

The aftermath of the putsch

Rallies were repeatedly held in the city over the next few days by Hitler's supporters, following the failed putsch. There were occasional shootings, too. The NSDAP was banned but a general sympathy for the National Socialists remained. In the Bavarian state elections in April 1924, the so-called 'Völkischer Block' won 33 percent of the vote – more than the Socialists and Communists combined. The economic and political situation eased slightly when the *Rentenmark* was introduced in November 1923.



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“This is not justice, this is arbitrariness.”

The criminal law professor Alexander Graf zu Dona on the court's wrong decision not to deport Hitler

On trial for high treason

On 26 February 1924, the trial for high treason against the putschists began at the *Volksgerecht* (People's Court) in the Infantry School building. The public prosecutor read out the charge. This was followed by a four-hour defence speech by Adolf Hitler who, during the course of the trial, was repeatedly allowed to stand as a prosecutor and was even allowed to question witnesses. When the verdict of treason was pronounced against him on 1 April 1924 it was clear that justice had been undermined. The extreme leniency of the presiding judge Georg Neithardt, who shared the putschists' political views, determined the outcome of the trial. As an Austrian, Hitler should have been expelled from the country. Instead, he was only sentenced to the statutory minimum sentence of five years' in prison – with the prospect of probation. Ludendorff was acquitted.

From his imprisonment in Landsberg Hitler was able to stylise himself as a national hero thanks to numerous influential supporters. With his early release after only nine months in prison and the renewed legalisation of the NSDAP his path to the founding of the so-called 'Third Reich' was free.

“The court has also come to the conclusion that the defendants were guided in their actions by a purely patriotic spirit and the noblest selfless will.”

Excerpt from the verdict given at Hitler's trial

Glorification

From a military point of view, the putsch had failed. The trial, the term of imprisonment in Landsberg, the putschists who had been killed and the ban on the NSDAP, however, were glorified into a myth and became the most important propaganda tools for Hitler's rise to power.

Hitler dedicated the propaganda manifesto *Mein Kampf*, that was written during his time while imprisoned under privileged conditions in Landsberg, to the 'fallen' putschists of 9 November 1923. He stylised them as the *Blutzeugen* – 'blood witnesses' – of the Movement who had died in the 'faithful belief in the resurrection of their people'. As such, they lay 'in state' in iron sarcophagi in the so-called 'Temples of Honour' on Munich's Königsplatz from 1935 onwards.

The former conspirator Gustav von Kahr was murdered as a traitor by the Nazis in Dachau concentration camp in June 1934.