years the Nazis had attracted a large following among university students.

Goebbels especially called out to the idealistic young to be the heart of the Nazi future in Germany:

The old ones don't even want to understand that we young people even exist. They defend their power to the last. But one day they will be defeated after all. Youth finally must be victorious. We young ones, we shall attack. The attacker is always stronger than the defender. If we free ourselves, we can also liberate the whole working class. And the liberated working class will release the Fatherland from its chains.²⁶

12. Nazi democratic success

For the Nazis, the clear, firm, and passionate advocacy of their political goals, along with efficient organization and propaganda, brought them increasing democratic success in Germany.

After years of work, by 1928 the party had only twelve seats in the Reichstag, Germany's national parliament. But in the election of September 1930, they increased that number to 107 seats. Less than two years later, in the election of July 1932, they increased that number dramatically to 230 seats. A few months later they lost thirty-four seats in a November election and now had 196. But in January of 1933, Hitler was

²⁶ Goebbels 1929, p. 111.

appointed Chancellor of Germany, one of the two highest positions in the land, and the Nazis were in a position to consolidate their power. In March of 1933 they called yet another election in order to get a clear mandate from the German people about their plans for Germany. The election had a huge turnout and the Nazis scored huge gains, winning 43.9% of the popular vote and 288 seats in the Reichstag. 288 seats are more seats than their next three competitors combined.

Table 1. Germany: March 5, 1933 election. Seats in the Reichstag:²⁷

NSDAP (National Socialist)	288
SPD (Socialist)	120
KPD (Communist)	81
Zentrum (Center, Catholic)	73
Kampfront SWR (Nationalist)	52
Bayerische Volkspartei	19
Deutsche Staatspartei	5
Christlich-Sozialer Volksdienst	4
Deutsche Volkspartei (Nationalist)	2
Deutsche Bauernpartei	2
Württembergische Landbund	1

By early 1933, the National Socialist German Workers' Party was in control.



Early NSDAP leaders

²⁷ Craig 1978, p. 576.