

# Nazi paramilitants



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The Night of the Long Knives, in June 1934, saw the wiping out of the SA's leadership and others who had angered Hitler in the recent past in Nazi Germany. After this date, the SS led by Heinrich Himmler was to become far more powerful in Nazi Germany. For all the power the Enabling Act gave Hitler, he still felt threatened by some in the Nazi Party. He was also worried that the regular army had not given an oath of allegiance. Hitler knew that the army hierarchy held him in disdain as he was 'only ' a corporal in their eyes.

More so; some of the important would not support Hitler and others would not support Hitler while these people remained. Some SA members were also keen on the original ideas of Nazis- A National Socialist Revolution. They wanted the rich landowners and businessmen to be swept away or taken over. Gregor Strasser was the main believer in this and, to fuel Hitler's rage, had a lot of supporters. Ernest Roehm, leader of SA, also clashed with Hitler. He wanted his brown-shirts to replace The German Army. Hitler got his ' buddies' to compile a list of such disloyal men.

The SS, thus, arrested dozens of SA men. Many were shot dead, others were sent to concentration camps, never to be seen again. Roehm was arrested and was shot dead. Strasser was shot dead. Unknown to others, Hitler also takes the opportunity to annihilate Von Scheicher, the ex-chancellor. Thus, over 1000 opponents were murdered. Hitler thus became the President, when the ex-President ' died'. The Night of the Long Knives not only removed the SA leaders but also got Hitler the army's oath that he so needed. By the summer of 1934, the SA's numbers had swollen to 2 million men.

They were under the control of Ernst Rohm, a loyal follower of Hitler since the early days of the Nazi Party. The SA had given the Nazi's an iron fist with which to disrupt other political parties meetings before January 1933. The SA was also used to enforce law after Hitler became Chancellor in January 1933. To all intents, they were the enforcers of the Nazi Party and there is no evidence that Rohm was ever planning anything against Hitler. However, Rohm had made enemies within the Nazi Party - Himmler, Goering and Goebbels were angered by the power he had gained and convinced Hitler that this was a threat to his position.

By June 1934, the regular army hierarchy also saw the SA as a threat to their authority. The SA outnumbered the army by 1934 and Rohm had openly spoken about taking over the regular army by absorbing it into the SA. Such talk alarmed the army's leaders. By the summer of 1934, Hitler had decided that Rohm was a 'threat' and he made a pact with the army. If Rohm and the other SA leaders were removed, the rank and file SA men would come under the control of the army but the army would have to swear an oath of loyalty to Hitler. The army agreed and Rohm's fate was sealed.

On the night of June 29th - June 30th 1934, units of the SS arrested the leaders of the SA and other political opponents. Men such as Gregor Strasser, von Schleicher and von Bredow were arrested and none of them had any connection with Rohm. The arrests carried on for 2 more nights. Seventy seven men were executed on charges of treason though historians tend to think the figure is higher. The SA was brought to heel and placed under the command of the army. Hitler received an oath of allegiance from all those who served in the army. Rohm was shot. Others were bludgeoned to death.

The first the public officially knew about the event was on July 13th 1934, when Hitler told the Reichstag that met in the Kroll Opera House, Berlin, that for the duration of the arrests that he and he alone was the judge in Germany and that the SS carried out his orders. From that time on the SS became a feared force in Nazi Germany lead by Heinrich Himmler. The efficiency with which the SS had carried out its orders greatly impressed Hitler and Himmler was to acquire huge power within Nazi Germany. This shows that the life of the Nazi paramilitants were not pleasant.

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