

# The Rise of the Nazi Party

## Before WW1:

- Germany had been a great power (Kaiser, ministers, and army)
  - Kaiser relied on chancellor, chief ministers and commanders
- The situation worsened due to the **treaty of Versailles** (Hunger, malnutrition etc.)
  - Kaiser and the army commanders involved members of the Reichstag in ruling the country
    - Wanted to shift the blame onto the elected politicians

## 1918:

- **The Kaiser abdicates on Nov 9**
- The next day the **SPD** became the new leaders
  - Germany was now a **democratic country**
- An **armistice** was signed

## 1919 (Jan)

- **The Weimar Republic was established** (unpopularity of it) 1918-1933
- **The first 📁 of the Weimar republic**
- An unpopular republic (1919-1923)
  - Elbert's SPD was the largest party (became president)
  - He did not have enough members to form a gov so he formed a coalition with the Catholic Centre Party and the German Democratic party

Strengths	Weaknesses
Proportional and fair representation. (e.g 20% votes => 20 seats). Resulted in most views and interests being represented in the Reichstag (parliament)	Difficult for one party to gain a majority. Governments ended up as <b>coalitions</b> (temporary alliance from different political parties). Made it difficult to pass laws cause people kept disagreeing with each other
Laws had to be approved by Reichstag so no abuse of power	Article 48 could be abused by President (Hitler moment)
Political Challenges	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Laws couldn't be passed</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hard for one party to gain majority, <b>coalition</b> govt made it hard to pass laws</li><li>• Article 48 could be misused and exploited as the President could just do anything they wanted</li></ul>



## 1921:

### Hitler takes control of the Nazi party

- SA - Sturmabteilung/Brownshirts => ex-soldiers who joined Nazi party. Hitler turned them into a private army complete with uniforms and a command structure
- SS - Schutzstaffel/Blackshirts => Hitler's bodyguards, led by Heinrich Himmler



## 1923:

### France occupies the Ruhr (Jan)

#### Hyperinflation

- and troops invaded the Ruhr
- German workers were ordered to go on strike => halt in industrial production => German collapsed (gov )
- Middle-class most affected => hyperinflated economy => government lost a lot of support

#### Munich Putsch - 1923

- Marched into Munich (
- Hitler was arrested (did try to escape)
- Nazi Party got banned
- While in jail he wrote a book (Mein Kampf)

#### Mein Kampf

Loyalty to Germany  
Racial purity  
Nationalisation of economy  
Lebensraum → Excuse to invade other countries to make more 'living space'

## Golden age of Weimar Government (1923-1929) ✨

- Gustav (The Goat) Stresemann came into power
- Replaced German mark with Rentenmark
- Negotiated reorganization of reparations through Dawes Plan (1929) and Young Plan
- Reduced its debt



## 1924:

### Nazi Candidates stood in the Reichstag elections for the 1st time, won 32 seats

Hitlers oratorical skills + the SS and SA + Success in Nazi political campaigns:

#### Promises Hitler made:

- End ineffective democratic coalition governments
- Restore the glory days of the Kaiser and authoritarian rule
- Return to traditional German values
- Fight the threat of communism in elections, in Reichstag and on streets

## 1929:

**A period of worldwide economic depression (Oct)** - US economy crashed

- Dawes Plan and Young Plan were changed and modified
- Unemployment went up like crazy / 40% of the workforce
- Weimar Government basically failed (this was under **Paul von Hindenburg**). Hindenburg had to rule by decree and took total control using **Article 48**
- "**Failure of democracy**" as the SPD (coalition gov) couldn't solve the issues
  - SPD coalition collapsed so he appointed Heinrich Brüning
    - He cut the wages of civil servants, harsh measures so couldn't get Reichstag to pass the laws
    - Forming a coalition was impossible
    - Hindenburg continued to rule by decree
- **Fear of communism:**  
People saw the **rise of the USSR and communism** as a threat as their countries had systems opposite of communism (democratic, capitalist economies)
  - The **business owners** would have to give up a ton of their assets if their countries became communist- leading them to support more extreme parties who would stand against communism
  - Also fueled by nationalism (their country is more superior than others)

## 1932:

- Hindenburg defeats Hitler in the presidential election (April)
  - Hitler wanted to appear as a man of the ppl (understood their problems etc)
- Reichstag elections

## 1933:

- **Hitler is appointed Chancellor (Jan)**
- Hindenburg and Franz von Papen thought they could use Hitler to get measures passed => restore stability to Germany (Nazis had the majority of the votes in the Reichstag)
- They thought they could use his opponents to curb his influence if Hitler grew too strong
- SPD and KPD against him
- Did not have majority in Reichstag
- Von Papen + elites planned to control him
- Von Schleicher and army were more loyal to Hindenburg (most were)
- Nazis took control of radio stations, newspapers, rallies
- Hitler wanted to win democratically ( $\frac{2}{3}$  majority vote in the Reichstag).
- Nazis already had control over radio stations, police and newspapers
- He called for another election in March 1933
- SPD and KPD (opponent parties) were interrupted in terms of meetings by SA and SS

- **Reichstag fire - 27 February 1933**
- **Immediately blamed it on the communists**
- Convinced Hindenburg to give emergency powers => Hitler went ahead and arrested 4,000 communists immediately and made it difficult for opposition parties to campaign
- During the elections on the 5th of March, Nazi Party won 52% of the seats

### **Enabling act - 24 March 1933**

- Only **SPD** voted against him now
- Nazis got **Catholic Centre Party** to cooperate with him
- Thus Hitler became dictator and Hindenburg/anyone else could do jack shit about it
- Hitler could issue laws without it going through parliament

### **Gleichschaltung (Co-ordination) - April 1933**

- Passed a law that banned Jews from civil service
- Trade unions were banned
- All local councils had to have a Nazi majority
- Banned all other political parties

 1934:

- **The Night of long knives (June/July)**
  - Ernst Rohm was arrested. SA was pretty much collapsed. Old rivals and other opponents were taken down – von Papen was put under house arrest, 400 SA men were arrested => they were growing too powerful
- **Oath of allegiance / Hitler becomes Führer - (Aug)**
  - Hindenburg died => Hitler combined presidency and chancellor to make Führer/Fuehrer (supreme leader) of Germany
  - Army swore allegiance to him