



Berlin, 13 March 1920: right-wing soldiers attempt to overthrow the government.

Left-wing revolutions were not the only expressions of dissatisfaction with post-war political, social and economic arrangements. Germany was a cauldron of left- and right-wing activism and there were two right-wing attempts to seize power. The Kapp *putsch* of March 1920 is a footnote in history. The Munich beer hall *putsch* of November 1923 at the time seemed also to be insignificant but adumbrated the will for power of Adolf Hitler. Sadly its significance is only evident with hindsight.

On 13 March 1920 the Right attempted to seize Berlin and proclaim a new nationalist government. The putative new Chancellor was Wolfgang Kapp, a former Prussian civil servant and founder member of the wartime Fatherland party. He was backed by General von Luttwitz and Captain Herrmann Ehrhardt, plus disgruntled members of the *freikorps* attempting to forestall disbandment. Ebert's legitimate government called upon General von Seeckt and the *Reichswehr* to stop the rising, but he was told that '*Reichswehr* do not fire on *Reichswehr*'. The legitimate government escaped to Stuttgart and then to Weimar, and called a general strike. The German officer corps remained aloof and Kapp's regime was not officially recognised abroad. Opposed by workers and secret police, Kapp's fragile authority dwindled and he and Luttwitz fled on 17 March, just four days after

Revolutionary uprisings



Munich, 9 November 1923: Himmler and other Nazis man the barricades.

they had declared their intentions. Nevertheless, the Left had been roused to defend social democracy and unrest continued for several weeks, especially in the Ruhr.

The second right-wing rising took place in Munich, on 8 and 9 November 1923. The National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) — the Nazis — broadly echoed the fascism of Mussolini. Authoritarian, nationalistic and violent, they were bitterly opposed to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and blamed Germany's spiralling economic problems on the Weimar government. The Munich beer-hall *putsch* signalled Hitler's intention to gain power, but it was ill-prepared and premature. They proclaimed the beginning

of a 'national revolution' to establish a Nazi regime; seizure of the Bavarian state government was preceded by an intended 'march' on Berlin (following the lead set by Mussolini's March on Rome). But Seeckt, called upon by Ebert to defend the Weimar Republic, this time opted to use the *Reichswehr* against the conspirators. The 'march' was fired on by police and sixteen of Hitler's Nazis were killed. Hitler was arrested and jailed in April 1924 for nine months; while imprisoned he set out his political ideas in *Mein Kampf*, published in 1925.