

Germany in Transition, 1919-39

Consolidation of power

The Reichstag Fire

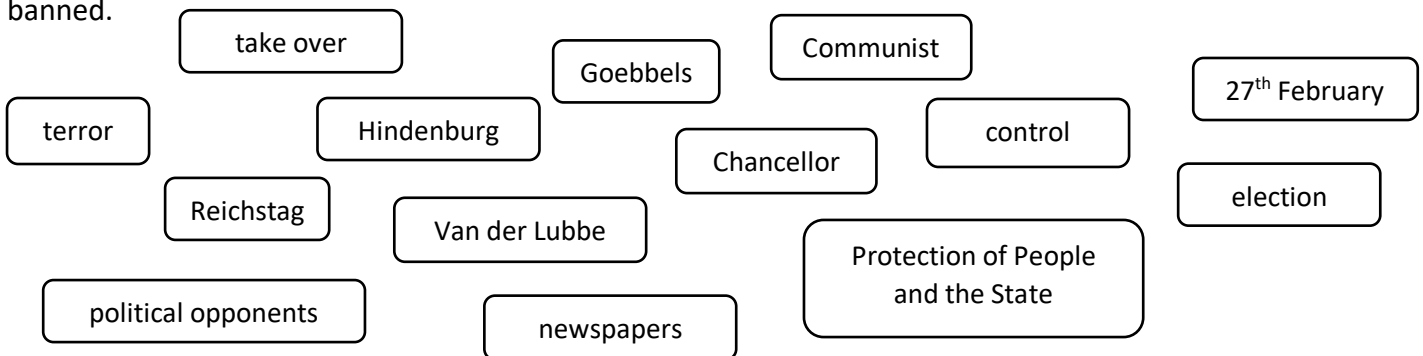
Task: Complete the gap fill below to find out about the Reichstag Fire.

When Hitler became _____ in January 1933, his position was not strong. This is because President _____ hated him and he did not have a majority with the Nationalist Party. Despite this, it was soon clear that Von Papen was not able to _____ him.

Hitler immediately called for a general _____ in March 1933, hoping that it would give the Nazis a majority in the _____. The Nazis used violence and _____, which caused 70 deaths leading up to the election. Hitler had received large amounts of money from _____ to fund his campaign and Joseph _____ used this money to get the propaganda message across.

A week before the election on the _____ 1933, the Reichstag building was set on _____. It is not known who started the fire, but the Nazis arrested Marinus _____, a Dutch _____. Hitler and Goebbels saw this as a great opportunity to claim the Communists were trying to attempt a _____.

After the Reichstag Fire, Hitler encouraged Hindenburg to sign the 'Decree for the _____'. This suspended civil rights and allowed the Nazis to imprison large numbers of their _____. Socialist and Communist _____ were banned.



The 1933 election and the Enabling Act

Key terms

Dictatorship- a form of government where one person has the ultimate power to run the country.

Censorship- controlling what speech or information is produced and suppressing anything that is thought to be against the state.

At the March 1933 election, the Nazis won 288 seats. Despite imprisoning many socialist and communists, the Nazis still did not have a majority in the Reichstag. Hitler was disappointed because he needed at least two-thirds of the seats in order to change the constitution.

Hitler's next step was to pass the **Enabling Act**. This would give him and his government full powers for the next four years and would mean that the Reichstag would become pointless. The act was passed, by devious means.

The **Enabling Act** was passed 23rd March 1933 and was the end of the Weimar Republic and democracy. It quickly led to the suspension of civil liberties (e.g. right to a fair trial), allowed Hitler to censor and control the press, abolition of trade unions and the banning of other political parties. Hitler had created a **dictatorship**.

Hitler managed to pass the **Enabling Act** by...

- Not allowing Communists to vote
- Promising not to interfere in Catholic Schools if members of the Catholic Party voted in favour
- Counted absentees (those that didn't show up) as present and in favour
- Getting the SA to intimidate members as they went in to vote

Task: Use the information above to answer the questions below...

1. Explain why the Enabling Act can be seen as the beginning of the Nazi dictatorship.

2. How important was the Enabling Act in increasing Hitler's power?

Task: Match the following way Hitler removed his opposition to the correct description

Trade unions	The eighteen state parliaments were abolished in January 1934 and Hitler decided that they would be run by Reich governors instead. This was the first time the country had been centralised since 1871.
Political parties	The Labour Front (DAF) was set up to replace this. The DAF decided on workers' wages and every worker had to have a logbook with their employment history recorded. Strikes were outlawed, anyone who took part in them were sent to concentration camps.
Control of state government (Länder)	The Communist Party had been banned and its property was confiscated. On 10 th May the SPD had its headquarters and property seized. The remaining political parties disbanded themselves by the beginning of July.

The Night of the Long Knives

This was the purging of Hitler's military and political rivals in the SA. Hitler wanted to do this because he needed to win over the army, but he also saw the SA as a threat during his chancellorship. The SA had been a key part in the growth of the Nazis and by 1933 they were well-known across Germany. Most of the SA were working class people who favoured the socialist views of the Nazi programme. They were hoping that Hitler would introduce reforms to help the workers.

Ernst Röhm, the leader of the SA, had different ideas to Hitler. He wanted to incorporate the army into the SA and wanted Hitler to abandon his close relations with the industrialists (the people who funding his campaigns). Rohm wanted to move away from Germany's class system and introduce more equality. There was also more tension because Hitler's personal bodyguards, the SS, (led by Himmler) wanted to break away from the SS. Another Nazi, Hermann Goering, wanted to lead the army so saw Ernst Röhm as an opponent.

Task: Put the following events into the correct order to show what happened at the Night of the Long Knives.

	By the end of the purge 400 people were murdered.
	Hitler had to make a choice between the army and the SA, he chose the army.
	Hitler also took the opportunity to get rid of some other opponents- von Schleicher and Gregor Strasser
	On the night of 30 th June 1934, Röhm and the main leaders of the SA were shot by members of the SS.



Task: What was the purpose of the source?

[illegible]

Task: Complete the gap fill below...

Hitler had removed the SA so that he could gain the support of the _____. This was successful and the army showed their support to Hitler after the SA leaders were _____. After Hindenburg died (August 1934), Hitler also became _____ of the Armed Forces. Hitler decided he needed to consult the German people before he combined the roles, so he held a _____. More than _____% of the voters agreed with the action.

army