

Chronology of events 1933-34

1. Hitler appointed Chancellor 30 Jan

- only 3 Nazis (Hitler, Göring, Frick) in the cabinet, with Papen as Vice Chancellor.
- President Hindenburg agrees to dissolve the Reichstag and hold new elections march 5 1933.
- Hitler is unhappy about the situation and promise that the Nazi will win a majority in the new election.
- Hitler as Chancellor makes him powerful. Göring is Minister of Interior in Prussia, the biggest state, a very useful and powerful position. Göring will make sure that no SA-men are arrested for interfering in other parties political meetings. He will also put Nazi-men in high positions.
- SA will start harassing Communists and Social Democrats. Supported by the Conservative. Popular among the middle class.

2. Reichstag building destroyed by fire February 27 1933.

- probably committed by Dutch Communist van der Lubbe acting alone.
- used by Nazis to show **Communist threat**.

3. Emergency Decrees

- Feb 28 Decree of the Reich President for the Protection of the Nation and the State
- issued by Hindenburg using Article 48
- suspended constitutional civil rights such as freedom of press and freedom of speech.
- secret police could hold people indefinitely in protective custody.
- Göring's role is vital here. The nazis gained control over all police activity in Prussia. No SA-thugs will be arrested. Communists will be arrested with no trial.
- The Decree issued by Hindenburg gives Hitler power to rule with decrees, but he is still under control of Hindenburg.

4. **Other emergency Decrees**

- imprisonment without trial
- used to repress KPD (German Communist Party).
- Central Government could take over local states not keeping order
- remained throughout 3rd Reich: amounted to basic law of 3rd Reich

5. **Elections March 5th 1933**

- Reichstag was dissolved on the 1st Feb 1933, meaning that Hitler and the Nazi Party could campaign without the interference of the Parliament.
- Government used control of the radio, police, along with unofficial pressure, to intimidate opponents in the election
- highest ever turnout with volumes of 88.8%. Nazis attracted many new voters with their Election slogan "The battle against Marxism"
- Nazis, surprisingly, only got 44% of the votes, Nationalist allies got 8%. Together they have majority in the parliament. This opens for the Enabling Act.

6. **March 9 - von Epp Coup.**

- A coup was carried out in Bavaria, replacing the state government with Nazi government.
- By April nazi Governors had taken power in all 18 states.
- Made this legal in January 1934 (see last point)

7. **March 13th - Control of media**

- Goebbels was appointed head of new Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda
- The Government took control of the radio and press

8. **March 24th Enabling Act ("Law for Terminating the Suffering of the People and Nation")**

- Law was passed by Reichstag who had been relocated to Opera House after fire and were surrounded by the SA/SS
- Law meant that the Cabinet (in effect, Hitler) could pass decrees without the President's nor the Reichstag's involvement.
- Hitler is in fact Dictator from now on.

9. Dachau Concentration camp opens in March 1933.

- Communists, Social Democrats and other “trouble makers” are put here.
- Internalizing Terror early in the Nazi Society. (Compare to Stalin...)

10. Enabling Act continued

- Enabling Act needed 2/3 majority as constitutional amendment
- passed by 441 vs 94 (only SPD voted against, KPD banned)
- Act renewed 1938
- became virtual constitution of Third Reich

11. Law for Restoration of Professional Civil Service

- administration, courts, education purged of "alien elements", i.e. Jews, opponents
- only 5%, actually replaced
- extended to all public service resulting in the removal of thousands of Jews

12. May 1 Government granted workers May Day holiday

- turned International Labour day into "Day of National Labour"
- May 2. Trade union offices seized: all unions incorporated into new German Labour Front (DAF)
- Strike made illegal later in Germany.

13. Employment Law - June

- major public works
- SPD is banned in June 1934, The Catholic Centre Party voluntarily dissolved themselves.

14. Law against the Formation of New Parties July 14th

- KPD, SPD were already banned
- other parties had dissolved themselves
- now no new parties allowed
- Germany became a one party state

15. Concordat July 20th

- agreement between state and Vatican
- Church banned political activity
- Government protected religious freedom

16. Law for the Reconstruction of the State January 1934

- since March many state governments had been forced out by SA violence.
- Law was used to allow the Reich government to appoint Commissioners. The situation was now formalised by this law.
 - dissolved state assemblies
 - created new Reich Governors to control states

17. the Army vs SA. Prelude to the Night of Long Knives.

- The Army remained the only part of German society that Hitler left untouched. He was afraid that upsetting the army would lead to him being removed from power.
- The Army was concerned with the SA-troops, they thought they would become the new Army of Germany.
- The Middle Class was also concerned with the SA and their thugs.
- Himmler and the SS didn't like the SA.
- The SA represented part of the Socialist branch of the party.

18. Night of the Long Knives June 1934

- SS shot many SA leaders and other people seen as threat
- Background and event:
 - SA Leader Ernst Röhm had been with Hitler since the very beginning.
 - Röhm saw him self as the leader of the “True Revolution” and the true nazis.
 - Röhm made anti-capitalistic speeches.
 - Von Papen made a speech urging Hitler to take action against Röhm and his Marxist ideas. The Military started to fear Röhm too.
 - June 21 Hindenburg lets Hitler knows that if he doesn't take action against the SA Hindenburg will ask the army to dissolve the government.

- Meanwhile Himmler and Heydrich (2nd in command in the SS) were planting rumors that Röhm and the SA were planning a coup against Hitler.
 - On Friday June 29 Hitler received a phone call from Himmler, claiming that Röhm and the SA was going to stage a coup the very next morning.
 - Hitler left for Munich at 2 a.m.
 - Hitler enters the room of Röhm saying “Ernst, you are under arrest”.
 - Röhm is put in prison and shot.
 - On Monday July 2 the purges are over. Hitler has purged the Nazi party, 200 – 1000 people are murdered.
- See Traynor p 264 – 267.

19. Hitler as dictator

- Hindenburg dies July 1934
- Hitler amalgamated position of Chancellor and president to become Führer
- Army tolerated Hitler's actions and the Armed Forces swore an Oath of allegiance to Hitler in August 1934