

KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER: Germany. Part 2: Germany and the Depression (1929-1934)

Key words (underlined)

Key Dates

1928	Nazi Party only won 3% of vote in the Reichstag (parliament) election
1929	Wall Street Crash led to <u>Great Depression</u> in Germany.
1930	Nazis gained 18% of vote in election.
1932	Six million Germans unemployed. July 1932 Nazis gained 37% of vote in election. November 1932 Nazis lost votes in election (33%), but still very popular.
1933	On 30 January Hitler was appointed Chancellor. Nazis gained 44% of vote in March election.

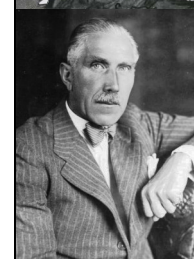
Impact of the Depression (Germany's problems)

Wall Street Crash	In October 1929, the Wall Street stock market in America crashed. It sparked a worldwide economic crisis, known as the <u>Great Depression</u> .
Depression	The Depression hit Germany hard. Americans could not afford to buy any foreign goods, including those in Germany. Soon German factories had to close down and Germans lost their jobs.
Dawes Plan	American banks demanded back all the money it had loaned Germany since 1924 in the <u>Dawes Plan</u> . Thousands more German businesses went bankrupt.
Unemployment	By 1932 almost 6 million people were out of work (unemployed). Many Germans became homeless and could not afford to buy food.
Weimar government	The Weimar government failed to deal with the problems of the Depression. The government actually made things worse, for example it reduced unemployment benefit when growing numbers of unemployed needed all the help they could get.
President Hindenburg	President Hindenburg used <u>Article 48</u> (emergency powers) of the Weimar Constitution to rule Germany without consulting the Reichstag.
Extremist parties	Many Germans turned away from the <u>moderate Weimar politicians</u> and now looked towards <u>extremist parties</u> who promised <u>radical solutions</u> to Germany's problems. This included the Communists and Nazi Party.
Communist Party	<u>Communism</u> increased in influence. The communists promised to represent workers' needs and make German society more fair. They gained a lot of support from unemployed Germans in the Depression.
Nazi Party	Nazi support grew even more rapidly than the Communists. The <u>Nazis extreme ideas</u> about how to run Germany appealed to young people, unemployed and even businessmen.
Election results	In the 1930 election, Nazi support increased from 3% to 18% of the vote. By July 1932 the Nazis were the most popular party with 14 million votes, which was about 37% of the vote. The Nazis became the largest party in the Reichstag.

Rise of Hitler

(Hitler and the Nazis actions)

- **Hitler** was able to exploit the Depression and the failure of the Weimar government to increase his popularity.
 - He was an effective speaker and was able to fill his audiences with hope.
 - Hitler blamed the Jews, communists, Weimar politicians and the Treaty of Versailles for Germany's problems. Jews and communists were used as scapegoats that gave Germans someone to blame for Germany's problems (even though it was not really their fault!)
 - Support for the Nazis increased as Hitler also promised to provide "work and bread."
 - Hitler promised to make Germany a great and powerful country. He came across as a strong leader and Germany's saviour.
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- **Fear of communism** led businessmen and farmers to support the Nazis.
 - In 1917, there had been a communist revolution in Russia, and the Communist Party took over all businesses and farms.
 - There had been attempts by German communists to take over Germany after World War I.
 - Hitler promised to fight communism. This gained him the support of businessmen and farmers who did not want to lose their wealth.
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- **The Stormtroopers (SA, Brownshirts)** were Hitler's private army.
 - There were 400,000 men in the SA by 1932.
 - The SA gave the Nazi Party a military feel, which made it seem organised and disciplined.
 - The SA protected Hitler's meetings.
 - Many Germans welcomed the fact that Hitler used the SA to fight communist gangs.
 - The SA smashed up communist election meetings and rallies. This made it very difficult for the Communists to run effective election campaigns.
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- **Nazi propaganda, campaigning and use of technology** made the Nazis appear organised, disciplined and modern.
 - The Nazis used new media like radio broadcasts and cinema news reports.
 - The Nazis also bought newspapers and printed millions of leaflets and posters.
 - Hitler took part in huge parades and mass rallies where he could speak to thousands of people at one time.
 - **Joseph Goebbels**, in charge of Nazi propaganda from 1928, organised a campaign to fly Hitler to rallies all over Germany by aeroplane. This was called 'Hitler over Germany.'
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- After the Reichstag election of July 1932 the Nazis were the largest party in the Reichstag.
 - Hitler demanded the post of Chancellor from **President Hindenburg**. But Hindenburg did not trust Hitler and refused to make him Chancellor.
 - Instead, Hindenburg used his emergency powers to appoint a politician from the Centre Party, **Franz von Papen**.
 - However, Papen got little support in the Reichstag and he was forced to resign.
 - Hindenburg then made one of his advisers, Kurt von Schleicher, Chancellor.
 - Schleicher failed to get support in the Reichstag and within a month was forced to resign.
 - Hindenburg realised he needed a Chancellor who actually had support in the Reichstag.
 - In January 1933 Hindenburg invited Hitler to become Chancellor. Hindenburg continued to distrust Hitler.
 - Hindenburg persuaded Hitler to accept **Papen** as Vice Chancellor and filled the government with Papen's supporters. There were only two other Nazis in the government.
 - In this way Hindenburg and Papen expected to be able to control Hitler.



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The establishment of Hitler's dictatorship

Dictator: ruler with total control over how a country is governed.

Date:	Key event:	Details:
January 1933	<i>Hitler became Chancellor</i>	As <u>Chancellor</u> , Hitler was not in total control. Hitler owed his job to President Hindenburg who could easily replace him. The Nazis did not have a majority in the Reichstag (parliament) and so Hitler could not make any laws he wanted.
February 1933	<i>Hitler called a new election</i>	Hitler hoped to use the election to get a <u>majority</u> in the Reichstag. He now had greater influence over many newspapers and radio stations. He used his control of the police to intimidate voters and beat up opponents.
27 February 1933	<u>Reichstag Fire</u>	A week before the election, the Reichstag burned down. A young communist, <u>Van der Lubbe</u> , was arrested and blamed for the fire. Hitler claimed the fire was part of a <u>Communist plot</u> to take over the country.
28 February 1933	<u>Law for the Protection of People and the State.</u>	Hitler persuaded President Hindenburg to sign an <u>emergency decree</u> (a type of law). This allowed Communist leaders to be imprisoned without trial. Communist meetings were broken up and their newspapers closed down. The 81 Communist members of the Reichstag were banned from taking their seats.
March 1933	<i>March Election</i>	The Nazis won more seats than ever before (44% of the vote), but Hitler did not get the majority he wanted. Hitler persuaded the Nationalist Party to join the Nazis. This gave Hitler a majority in the Reichstag.
23 March 1933	<u>Enabling Act</u>	Hitler forced the Reichstag to pass the Enabling Act. This gave him the power to make laws without asking the Reichstag for four years. The Enabling Act gave Hitler the power to become a dictator.
April 1933	<i>Hitler immediately used new powers</i>	Nazis were put in charge of all local government, councils and the police. The <u>Gestapo</u> (secret police) was formed. The first <u>concentration camp</u> for political prisoners was opened in Dachau, Germany.
May	<i>Banned all <u>trade unions</u></i>	By removing trade unions, Hitler had taken away a worker's way of complaining about pay and conditions.
July 1933	<u>Law Against the Formation of New Parties</u>	Hitler banned all political parties in Germany, except the Nazis. Germany was now a <u>one-party state</u> .
June 1934	<i>The <u>Night of the Long Knives</u>.</i>	The leader of the SA <u>Ernst Rohm</u> wanted to join the SA with the army, with both under his control. The SA was bigger than the army. There were also rumours Rohm wanted to seize power from Hitler. Hitler used the <u>SS</u> (the Blackshirts) to arrest and shoot leading members of the SA, including Rohm. This was the <u>Night of the Long Knives</u> . Hitler also used this opportunity to murder some of his political opponents, for example the former Chancellor <u>Von Schleicher</u> .
August 1934	<i>President Hindenburg died</i>	When Hindenburg died, Hitler immediately took over the President's job as well as remaining Chancellor. Hitler gave himself the simple title of <u>Der Führer</u> (the leader). He also made the army swear an oath of loyalty to him, and not to the country. Hitler was now a <u>dictator</u> with total power.

