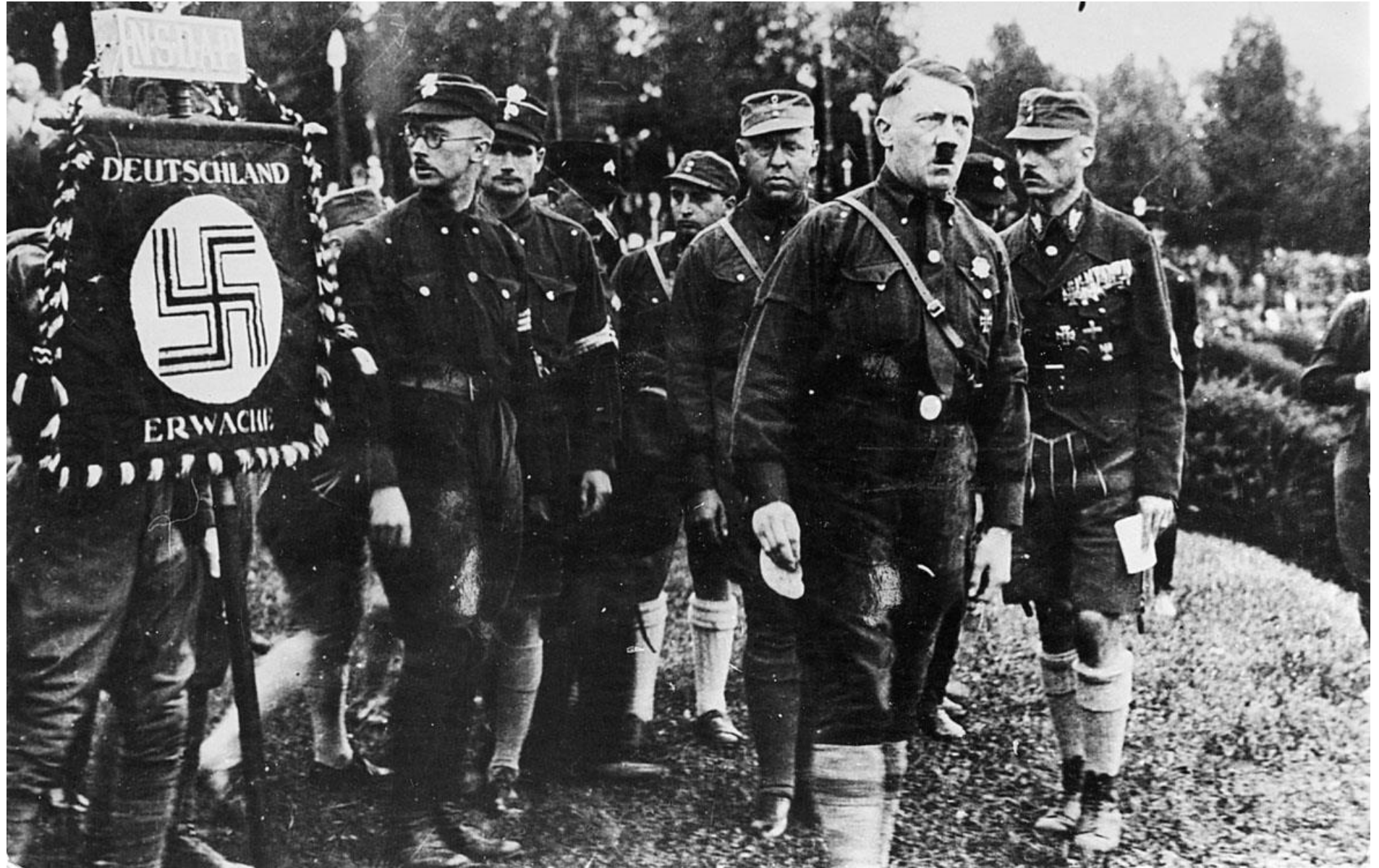


Key topic 2: Hitler's rise to power, 1919–33

Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–39: Paper 3



Key topic 2: Hitler's rise to power, 1919–33

1 Early development of the Nazi Party, 1920–22

Hitler's DAP
membership
card.

Deutsche Arbeiter-Partei (D. A. P.)
Ortsgruppe München **Abteilung:.....**

Mitgliedskarte

für *Arbeiter Adolf Hitler* *Leipziger 25*

München, den *1. Jan.* *1920.*

Nr. *555*

Heinrich
Ehriftwart

für den Arbeitsausschuß:
Presler

 Diese Karte gilt als Ausweis bei geschlossenen
Versammlungen 

Hitler's Early Career in Politics

The Origins of the Nazi Party

The Nazi Party was originally known as the German Workers Party (or DAP). It was formed in Munich in January 1919. It was established by a railway mechanic called Anton Drexler.

Hitler was working for the army in 1919 and was asked to spy on the DAP. He went to some of their meetings and realised that he was interested in what they had to say. He eventually joined the DAP.

When Hitler joined the DAP in September 1919, it was a small and poorly organised. Hitler set about taking control of the DAP and reshaped it. He changed the name to the NSDAP, or Nazi Party.

By 1921, Hitler was leader of the Party.

Hitler's takeover was in five stages.

1) Developing Party Policy

The policies focussed on being opposed to the Weimar politicians who he saw as the people who ended the war and forced out the Kaiser. He also opposed the Treaty of Versailles, criticised the weakness of democracy and attacked the Jews who he blamed for Germany's problems.

He developed the **Twenty-Five Point Programme** in February 1920. It included the following policies:

- a) ***A union of all German speaking people in one large country.***
- b) ***Equality for Germany in world politics.***
- c) ***Demanding more land for German so its people could settle.***
- d) ***Only people with German blood could be citizens of Germany – no Jews would be allowed.***
- e) ***Provide work for the German people.***
- f) ***Take land from the rich.***
- g) ***Rebuild the armed forces.***
- h) ***A strong central government for Germany.***
- i) ***Government should take over big businesses.***
- j) ***Immigrants should be expelled.***

2) Hitler's personal appeal

Hitler was a great speaker and won over audiences with his skills. His speeches drew in large crowds and won new members. He practiced his speeches for hours. They were energetic rants with strong arm movements – he was entertaining.

3) Party Organisation

Hitler became Drexler's deputy and set about reorganising the Party. He set up new offices and started to raise money. He advertised the Party meetings and got more people to attend and join up.

Hitler adopted the swastika as a symbol of the party and gave it a distinct image.

In December 1920 he set up the Nazi Party's newspaper – "People's Observer".

4) Party Leadership

Hitler recruited some key figures around him who would offer him support. Hermann Goering (wealthy fighter pilot), Julius Streicher (publisher), Ernst Rohm (war hero) and Rudolf Hess (a wealthy academic). Hitler also recruited the leading war hero General Ludendorff.

5) The SA

In 1921 Hitler set up the **Sturm Abteilung** (SA) or Nazi Stormtroopers. This was a group of young Nazis who wore brown uniforms (they are sometimes called the Brownshirts) and acted as a kind of private army. Many were ex-soldiers or members of the Freikorps. They were used to protect Nazi meetings and attack Hitler's opponents.

By 1921, Hitler was in a strong position in the Nazi Party and was able to push out Drexler. He asked the Nazi Party to give him absolute power to make decisions. They agreed. He became known as Fuhrer.

Key topic 2: Hitler's rise to power, 1919–33

2 The Munich Putsch and the lean years, 1923–29

Hitler and his
friends on
prison in 1924.



The Munich Putsch, November 1923

What happened in the Putsch?

In 1923 the Nazis were still a small group with few members. Most of their support came from Bavaria and their membership was below 4000. However, in November 1923, the Nazis tried to seize power in Germany.

On 8 November 1923 Hitler went to a Beer Hall where members of the Bavarian Government were speaking to a group of key businessmen and politicians, including the leader of Bavaria, Gustav von Kahr.

He used his SA men to seize the government of Bavaria. He planned to use Bavaria as a base from which to seize the national government.

However, von Kahr did not give Hitler his support. The next day Hitler tried to take 3000 supporters onto the streets of Bavaria.

Kahr had managed to escape during the night and had ordered the army and armed police to open fire on Hitler's men.

Sixteen of Hitler's men were killed and Hitler and his key supporters were captured.

He was put on trial for treason and was given a five year prison sentence. The sentence was the shortest the judges could give Hitler and they made it clear he would be released much earlier. Hitler served only nine months in prison.

Why did Hitler launch the Putsch?

He felt the time was right: Hitler felt that the economic problems and inflation would make the people in Germany more likely to accept a strong right-wing government. He hoped that the German people had grown tired of democracy. They were also angry about Versailles and the French occupation of the Ruhr. Hitler had seen that a similar plan had worked for Mussolini in Italy the year before.

He felt he had support: The local government in Bavaria was also trying to undermine the national government. This made Hitler think the Bavarian government would support his attempt to seize power.

He also believed the army would support him in an attempt to overthrow the government. Hitler had become very close to General Ludendorff. Hitler believed that Ludendorff could get the army to support him because many top generals hated the government for signing the Treaty of Versailles.

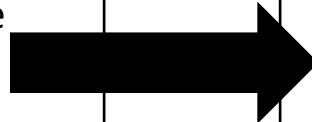
The SA were getting restless: Some of Hitler's supporters in the SA were becoming restless at Hitler's lack of action. They were starting to think that he was "all talk". Hitler took action to keep them happy.

Hitler was angry: Hitler was angry that the French had occupied the Ruhr and that the policy of passive resistance had failed. He was also angry that the government had resumed reparation payments to the French. For Hitler this was a great embarrassment for Germany.

The Munich Putsch: Consequences

Consequences of the Putsch?

- Hitler became a national figure. His trial made him famous in Germany and other parts of the world. He spoke well at his trial and the Judges liked many of his ideas. He was given a light prison sentence. He spread his ideas about nationalism, the November Criminals, the Treaty of Versailles and the Jews.
- The Putsch made the Nazis look exciting and more young men joined the organisation. The 16 men who had been killed became heroes of the SA and were seen as martyrs.
- Hitler was well treated in prison. He used the time to write his famous book, ***Mein Kampf*** (My Struggle). Hitler wrote down many of his main ideas and beliefs. Prison gave him time to think.
- The failure of the Putsch made Hitler realise that he would have to change tactics and try and take part in the democratic system to win power.
- After the Putsch, Hitler reformed the Nazi Party and got ready for the time when he could seize power with more success.



What was in *Mein Kampf*?

- Abolition of the Treaty of Versailles.
- Gain *Lebensraum* – living space – for the German people by attacking countries in the East.
- All German-speaking people should be united into one country.
- The belief in the master race - Germans (and other ***Aryans***) were superior to other races.
- The Jews were to blame for the world's problems and needed to be eliminated.
- Communists were another cause of many problems and needed to be defeated.
- Traditional German values should be respected and encouraged. Families, women as mothers, men as soldiers and workers and old style music and art.
- Democracy should be scrapped and a strong dictator appointed.

Reforming the Nazi Party 1924-28

Hitler comes out of Prison

After his release from prison Hitler started to reform and rebuild the Nazi Party. During his time in prison Hitler had realised that he could not hope to win power by revolution, but instead he would have to use democratic methods. This would mean an overhaul of the party.

In February 1925, Hitler relaunched the Nazi Party by making a big speech in the Munich Beer Hall where he had tried to start a revolution in 1923.

(a) Better National Organisation

Hitler worked hard at getting branches of the party set up all over Germany. He made sure there were party workers to run the local organisations. He recruited more men into the SA.

Hitler made sure there was an efficient national organisation which could spread the Nazi message and win over support. Many Nazis had been soldiers in the First World War. They brought to party work the same obedience, organisation and teamwork skills that they had needed in the trenches.

The local branches of the Nazi Party were called Gaue and were run by Gauleiters, who were well-trained and motivated party members. They had skilled leaders at almost every level.

Hitler was the leader of the party and controlled all ideas and policies. He appointed key people to help him run the party and spread the ideas. He also had a women's section for the party and a group for young people, the **Hitler Youth**.

All of this was paid for by loans and gifts from rich supporters and businesses.

(b) New Ideas

While in prison, Hitler had written his now famous book – *Mein Kampf*. This set out new ideas and beliefs. His new ideas and policies would be used to win people over. He kept his ideas on race, crushing the Treaty of Versailles and German expansion – but he toned down some of his economic policies so as not to upset the middle class. Every sector of German society seemed to hear something it wanted to hear. Workers were promised jobs (Hitler could point out how the SA had taken in the unemployed and fed and housed them). Employers were promised restored profits; farmers higher prices; shopkeepers protection against competition. There was something for everybody.

(c) Propaganda

Their national leaders were masters of propaganda, and they carefully trained their local groups in propaganda skills. They used every trick in the book to get their message home. They knew that their anti-Communist stance was very popular and their propaganda further whipped up fear and hatred of the Communists. They stirred up violence at election meetings so that the SA could crush it and be seen 'dealing with the Communist threat'. Hitler pointed to the Nazis' track record in leading the fight against Communism.

This was eventually led by one of Hitler's closest supporters Joseph Goebbels.

(d) The SS

While Hitler was in prison, the SA had become very close to their leader, Ernst Rohm. Hitler felt they were a possible threat to him. He therefore sacked Rohm and sent him to work abroad.

He then set up a new group, the **Schutzstaffel** (protection squad), who were often known as the SS.

They were specially selected to be Hitler's bodyguard and were put under the control of Heinrich Himmler. They were feared and appeared menacing in their all-black uniforms. By 1930, there were 3000 members of the SS.

The Bamberg Conference of 1926

Why was the Bamberg Conference called?

There was a growing division in the Nazi Party. The Gauleiters in the northern cities and towns (including Goebbels and Strasser) were keen to stress the socialist policies that helped the workers and attacked businesses. Others in the south, including Hitler, wanted to stress the nationalist policies to do with making Germany a strong country and attacking Jews.

Hitler called a meeting at Bamberg, in Bavaria, to try and solve the problems causing the division. Hitler chose Bamberg because it was in the south and the northern Gauleiters would find it harder to get there.

What happened at the Bamberg Conference?

Hitler let the northern Gauleiters put their ideas forward and then made a five hour speech. He compared the northern leaders to the communists – the Nazi's main enemies. The speech won over Goebbels. Strasser was furious and called Goebbels a "scheming dwarf".

The conference made Hitler stronger and isolated the northern Gauleiters. Hitler was able to make policy more freely. He stressed the nationalist ideas more and ignored the socialist policies which were unpopular with the businessmen who donated money to the Nazis. Goebbels was promoted and Strasser was isolated.

Why did the Nazis not win more support in the period 1924-29?

The Nazi Party grew from 27,000 members in 1925 to 100,000 by 1928. However, it won only 12 seats in the Reichstag in 1928. In 1924 it had won 32! Why did they do so badly?

Other Parties were doing well:

The Weimar Government was seen to be doing a good job. Unemployment was falling and trade was up. The old threat of inflation had been cured and the coalitions were working. Parties such as the Social Democrats were winning the votes of the working class and the middle class were voting for the catholic and centre parties.

Hindenburg was Popular:

The President of the Weimar Republic, **Paul von Hindenburg**, was an ex-soldier and war hero. The Weimar Government was more popular because he was part of it.

It was a time of prosperity and promise for Germany:

People had jobs and businesses were doing well after the American loans of 1924. The Locarno Treaty made Germany a respectable country and she was a member of the League. In 1929 French troops left the Rhineland. Culture was booming.

The Nazis ideas were too extreme:

Hitler's talk of smashing Versailles, persecuting Jews and regaining lost land were all too wild for the German people. The idea of massive economic reform was also seen as unnecessary when things were going well. Hitler was a little too odd for the 1920s and did not seem the right man for the times.

Key topic 2: Hitler's rise to power, 1919–33

3 The growth in support for the Nazis, 1929–32

Nazi election posters from 1932.



Why did the German economy collapse after 1929?

In 1924 and 1929 Germany borrowed money from the USA. The Dawes and Young Plans.

Germany also traded with the USA and needed the USA to buy her products.

In 1929 the **Wall Street Crash** took place in the USA. Share prices in the USA fell and banks and ordinary people saw their wealth wiped out in a matter of days. This led to an economic depression in the USA.

The USA could not lend money or buy German products.

German factories closed.

Weimar Government had to try and solve the problem. However, their leading politician, Stresmann had just died.

Massive unemployment in Germany – people ran out of money and more factories closed – more unemployment.

What were the consequences of the economic depression for the German people?

Unemployment:

In September 1929 there were 1.3 million Germans out of work. By January 1933 that number had risen to 6.1 million.

How were different groups affected?

Businessmen: Many businessmen went bankrupt and lost everything. Those who survived made less money. Businessmen had to pay higher taxes to fund the unemployment benefit of the people who had lost their jobs.

Young People: Young people were especially hit by unemployment. In 1933 over half of the 16-30 year olds were unemployed. Even university graduates could not get jobs.

Farmers: Farmers were doing badly before the depression. Things got much worse for them as people had less money to spend on food. The collapse of world trade meant farmers could not sell food abroad.

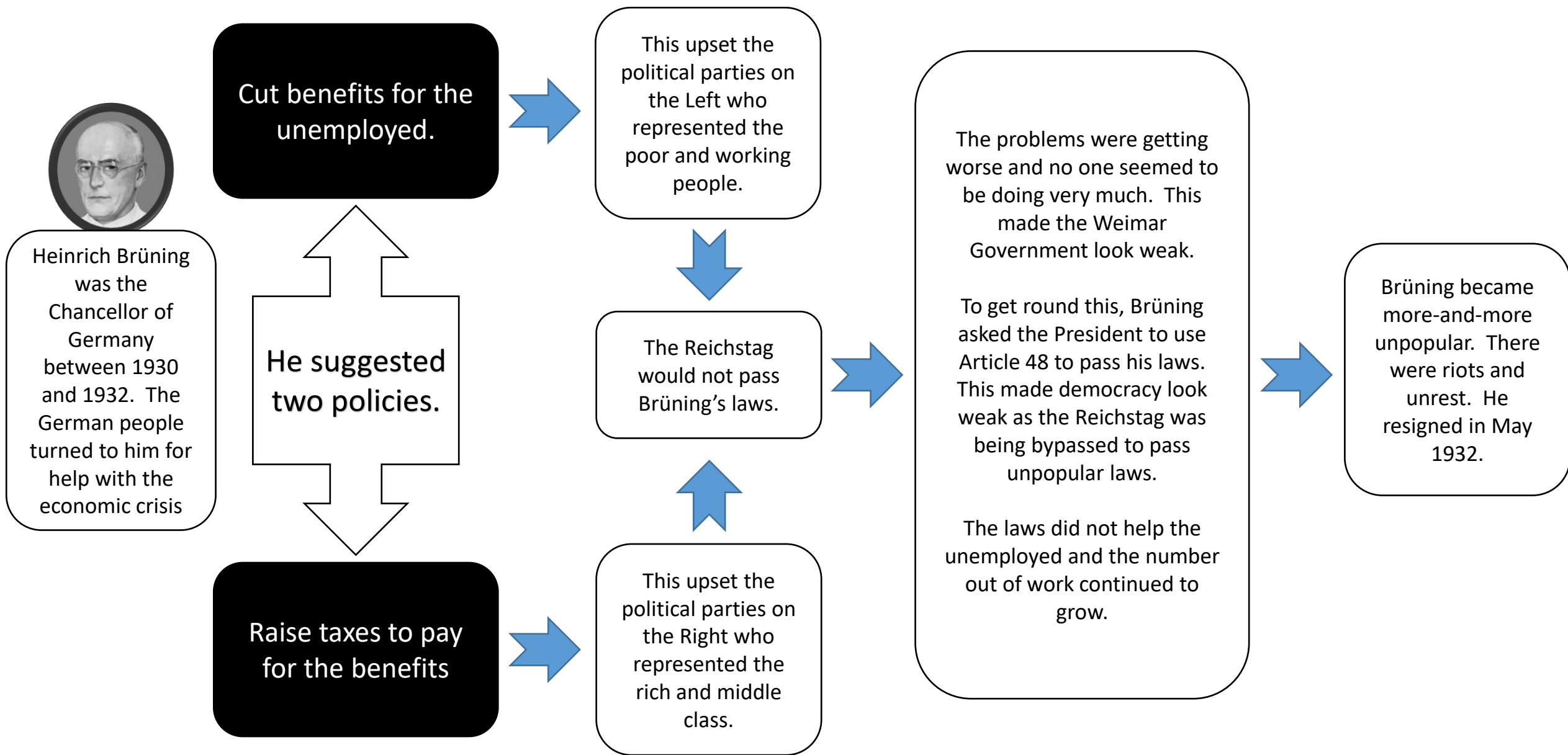
Factory Workers: 40% of all factory workers were unemployed by 1932. What made things even worse was the fact that the government cut unemployment benefit which meant the factory workers without jobs lived in extreme poverty. Between 1929 and 1933 unemployment rose from under 2 million to over 5 million. 15% of all unemployed people got no help at all from the government.

People in work: Wages were cut and taxes were increased to pay for unemployment benefit. Those people with jobs were afraid that they would be sacked next. Wages fell by about 70%.

Savers: Many people with savings were hit by the economic crisis. Some lost money when banks closed and others lost money when the value of the shares they had bought in businesses fell in value. When people lost their jobs they had to use their savings to live.

Homelessness: There was a massive rise in homelessness. Unemployed people could not pay their rent and were evicted and whole families were forced to live on the streets or in shanty towns on the edge of cities.

What were the consequences of the economic depression for the Weimar Government?



What were the consequences of the economic depression for Communist Party?

As the Depression went on and the problems of unemployment got worse, the German people became angrier at the Weimar Government and its lack of effective action. People stopped voting for the moderate parties like the Social Democrats (SPD) and moved towards the Communist Party (KPD) and the Nazis (NASDP).

	1928	1930	1932 (July)	1932 (Nov)
SPD	153	143	133	121
CP	61	68	75	70
DNVP	73	41	37	51
Others	307	224	96	122
Democratic Total	594	476	341	364
KPD	54	77	89	100
NASDP	12	107	230	196
Undemocratic Total	66	184	319	296

People stopped voting for the democratic parties.

As the unemployment problem grew and wages fell, many workers turned to the Communists. This scared many businessmen and middle-class Germans who feared a Communist government was about to be formed that would confiscate their wealth and share it out amongst the poor.. They were so scared they looked for an alternative – they moved towards the Nazis.

More people voted for the radical parties who opposed the Weimar Republic.

Why did people support the Nazis after 1929?

The Nazis were not that successful in terms of winning votes before 1929. That all changed after the depression set in. The Nazis were successful for many reasons, but many of them were related to the depression.

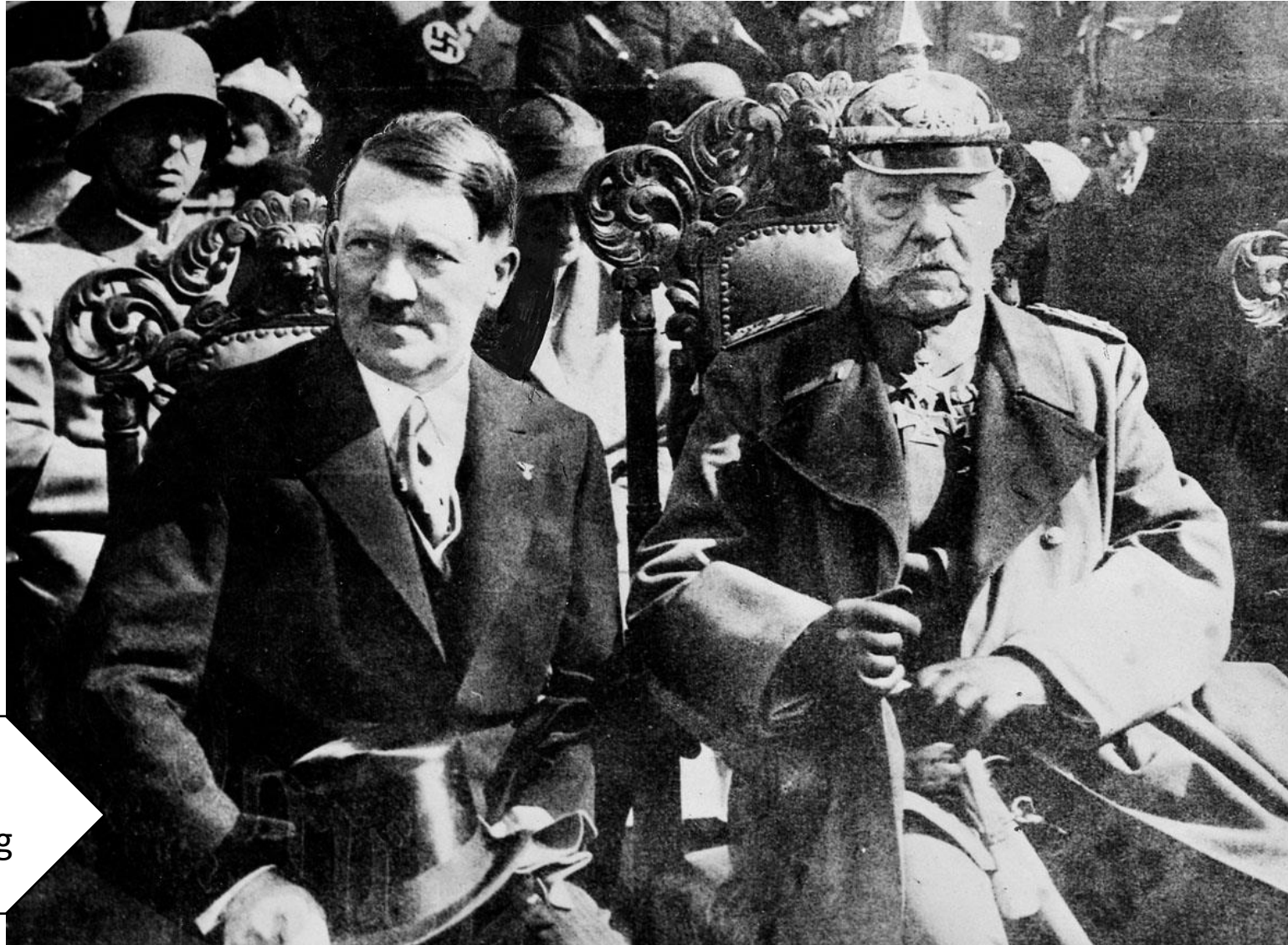
Why the Nazis were successful	How it is connected to the depression	Who it appealed to
<u>1) Hitler was a strong leader:</u> He was a charismatic person whose speeches were very effective at winning over crowds. He seemed to be in command and had ideas and solution.	People wanted someone who could solve the problem of the depression. They wanted a strong person who could come up with solutions. They were fed up with the weak leadership of the Weimar Government.	Big business, the middle class and ex-soldiers all wanted new leaders. Women also liked Hitler's style. He was liked by many German people.
<u>2) The Nazis had policies and ideas:</u> They pledged to cure unemployment, rearm Germany, win land in the east and scrap the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler had policies to help women, children, workers, businessmen and the army. There was something for everyone.	Hitler seemed to have solutions to the depression. He promised to spend money and create jobs building roads, bridges and airports. His plan to expand the army would also create jobs.	There was something for everyone! He did not say how he would pay for all this – but that did not matter to the German people. Farmers were very supportive of Hitler as he seemed to have many policies to help solve their problems. Women and the middle-class liked Hitler's emphasis on traditional values. The workers liked his slogan of "Work and Bread".
<u>3) Organisation:</u> The Nazis had local and national organisations that gave out leaflets, put up posters, held meetings and spread the Nazi message. The Nazis held meetings all over the country. Nazi soup kitchens gave free food to the unemployed.	This organisation was better than that of the Nazis' main rivals. It also made them look strong and ready to solve Germany's problems.	Again, this was popular with everyone. The middle class and businesspeople were very impressed by Hitler's organisation and felt he was a man who could get things done.
<u>4) Propaganda:</u> This was organised by Josef Goebbels. The latest technology, loud speakers, slide shows and films were used alongside posters, speeches and meetings. Huge impressive meetings, called rallies, were used. Here Nazi ideas and slogans were put forward to the meetings.	It spread the message of how Hitler would solve the problems of the depression and the organised way he did it made him look like the right man for the job.	The propaganda was carefully targeted at different groups. In the poor areas, Hitler stressed his help for the unemployed, but in the rich areas he spread his message about help for business. In rural areas, ideas about farms were the focus.

Why did people support the Nazis after 1929? (Continued)

Why the Nazis were successful	How it is connected to the depression	Who it appealed to
<u>5) Weak Opponents:</u> The Nazis democratic opponents were weak and divided. They looked less able to run the country and they were badly organised to fight the Nazis.	The democratic parties were worn out and discredited from trying to solve the depression.	Many middle class people turned away from the old parties and voted for Hitler.
<u>6) Growth of the Communists:</u> The Communists were growing in strength and it looked as if they would seize control.	The communists became popular amongst the working class during the depression. Many working people voted communists in the hope of getting help.	Businessmen, farmers, Catholics and the middle-class all feared Communism. Some supported the Nazis so they would stop the Communists.
<u>7) The SA:</u> Hitler used the SA to disrupt his opponent's meetings and to protect his own. The SA looked strong and organised and so people felt the Nazis were a strong party that could achieve things. The SA had 400,000 members and fought running battles with the communists.	Many men had joined the SA because they had lost their jobs. The SA offered them a place to stay, food, a sense of belonging and a purpose in life.	The middle class liked the way the SA fought the communists.

Key topic 2: Hitler's rise to power, 1919–33

4 How Hitler became Chancellor, 1932–33



Hitler and
Hindenburg

How did Hitler become Chancellor in 1933?

March/April 1932: Hindenburg stands for re-election.

By 1932, Hindenburg's term of office as President was over and he had to stand for re-election. He was 84 and very frail. The campaign was bitter and there was lots of violence. Hitler ran for President and campaigned by flying from town-to-town by plane.

The result saw Hindenburg re-elected, but Hitler won 36% of the vote compared to the communists 11%. ***This was a boost to Hitler and raised his profile.***

30 May 1932: Brüning resigns as Chancellor.

By 1932, there was lots of violence on the streets of Germany as the Nazis and Communists were fighting each other. In April 1932, Brüning announced he was banning the SA and SS. He also said he was going to force rich landowners to sell the government their land so he could build homes for the homeless. This made the right wing groups in the Reichstag (including the Nazis) angry. The President and the Nazis refused to cooperate with Brüning and he found it impossible to stay as Chancellor.

When Brüning resigned there was a big problem –who would be Chancellor?

30 May 1932: Von Papen becomes Chancellor.

A leading politician and General, Kurt von Schleicher, put together a group of right-wing politicians in the Reichstag and got them to try and form a government. The Nazis agreed to support the new Government. Von Schleicher got Hindenburg to appoint his friend, Franz von Papen to be Chancellor. This was a very unpopular government and was seen as being a government of the rich. It got the nickname the “Cabinet of the Barons”.

The Nazis were now part of the new Government. Von Schleicher and von Papen hoped they could control the Nazis and said they were “merely children who had to led by the hand”. They under-estimated Hitler.

How did Hitler become Chancellor in 1933? (Continued)

July 1932: The Nazis become largest party.

The elections of July 1932 saw a great deal of fighting and violence – most of it caused by the Nazis. Hitler fought a good campaign and the Nazis became the biggest party in the Reichstag.

Hitler demanded that Hindenburg should sack von Papen and make him Chancellor.

November 1932: von Papen is sacked – von Schleicher takes over.

Hindenburg hated Hitler and would not make him Chancellor. Hindenburg hoped the Nazis would decline and die away. He was wrong. They continued to cause trouble and disrupt the Reichstag.

Von Schleicher forced Hindenburg to sack von Papen and make him Chancellor. Von Schleicher had no real support in the Reichstag. The Nazis continued to disrupt the Reichstag. He had to step down as Chancellor.

Hindenburg could not find a Chancellor and Hitler was demanding he was given the job.

January 1933: Hitler becomes Chancellor.

Von Schleicher demanded that Hindenburg should give him control of Germany. Von Schleicher plotted to use the army to seize power in Germany and set up a military dictatorship.

Von Papen came up with a solution. Make Hitler Chancellor and make him Vice-Chancellor. He said he could control Hitler. He said “within two months we will have pushed Hitler so far into a corner that he will squeak”. Hindenburg was old and frail and did not know what to do. He agreed to the plan in the hope it would save Germany from chaos.

Hitler was Chancellor – he was much stronger than von Papen thought!