

THE SA

In 1921 [Adolf Hitler](#) formed his own private army called Sturm Abteilung (Storm Section). The SA (also known as stormtroopers or brownshirts) were instructed to disrupt the meetings of political opponents and to protect Hitler from revenge attacks. Captain [Ernst Roehm](#) of the Bavarian Army played an important role in recruiting these men, and became the SA's first leader

Source 1 [Ernst Roehm](#), article published about [Adolf Hitler](#) becoming Chancellor of Germany (June, 1933)

A tremendous victory has been won. But not an absolute victory! The SA and the SS will not tolerate the German revolution going to sleep and being betrayed at the half-way stage by non-combatants. Not for the sake of the SA and SS but for Germany's sake. For the SA is the last armed force of the nation, the last defence against communism. If the German revolution is wrecked by the reactionary opposition, incompetence, or laziness, the German people will fall into despair and will be an easy prey for the bloodstained frenzy coming from the depths of Asia.

THE SS

In 1925 [Adolf Hitler](#) formed his own personal bodyguard called the Schutzstaffel (SS). Four years later Hitler appointed [Heinrich Himmler](#) as the leader of the SS. By the time of Himmler's appointment the SS had only 280 members. They wore the same uniform as the SA except for a black cap with a silver death's head badge and a black tie.

THE SD

In August 1931 the [Nazi Party](#) decided to have its own intelligence and security body. [Heinrich Himmler](#) therefore created the SD (Sicherheitsdienst). [Reinhard Heydrich](#) was appointed head of the organization and it was kept distinct from the uniformed [SS \(Schutzstaffel\)](#).

When [Adolf Hitler](#) became chancellor in 1933 the SD was given extra power to deal with all opposition to the Nazi government. On 30th June 1934, the SD played an important role in the [Night of the Long Knives](#).

THE GESTAPO

The **Gestapo** was the official [secret police](#) of [Nazi Germany](#). The Gestapo had the authority to investigate cases of [treason](#), [espionage](#), [sabotage](#) and criminal attacks on the [Nazi Party](#) and [Germany](#). The basic Gestapo law passed by the government in 1936 gave the Gestapo *permission* to operate without [any](#) boundaries. The Gestapo was specifically exempted from responsibility to administrative courts, where citizens normally could [sue](#) the state to conform to laws. The SS officer [Werner Best](#), summed up this policy by saying, "As long as the police carries out the will of the leadership, it is acting legally."

