



3.1 HITLER AND THE GERMAN WORKERS' PARTY 1920–22

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the origins of Hitler's political ideas
- Understand the beginnings of the German Workers' Party and changes 1920–22
- Understand the aims and features of the Nazi Party.

THE ORIGINS OF THE NAZI PARTY

SOURCE A

From a confidential Interior Ministry report on the Nazi Party in the 1920s.

In spite of their very well prepared and thoroughly organised propaganda, their successes remain very minor. This party isn't going anywhere. Today it is a splinter group that can't exert any real influence on the great mass of the population.

ACTIVITY

- 1 What impression does the author of Source A give about the impact of the Nazi Party on Germany in the 1920s?
- 2 Why did the Interior Ministry collect information on political parties like the Nazi Party?

When the First World War started in 1914, Hitler was living in Munich, Bavaria. He joined the army in 1914 and served as a soldier on the Western Front in France. The conditions were terrible and many of the men he fought with were killed. By the end of the first week, only 611 men from his regiment of 3,600 had survived. During the war, Hitler was promoted to corporal and awarded the Iron Cross medal for bravery. Like many other soldiers, he could not believe the news when he heard that Germany had lost the war: their superiors had assured them of victory and they had believed that their sacrifices would pay off.

After the war ended, many Germans felt betrayed. They did not trust the government and wanted new ideas about how to rebuild Germany. As a result, many extreme political groups gained support after the war. From 1919, Hitler worked for the army to monitor the activities of these groups in Germany. One of the groups Hitler was spying on was the German Workers' Party, which had been formed in January 1919 and was led by Anton Drexler. Although the party had only six members at that time, Hitler attended the party meetings to gather information. Over time, he came to realise that he agreed with the views of the party. It believed:

- 1 democracy was weak and a powerful leader was needed to rebuild Germany's strength
- 2 **Jews** were to blame for making Germany weak
- 3 Communists and **Socialists** had brought about the fall of the Kaiser
- 4 the socialist Weimar politicians had betrayed Germany by signing the Treaty of Versailles.

Hitler joined the German Workers' Party in September 1919. At the time, the party seemed very unimportant but it rapidly became more popular over the next few years.

EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

HITLER THE ARTIST

Hitler was born in a small town in Austria in 1889. He did badly at school where his favourite subject was art. After he finished school, he went to live in Vienna where he hoped to become an artist. Unfortunately, he was rejected by both the Vienna Academy of Art and the School of Architecture. With little money, he stayed at a hostel and painted postcards which he hoped to sell. Some people claim that Hitler developed a hatred for Jews at this time, because he was convinced that a Jewish professor had rejected his art work. He also blamed a Jewish doctor for his mother's death.

CHANGES TO THE PARTY, 1920–22

KEY TERM

propaganda information (sometimes misleading) that is used to persuade people to hold or believe in certain values and ideas

In February 1920, Hitler was put in charge of **propaganda** for the German Workers' Party. In this role, he played an important part in increasing party membership. In the same year:

- Hitler and Drexler rewrote the aims of the party; the revised aims were published in its 25 Point Programme
- the party was renamed the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) or the Nazi Party.

By 1921, Hitler had become the party leader. The party's aims were kept deliberately vague, so they would appeal to many different groups in Germany. For example:

- nationalists were keen on the destruction of the Treaty of Versailles
- people who wanted someone to blame for Germany's problems and defeat in the First World War were attracted by the party's **anti-Semitism**
- the middle classes and big businesses liked Hitler's anti-communist ideas.

SOURCE B

Key points from the German Workers' Party 25 Point Programme, 1920.

We demand the union of all Germans in a greater Germany on the basis of national self-determination.

We demand the revocation (end) of the peace treaties of Versailles and Saint Germain.

We demand land and territory to feed our people and settle our extra population.

Only those of German blood may be members of the nation.

ACTIVITY

- 1 Describe the aims of the German Workers' Party.
- 2 What do these demands suggest about Hitler's beliefs about race?

HITLER'S ROLE 1920–22

Hitler was a talented speaker and attracted many new members to the Nazi Party. He argued that Germany needed a strong authoritarian government and this message was popular among critics of the Weimar Republic. Hitler's leadership and the role of other new members, including Ernst Röhm, meant that the party was no longer one that could be ignored. By the end of 1920 membership had increased to around 1,100 and as a result the party could afford to purchase a newspaper which it called the *People's Observer*. Hitler was now the undisputed leader of the party (see Figure 3.1) and decided it was time to have a military wing in the party to help promote its views.

Talented speaker

Appealed to critics of the Weimar Republic

Controlled the NSDAP like a military leader

Suggested the name change that was made in August 1920

Introduced the emblem of the **swastika**, and the arm salute

Ousted Drexler and became leader in mid-1921

Used the party newspaper (*Völkischer Beobachter*) to spread the party's views

Surrounded himself with loyal individuals such as Röhm, Goering and Hess

Developed friendships with powerful Germans such as General Ludendorff (the German army commander in the First World War)

▲ Figure 3.1 Hitler's role in the growth of the Nazi Party, 1920–22

ACTIVITY

Complete a table with the headings 'Hitler's measures' and 'How this helped the Nazi Party'.

EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

THE VÖLKISCHER BEOBACHTER – THE PEOPLE'S OBSERVER

The *Völkischer Beobachter* was the first Nazi newspaper, published between 1920 and 1945. It was not originally a Nazi newspaper – it had started as the *Münchener Beobachter* (Munich Observer), which focused on lighter news stories and gossip. After the First World War, however, it became a voice of extreme anti-Semitism. On 10 March 1920, the main headline was 'Clean Out the Jews Once and For All'; the article below called for the German government to sweep out the 'Jewish vermin with an iron broom'. In 1920, the paper had money troubles and was bought by members of the German Workers' Party.

THE ORIGINS OF THE STURMABTEILUNG (SA)

KEY TERM

paramilitary force a private group run like a military force

Many ex-soldiers, such as the Freikorps, were attracted to Hitler's ideas. They shared his sense of nationalism and resented the settlement after the First World War. In 1921, Hitler set up the *Sturmabteilung* (SA), sometimes called the **stormtroopers**. Ernst Röhm, one of Hitler's loyal supporters at the time, became the leader of the SA. The SA wore brown shirts as a uniform, so they were sometimes called the 'Brownshirts'. Members of the SA were provided with uniforms, meals and hostel accommodation. The SA was created as a **paramilitary force**; their role was to disrupt the meetings of opposing political parties and control crowds at Nazi meetings. There was often violence between Communists and SA members.

The power and organisation of the SA impressed many people. The SA paraded in the streets as a show of force and to demonstrate Hitler's strength. Many SA members were unruly characters who could be difficult to control. However, Hitler demanded their complete obedience to him (even though Ernst Röhm was the official head of the SA). Hitler chose the most-trusted members of the SA to be his own personal **bodyguard**, known as the **Stosstrupp** (Shock Troop).

3.2 THE MUNICH PUTSCH AND THE REORGANISATION OF THE NAZI PARTY

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understand the causes and events of the Munich Putsch
- Understand the results of the Munich Putsch
- Understand how the Nazi Party was reorganised in the period 1924–28

CAUSES OF THE MUNICH PUTSCH

In November 1923, Hitler led an armed uprising known as the Munich Putsch or the Beer Hall Putsch. The intention was to overthrow the Weimar Republic. What made Hitler carry out such a bold move?

- From 1918 to 1923, many Germans had developed a deep anger towards the Weimar Republic. They were angry about issues such as the 'stab in the back', reparations and the loss of Germany's colonies. As a result, support for nationalist parties like NSDAP had grown significantly in Bavaria.
- The leaders of the Bavarian state government, including Gustav von Kahr, were hostile to the Weimar government. They agreed with the NSDAP's views and sometimes chose to ignore SA violence. Hitler knew he would have support in Munich.
- During 1923, Germany's economic position had worsened. In 1923, French troops marched into the Ruhr (the German industrial heartland) and took over German businesses there. Germans who resisted were imprisoned or even **deported**. The Weimar Republic seemed unable to resolve the situation and many German people saw the government as weak and powerless. As hyperinflation reached its peak in November 1923, Hitler saw an opportunity to take power.
- From 1921 to 1922, Hitler and the Nazis were influenced by the Fascists, an Italian right-wing party led by Benito Mussolini. The Nazis copied the Fascists' **salute** and use of flags and this helped to give the Nazi Party a clear identity. In 1922, Mussolini led his paramilitary soldiers in a 'march on Rome'. He used violence to force the Italian democratic government to accept him as leader of Italy. Hitler decided to use a similar approach in Germany to take power for himself.
- Hitler believed the Nazi Party was ready to seize power. It had 20,000 supporters and the SA, its own private army. Hitler had built a close relationship with the former army leader, General Ludendorff. Hitler believed Ludendorff could persuade the army to support the Nazi Party against the Weimar government; this would make a **takeover** possible.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE NAZI PARTY 1920–28

1920	1,100
1923	20,000
1925	27,000
1928	108,000

SOURCE C

Members of the SA boarding a lorry just before the attempted putsch.



WHO'S WHO IN THE MUNICH PUTSCH?

The key characters involved in the Munich Putsch are shown in Figure 3.2.



Otto von Lossow

- Head of the German army in Bavaria
- Fled during the Putsch to join the opposition to Hitler



Gustav von Kahr

- Bavarian prime minister
- Supported Hitler's aims



Erich Ludendorff

- With Hitler, sought Kahr's support in the Putsch
- Led the Putsch along with Hitler and was arrested as a result

▲ Figure 3.2 Who's who in the Munich Putsch?

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A04

SKILLS ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, CREATIVITY

Study Extract A. What impression does the author of Extract A give about Hitler's leadership of the Munich Putsch? You **must** use Extract A to explain your answer. (6 marks)

HINT

Think about the author's criticisms of Hitler's leadership qualities. Then explain what he says about the other people involved in the Munich Putsch.

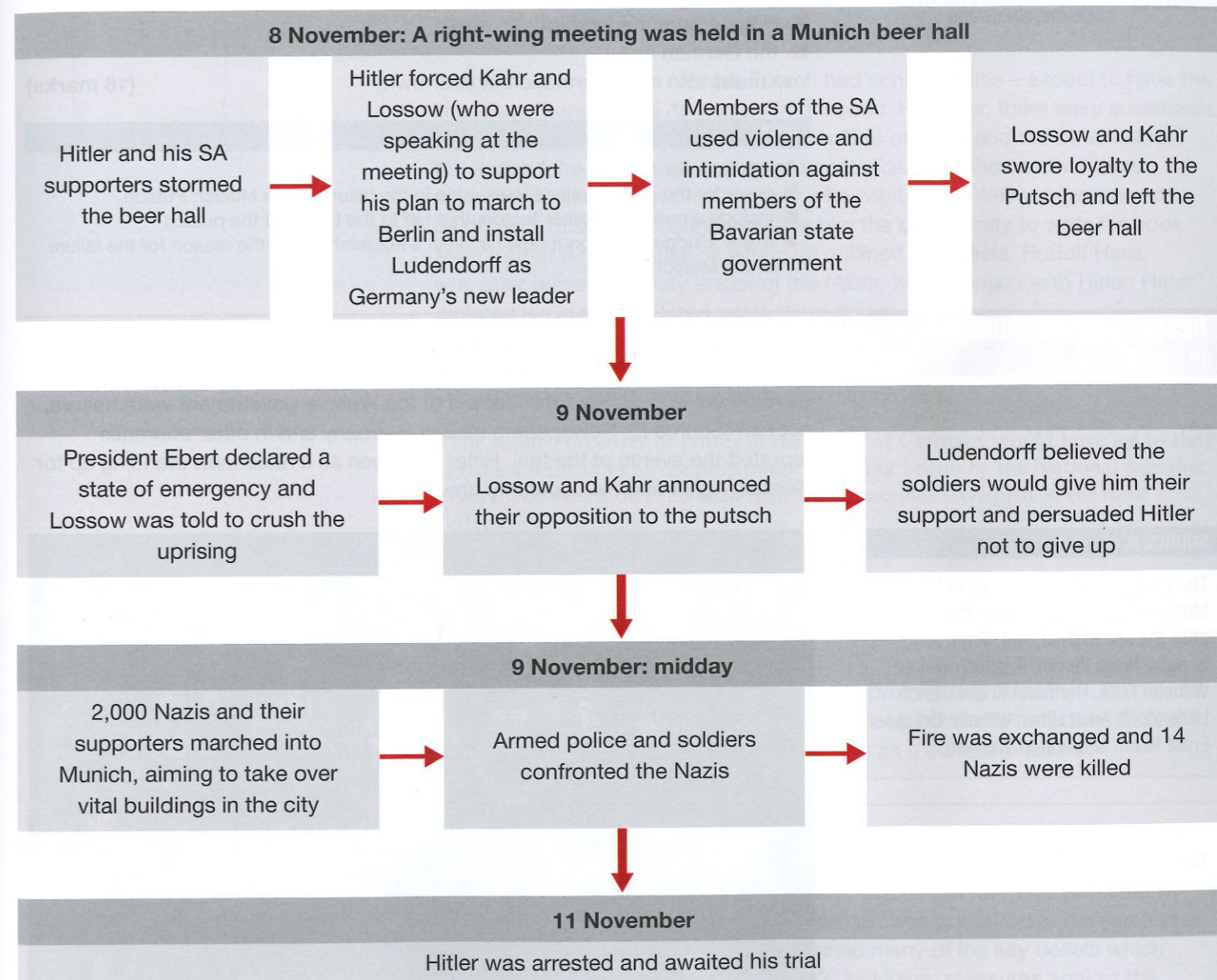
EXTRACT A

A historian commenting on the Munich Putsch in a book written in 1992.

Hitler... proved singularly ineffective. Nothing had been properly planned... He remained shut up in the Beer Hall... unable to make up his mind whether or not to risk a demonstration. It was Ludendorff who decided for him, and at noon the next day led out Hitler and the other Nazi leaders at the head of a column of several thousand men, which... marched into the centre of the city. While Ludendorff marched on and pushed through the [police] cordon, Hitler, after being pulled to the ground and dislocating his arm, scrambled to his feet and fled.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE MUNICH PUTSCH?

The main events of the Munich Putsch are shown in Figure 3.3.



▲ Figure 3.3 The main events of the Munich Putsch

ACTIVITY

- 1 Work in small groups to create a series of 'living photographs' by acting out key moments during the Munich Putsch. Use Figure 3.3 to help you identify the key events.
- 2 Perform a selection of your living photographs to the other students and ask them to identify the events you are showing.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A01

A02

SKILLS PROBLEM SOLVING, REASONING,
DECISION MAKING, ADAPTIVE
LEARNING, INNOVATION

'The most important reason for the failure of the Munich Putsch was Hitler's poor leadership.'

How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

You may use the following in your answer:

- Hitler's poor leadership
- the German army.

You **must** also use information of your own.

(16 marks)

HINT

A good answer should:

- consider the role of Hitler's leadership in the failure of the Munich Putsch
- include a number of other factors that led to the failure of the putsch
- make a judgement about how far Hitler's leadership was the reason for the failure of the Munich Putsch.

RESULTS OF THE MUNICH PUTSCH

In February 1924, Hitler, Ludendorff, Röhm and other Nazi leaders were put on trial. Hitler used his trial as a stage: he made speeches attacking the government and claimed the leaders of the Weimar government were traitors, not him (Source E). Newspapers across Germany and in other countries reported the events of the trial. Hitler was seen as a nationalist standing up for German rights and his popularity grew.

SOURCE D

The principal people involved in the Munich Putsch pose outside the court after the end of their trial. (From left to right: Heinz Pernet, Friedrich Weber, Wilhelm Frick, Hermann Kriebel, Erich Ludendorff, Adolf Hitler, Wilhelm Brückner, Ernst Röhm and Robert Wagner).



SOURCE E

Hitler speaks at his trial in 1924.

I alone bear the responsibility. But I am not a criminal because of that. If today I stand here as a revolutionary, it is as a revolutionary against the revolution. There is no such thing as high treason against the traitors of 1918.

There was no doubt that Hitler would be found guilty, but his speeches seemed to have impressed the judges. Hitler and three others were found guilty of **treason** and he was sentenced to 5 years in jail at Landsberg Castle. This was a very light sentence given the serious nature of the crimes. Conditions in the jail were very relaxed, and Hitler enjoyed a number of home comforts. He also won an early release so, in the end, he spent only 9 months in jail. Ludendorff was found not guilty – mainly because of the judge's sympathy for the great war hero. (There was plenty of evidence against him.) However, the Nazi Party was banned.

It looked as though the Munich Putsch had achieved little – except to have the Nazi Party banned and its leaders imprisoned. However, there were successes. The judge could have ordered the **execution** of Hitler and the other leaders but instead, he gave them a very light sentence. This showed that there were still powerful forces in Germany who wanted the Weimar government destroyed. Hitler's imprisonment gave him the opportunity to write his book, *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), in which he outlined his beliefs. Rudolf Hess, who later became deputy leader of the Nazis, was in prison with Hitler; Hitler dictated his ideas and Hess wrote them down.

SOURCE F

Hitler speaking in 1933 about the failure of the Munich Putsch.

The sudden takeover of power in the whole of Germany would have led to the greatest difficulties as the preparations had not begun by the National Socialist Party. The events of 1923 with their blood sacrifice have proved the most effective propaganda.

ACTIVITY

Read sources E and F.

- 1 In what ways did Hitler use the trial to promote his ideas?
- 2 Why did Hitler consider the Nazi Party was not ready for power in 1923?
- 3 Is it fair to describe the Munich Putsch as a complete failure?

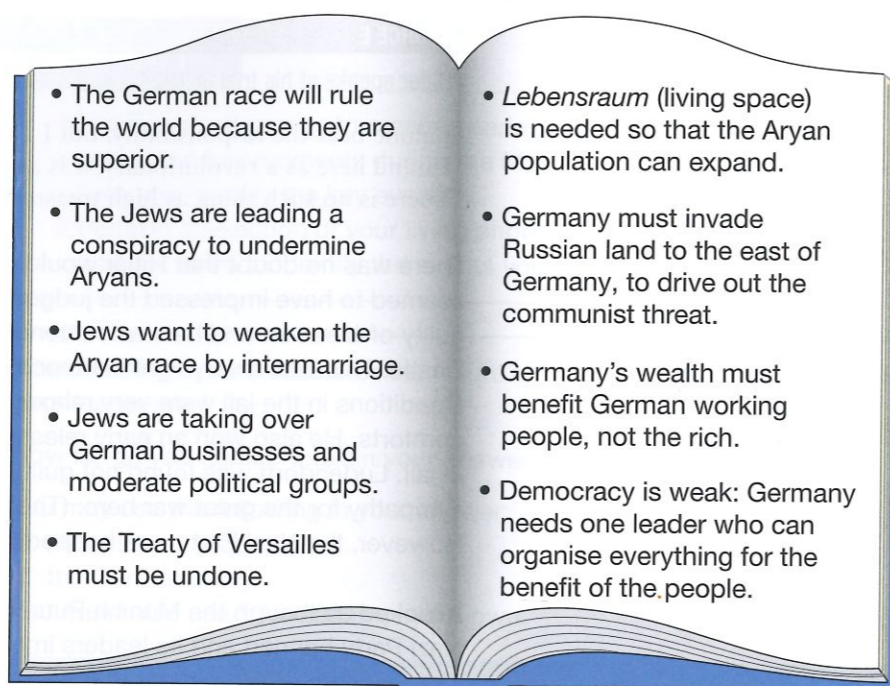
THE REORGANISATION OF THE NAZI PARTY 1924–28

KEY TERMS

Lebensraum 'living room'; areas of land that the Nazis claimed they would need to acquire to provide space for a growing Aryan population

Aryans those people who Hitler said were the master race

The ban on the Nazi Party was lifted in February 1925 and Hitler decided to relaunch the party. He chose to make his return in the same Munich Beer Hall that had been the location of the Munich Putsch. The rally was attended by 4,000 supporters. Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*, was published in the same year and soon became a bestseller. It contained many of the key beliefs which Hitler would put into practice from 1933, including: measures against the Jews; the need for more living space (**Lebensraum**) for Germans; and the dominance of the **Aryan** race (see Figure 3.4).

► Figure 3.4 Key ideas in *Mein Kampf*

While in prison, Hitler had become convinced that the Nazi Party needed to change its methods. They had failed to take power by violent revolution; instead, they should try to win support by legal means (Source G). With this in mind, Hitler began to reorganise the party to make it more attractive to German voters.

- He created a national headquarters for the Nazi Party in Munich.
- He divided Germany into 34 districts, and appointed a leading Nazi to increase support in each district.
- In 1926, he called a party conference in Bamberg. Here, he was confirmed as leader. At the conference, he persuaded party members to re-adopt the 25 Point Plan.
- In 1926, the first Nazi rally was held in Weimar.
- Hitler encouraged more young people to join the SA and also set up the Hitler Youth.
- Hitler established a new private bodyguard called the *Schutzstaffel* (SS).
- Goebbels, who edited the Nazi newspaper and was in charge of propaganda, emphasised the Nazi's opposition to Jews. This anti-Jewish message was very popular.
- The Nazis held public meetings across Germany and trained their members to be effective public speakers.
- The Nazi Party established various organisations, such as the Nazi Women's League, to take its message to particular groups of people.
- The party concentrated on winning the support of farmers, as Germany's agriculture was suffering badly in the late 1920s.

ACTIVITY

What do you think Hitler meant in Source G when he said the Nazis would 'have to hold our noses'?

SOURCE G

Hitler speaking in the mid-1920s.

Instead of working to achieve power by armed coup, we shall have to hold our noses and enter the Reichstag against the opposition deputies. If outvoting them takes longer than outshooting them, at least the results will be guaranteed by their own constitution.

SOURCE H

An American journalist remembering the support he saw for the Nazis in 1928.

Support for the Nazi Party had grown due to the country's problems of hyperinflation and the French invasion of the Ruhr. By 1928 Nazism appeared to be a dying cause. Now that Germany's outlook was suddenly bright, the Nazi Party was rapidly withering away. One scarcely heard of Hitler or the Nazis except as a joke.

SOURCE I

Hitler speaks to supporters in 1925.



LIMITED SUPPORT FOR THE NAZIS, 1923–29

By 1929 – thanks to Hitler's reorganisation – the Nazi party was well organised, with a membership of over 100,000. However, the Nazis had little success in gaining seats in the Reichstag. In May 1924 (in which the Nazis stood as the National Socialist Freedom Movement because the NSDAP was banned following the Munich Putsch) they won 32 seats. Four years later, in 1928, they managed to win only 12 seats.

This was largely because of Gustav Stresemann's efforts. Between 1924 and 1929, Stresemann had ended inflation and agreed the Dawes and Young Plans. This had helped to stabilise the German economy. As foreign minister, Stresemann had restored Germany's place in the international community: the Locarno and Kellogg–Briand Pacts had improved Germany's relations with other countries and, in 1926, Germany had become part of the League of Nations. In 1925, Hindenburg had become president of the Republic. He had been an army commander in the First World War and was popular among Germans with more **conservative** and nationalist views. He and Stresemann managed to unite the more moderate parties on both the left and the right, so coalitions had been able to govern Germany effectively.

As a result, the German people were happier with the government and had less reason to vote for extreme parties, such as the Nazis. In 1928, the Nazis had support from the farming community, winning up to 18 per cent of the

vote in some farming areas. The party won few votes in the big cities and industrial areas, however, gaining only 1 per cent of the votes in Berlin and in the Ruhr industrial region.

3.3 IMPACT OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the economic impact of the Great Depression
- Understand the impact of this on support for the Nazi Party
- Understand Nazi methods to win support during the Great Depression

In October 1929, Stresemann died suddenly after a stroke. This was a serious setback for the Weimar Republic. At the same time, events in the USA plunged the world economy into a crisis. In Germany, these events gave Hitler the ideal opportunity to gain more support.

THE WALL STREET CRASH, 1929

During the 1920s there had been a great deal of **speculation** on the New York stock exchange (Wall Street) and prices of stocks and shares rose. Then in October 1929, there was a collapse of prices as investors lost confidence and began to sell. As a result, many American businesses were destroyed by the Wall Street Crash. This, in turn, triggered a downturn in the US economy.

The USA recalled the loans it had made to Germany. This led to a financial crisis in Germany, because the government did not have the money to repay the loans. Many German businesses were forced to close due to the economic problems, so many people lost their jobs. Unemployment increased rapidly and the government needed more money to pay unemployment benefits; it raised taxes to provide this money.

THE EFFECTS OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION ON THE GERMAN PEOPLE

Different groups of people were affected in different ways by the Great Depression. The Great Depression led to a spiral of decline and widespread hardship and suffering across many groups in German society. Thousands of German businesses were forced to close and millions lost their jobs as a result. The government took the decision to cut unemployment benefits which meant further suffering and a decline in demand for manufactured products.

- **Young people:** In 1933, more than 50 per cent of people aged 16–30 were unemployed. Even people with a good level of education (such as a university degree) could not find work.
- **Factory workers:** Four out of ten could not get a job. They also suffered because unemployment benefits were reduced by the government. Food prices were high and many unemployed people could not afford to eat.
- **Farmers:** Since the mid-1920s, farmers had been struggling because the price of their goods was falling. Many farmers were in debt. The economic problems in rural areas led to an increase in support for the Nazis. The Nazis used existing farmers' organisations to spread their influence and take advantage of the economic troubles that farmers faced, like falling prices for their goods.
- **Businessmen:** Those who managed to keep their businesses struggled, because people had less money to spend on goods. This was partly because many people were unemployed and partly because of the government tax rises.

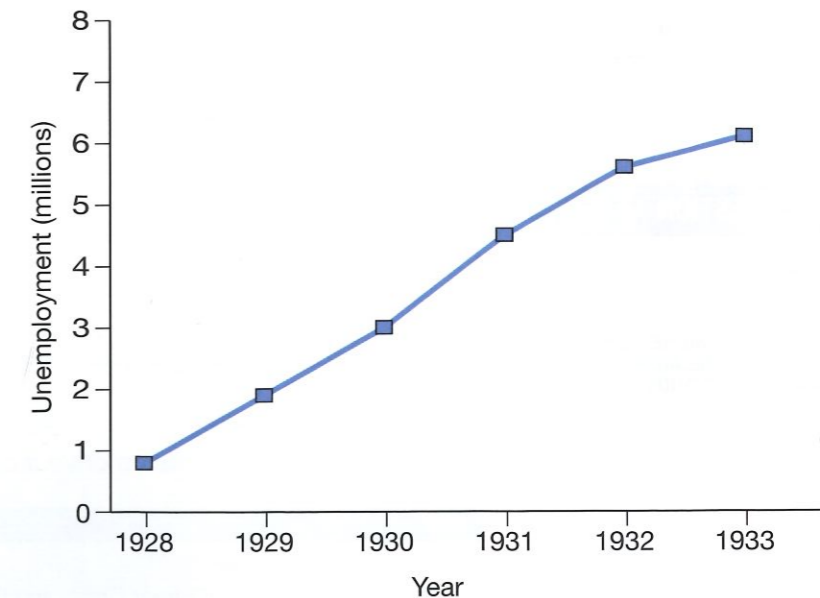
SOURCE J

People queuing at a job centre in Germany, 1930.



Figure 3.5 shows how unemployment levels in Germany rose and fell between 1928 and 1933.

► **Figure 3.5** The growth of unemployment 1928–33



THE EFFECTS OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION ON THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

As a result of the Great Depression, the SPD and the Centre Party (the two main parties in the coalition government) fell out. Heinrich Brüning (the Centre Party leader) suggested making further cuts to welfare benefits, but Hermann Müller (the SPD leader) refused to accept this. Müller resigned and Brüning became chancellor.

KEY TERMS

Article 48 part of the German constitution; in an emergency, the president could make laws by decree, without the approval of the Reichstag

scapegoats people who are blamed for something that someone else has done wrong

Brüning did not have a majority in the Reichstag, so he asked President Hindenburg to use **Article 48** of the constitution. This could be used in an emergency, so that laws could be made without Reichstag approval. This meant that, from 1930, Germany was not run as a democracy. The Reichstag met only occasionally and Germany was effectively controlled by Hindenburg.

Brüning introduced several unpopular measures, including tax rises and further cuts to unemployment benefit. These measures greatly increased the suffering of the German people. In response, many Germans turned to extreme political parties, in the hopes of a solution to their problems. The Nazis gave people **scapegoats**; they claimed that Germany's problems had been caused by Jews, Communists and Weimar politicians. In the 1930 election, the Nazis won 107 seats and the Communists won 77 seats.

ACTIVITY

- 1 What was the Wall Street Crash?
- 2 Describe how the economic depression affected groups in Germany in different ways.
- 3 Explain the link between the Wall Street Crash and the economic depression in Germany.

EXTRACT A

A modern historian describes the effects of Brüning's policies as chancellor.

He deliberately deepened the economic crisis as he hoped it would allow Germany to recover more quickly... He broke the spirit of the constitution. This contributed to the final destruction of the Weimar Republic and produced an atmosphere of hopelessness.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A01

A02

SKILLS

PROBLEM SOLVING, REASONING,
DECISION MAKING, ADAPTIVE
LEARNING, INNOVATION

'The Wall Street Crash was to blame for the economic and social problems in Germany 1929–32.'

How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

You may use the following in your answer:

- the Wall Street Crash
- Brüning's policies.

You **must** also use information of your own.

(16 marks)

HINT

Remember to consider:

- the effects of the Wall Street Crash and the fact that Germany was affected more than some other countries
- other reasons for Germany's economic and social problems
- the difficulties faced by the Weimar government as they tried to provide solutions to these problems.

You need to reach a conclusion about the most important causes.

WHY WAS HITLER ABLE TO BECOME CHANCELLOR?

The Nazis used a number of methods to take advantage of the economic and political problems of the Weimar Republic. They focused on:

- the appeal of Hitler
- the activities of the SA
- skilful use of propaganda.

THE APPEAL OF HITLER

During election campaigns in 1930–32, the Nazis presented Hitler as the strong leader that Germany needed and was looking for. In posters, his appearance was changed and he was shown to have almost superhuman strength. When making speeches, for example at Nazi rallies, Hitler developed a powerful and convincing personal style. He said he was Germany's last hope and he promised a better future. These messages were very popular with people who were desperate to see Germany become strong again. Hitler made sure his messages would appeal to many different groups in Germany, with broad pledges such as 'Make Germany strong' and 'Smash the chains of Versailles'.

Powerful business interests were willing to support Hitler and provide financial backing for his campaign with the aim of stopping the rise of communist support. The Communists told the German people that the depression in Germany and worldwide was clear evidence that the capitalist system did not work. They also pointed out that it was the workers who suffered the

consequences of this failure when they lost their jobs and couldn't support their families. It was time for the German people to stand up to big business and bring about a fairer society. It was no surprise that the major German business leaders looked for a party that could stop the growth in support for the German Communist Party (see Table).

After 1929 the National Party which had previously attracted the support of big business in Germany had been in decline, so industrialists began to favour Hitler as an alternative. Some wealthy business owners like Krupp and Siemens gave money to help the Nazis promote their message.

THE ROLE OF THE SA

In the SA, the Nazis had a stronger private army than their main rivals – the Communists. The SA played a key role in the growth of the Nazi Party at this time.

- In 1930, the SA had 400,000 members, and their presence at Nazi Party rallies helped the Nazis to appear strong.
- At rallies, the SA used lights and symbols of power such as swords and flags. These reinforced the idea that the Nazis could bring a better future for Germans.
- The SA disrupted the meetings of political opponents.
- In the elections of 1930 and 1932, the SA used violence to threaten the opposition. Some people were killed and voters were intimidated as they cast their votes at polling stations.

▼ Seats won by the German Communist Party in elections to the Reichstag

▼ ELECTION	▼ NO OF SEATS	▼ % OF VOTE
1928	54	10.6
1930	77	13.1
1932 (July)	89	14.6
1932 (Nov)	100	16.9

SOURCE K

Marching members of the SA, 1930.



EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

HITLER OVER GERMANY

Many of Goebbels' techniques were very modern for the time. The use of mass media to gain political popularity was only just beginning. Goebbels organised an impressive election schedule: Hitler was flown all over Germany in his *Deutschlandflug* (flight over Germany), using the slogan 'The Führer over Germany'. At one point, Hitler spoke at major rallies in twenty different cities in just 6 days.

SOURCE L

A Nazi election poster, 1932. The poster is titled 'We farmers of rubbish' and shows an Aryan farmer with a pitchfork clearing up the 'muck' – Communists, Jews and businessmen who have been destroying Germany.



NAZI ELECTION PROPAGANDA

The Nazi Party trained members of local groups in propaganda skills. It focused on popular messages and was quick to change its messages if a particular idea began to lose support. For example, at one point, the Nazis were keen to nationalise industry. However, this message was quickly dropped when it became apparent that German industrialists did not support the idea.

The Nazis were keen to use new technology, so Hitler was flown around Germany to make speeches. Goebbels was also a master of propaganda and used many methods to get Nazi messages across to voters. For example:

- Parades and marches were organised by mobile Nazi units. They included both political speeches and entertainments such as plays, concerts and sport.
- The Nazis owned eight different newspapers. Each paper aimed to sell the Nazi message to a particular audience.
- Huge rallies were held, to demonstrate the order and discipline of the Nazi Party.
- Posters were designed to target different groups in Germany. The messages were deliberately clear and simple.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A01

A02

Explain **two** effects on the German people of Hitler's methods to win their support in 1932. (8 marks)

HINT

Make sure you explain two different effects. For example, you could think about the effects of SA intimidation on how people felt about Nazi power.

1932 ELECTIONS AND THE FALL OF BRÜNING

In July 1932, the Nazis were the biggest party in the Reichstag with 230 seats (37.4 per cent of the vote). In the same year, Hitler used the elections for president to increase his political reputation in Germany: in April 1932, he polled 13 million votes. In the end, he was beaten by Hindenburg, who kept his role as president. Despite this defeat, Hitler had become a major political figure.

KEY TERM

decree an official order by an individual or group which has the force of law; Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution allowed the president to pass decrees in times of national emergency

In the same month, Brüning tried to use a presidential **decree** to ban the SA and the SS, because there had been considerable political unrest. However, an ambitious army general named Kurt von Schleicher removed Brüning and replaced him with a coalition of army officers, rich landowners and industrialists. Von Schleicher then persuaded Hindenburg to sack Brüning as chancellor.

FRANZ VON PAPEN

Von Schleicher was determined to take control. He decided that a wealthy politician named von Papen would make a suitable figurehead for a new coalition. Von Schleicher gave Hitler a place in the coalition but he dramatically underestimated Hitler's ability to manipulate the situation to suit his own ends.

The coalition led by von Papen was weak and Hitler argued that he should be chancellor, since the Nazi Party had the largest number of seats in the Reichstag. Hindenburg refused, because he hated Hitler and thought he was becoming too ambitious. Von Papen called another election; the Nazi position was weakened but they remained the largest party in the Reichstag, with 190 seats. As a result, von Papen resigned.

VON SCHLEICHER AND HINDENBURG

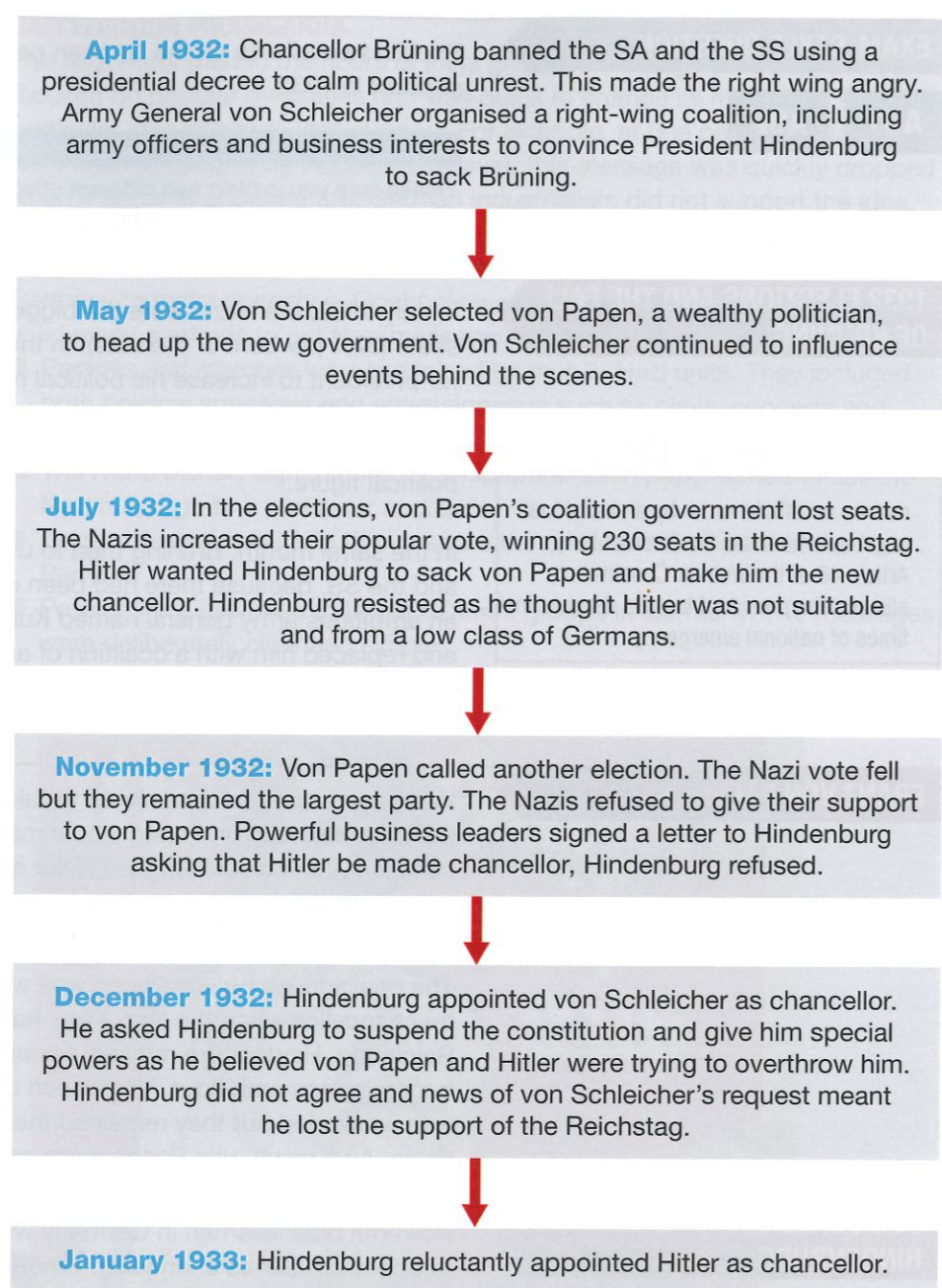
KEY TERM

conspiracy a secret plan with other people to do something bad or illegal

Powerful businessmen in Germany wrote to President Hindenburg, asking him to appoint Hitler as chancellor. Hindenburg refused and chose von Schleicher instead. As chancellor, von Schleicher asked Hindenburg to suspend the constitution and make him the head of a military **dictatorship**; he claimed that Hitler and von Papen were trying to lead a **conspiracy** against him. However, von Schleicher's request was leaked and he lost the support of the Reichstag.

Meanwhile, von Papen had become determined to take power. He believed he would be able to control Hitler from the background, and tried to persuade Hindenburg to make him vice chancellor, with Hitler as chancellor. Eventually, Hindenburg agreed and Hitler became chancellor of Germany on 30 January 1933.

► **Figure 3.6** The roles of von Papen, Schleicher and Hindenburg in Hitler becoming chancellor



EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A01

A02

SKILLS

PROBLEM SOLVING, REASONING,
DECISION MAKING, ADAPTIVE
LEARNING, INNOVATION

'The main reason that there was support for Hitler in the 1932 general election was because powerful interest groups in Germany underestimated Hitler's ambition.'

How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

You may use the following in your answer:

- the November 1932 election result
- the fears of industrialists.

You **must** also use information of your own.

(16 marks)

HINT

Remember it is important to consider reasons for and against the statement. In this answer, you could also look at Hitler's popularity in the 1932 elections.

RECAP

RECALL QUIZ

- 1 Who founded the German Workers' Party in 1919?
- 2 What was Hitler's job at the end of the First World War?
- 3 What prison was Hitler sent to after the Munich Putsch?
- 4 What was the name of the book Hitler wrote while in prison?
- 5 What does the term *Lebensraum* mean?
- 6 Who was the leader of the SA?
- 7 When was Brüning chancellor?
- 8 What percentage of the vote did Hitler win in July 1932?
- 9 Why did Hindenburg dislike Hitler?
- 10 On what date did Hitler become chancellor?

CHECKPOINT

STRENGTHEN

- S1** Explain three ways in which the Great Depression affected people in Germany.
- S2** Explain three ways in which the Nazis used propaganda messages in their election campaigns.
- S3** Explain how the role of the SA grew.

CHALLENGE

- C1** Why did industrialists give their support to Hitler as chancellor?
- C2** How far did the Nazis change their tactics to gain power after 1924?
- C3** In what ways did the Weimar's weaknesses provide opportunities for Hitler?

SUMMARY

- The Nazi Party rose from being a minor political group in Munich to holding power in Germany.
- Under Hitler's leadership, the party was transformed. From 1924, the Nazis focused on using democratic means to get power.
- Until 1928, the Nazis remained a minor political party with very little influence.
- In the late 1920s, the economic situation in Germany changed dramatically due to the impact of the Wall Street Crash and the start of a worldwide economic depression. The Great Depression affected Germany particularly badly.
- The Nazis were in a position to take advantage of the economic crisis. They used extensive propaganda and intimidation to get more votes.
- The Weimar government was unable to find solutions to Germany's economic problems. Hitler benefited from the collapse of the Weimar democracy.
- Hitler was helped into power by powerful individuals in Germany who thought they could control him. He was also helped by business leaders, who preferred Hitler to the communist alternative.