

Rebirth of the Reich land

Level 1 | Elementary

1 Key vocabulary

Fill the gaps using these words:

reputation
Holocaust

attractive
unemployed

federal
skinheads

1. If something is _____ it is very pleasant in some way.
2. If a person is _____, he or she has no job.
3. The _____ was the organised killing of millions of people during World War II.
4. _____ are young men who cut off all their hair.
5. _____ is the opinion other people have about how good or bad someone or something is.
6. _____ means connected to the national government of a country.

2 Find the information

Find the answers to these questions in the article:

1. Where is Saxon Switzerland?
2. What is the NPD?
3. How many NPD MPs are in the Saxon parliament?
4. How many people died in the bombing of Dresden?
5. When was the bombing of Dresden?
6. When did Adolf Hitler come to power?

Now look in the text and check your answers.

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Luke Harding

The German region of Saxon Switzerland is very attractive with many hills, rivers and forests. During the communist period, Saxon Switzerland was in East Germany and was well known as a centre for walking and water sports like kayaking. Now it is famous for a different reason. Sixty years after the end of the Second World War, Germany's neo-Nazi political party is coming back.

Last September there were federal elections in the Saxony region. The neo-Nazi National Party of Germany (NPD) won 9.2% of the vote, giving it 12 MPs in the new Saxon parliament in Dresden. Now members of the NPD are trying to do things which make people notice them. Last month, for example NPD MPs walked out of the parliament during a one-minute silence in memory of the victims of the Holocaust in the Second World War. Last weekend the party and its supporters marched in memory of the 35,000 Germans killed during the attack on Dresden 60 years ago by British and American planes. According to Holger Apfel, the NPD's 33-year-old leader, the attack on Dresden during February 13-14, 1945, was a war crime.

Most German politicians are surprised by the success of the NPD but this success has been at a time when more than 5 million Germans are unemployed. Many people do not trust the main political parties. Edmund Stoiber, the conservative leader of Bavaria's CSU party, says that the situation in present-day Germany is like the situation in 1932, when millions of people were unemployed. One year later Adolf Hitler came to power.

Frieder Haase is the mayor of Koenigstein, a town 30km south of Dresden. He says the

situation is different now and it is not like 1932. He says he wants to stop 1933 from happening again. Koenigstein, with a population of 3,200, is a small town in the middle of Saxon Switzerland. During last September's elections almost 20% of its population voted for the NPD. Who, then, are the NPD's supporters? "They look like you and me. They are completely normal," says Haase. "They work on building sites. They are women shop assistants. They don't look like skinheads."

German newspapers have different explanations for the success of the NPD. They say it is because Saxony was communist until 1989 or because 18% of the population is unemployed. They also say that many people do not like the red-green government in Berlin. The NPD, meanwhile, is working hard to increase its support, particularly among young people - with barbecues, discos and canoeing trips.

The NPD's new MPs don't look like skinheads either. They wear suits; they are in their 30s; and they are very polite. Holger Apfel says that other political parties do not take him seriously. "We have very good local structures" he says. The NPD's views are popular with some German voters - and above all its argument that it is time Germans stopped feeling guilty about being German.

Frieder Haase and other Koenigstein citizens are fighting against the town's reputation as a neo-Nazi centre. "The Nazi period is not going to happen again," Haase says. "Germany lost the First World War and in 1933 it was a broken country. Then a big, powerful man arrived - Adolf Hitler. Things are different now."

The Guardian Weekly 18-02-2005, page 20

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3 Comprehension check

Match the beginnings with the endings.

1. The NPD has many supporters ...
 2. NPD MPs ...
 3. Many people vote for the NPD ...
 4. German newspapers say the NPD's success
 5. Almost 20% of the people of Koenigstein ...
 6. The mayor of Koenigstein ...
-
- a. ... because they do not like the red-green government in Berlin.
 - b. ... does not think the Nazi period will happen again.
 - c. ... do not look like skinheads.
 - d. ... voted for the NPD at the last election.
 - e. ... among young people.
 - f. ... is because of high unemployment.

4 Vocabulary - find the words

1. Find two water sports in the text.
2. In the first paragraph, find a word that means 'well-known'.
3. In the third paragraph, find an adjective and two nouns beginning with 's'.
4. In the fourth paragraph, find a word meaning the number of people living in a town.
5. In the fifth paragraph, find a word for a meal cooked outside.
6. In the sixth paragraph, find an adjective that is the opposite of 'rude'.

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5 Vocabulary - puzzle

Reorder the letters to make words from the text:

1. ssseccu
2. tciimsv
3. eeyluompnd
4. desurpsi
5. ltnoceei

6 Grammar focus - *there is/ are/ was/ were*

Look at this example:

There are 12 NPD MPs in the Saxon parliament.

Complete these sentences using the correct form of the verb 'to be':

1. Last September there _____ federal elections in Saxony.
2. There _____ a lot of unemployment in Germany.
3. There _____ many hills and rivers in Saxon Switzerland.
4. There _____ many NPD supporters in Koenigstein.
5. There _____ 35,000 victims of the 1945 attack on Dresden.
6. There _____ a lot of unemployed people in Saxony.

7 Discussion

Do you agree with the main idea of the text that cultural and economic forces are more powerful than conventional military forces?

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KEY

1 Key vocabulary

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1. attractive | 2. unemployed | 3. Holocaust |
| 4. skinheads | 5. reputation | 6. federal |

2 Find the information

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Germany (East Germany) | 2. National Party of Germany | 3. 12 |
| 4. 35,000 | 5. 1945 | 6. 1933 |

3 Comprehension check

- | | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| 1. e; | 2. c; | 3. a; | 4. f; | 5. d; | 6. b |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|

4 Vocab 1

Find the words

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. kayaking, canoeing | 2. famous | 3. surprised, situation, success |
| 4. population | 5. barbecue. | 6. polite |

5 Vocab 2

Puzzle

Reorder the letters to make words from the text:

- | | | |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1. success | 2. victims | 3. unemployed |
| 4. surprised | 5. election | |

6 Grammar focus

There is/are/was/were

- | | | |
|--------|---------|--------|
| 1. was | 2. is | 3. are |
| 4. are | 5. were | 6. are |