



## THE SEIZURE OF POWER



Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg (left) and General Eric Ludendorff (right) in 1918

### HINDENBURG

- 1860 Enters Prussian army as Kadet (age 13); serves with distinction against Austria (1866) and France (1870)
- 1909 Proposed by Schlieffen to succeed him as Chief of Staff, passed over in favor of Helmuth von Moltke
- 1911 Retires as Lieutenant General
- 1914 Recalled to command German forces in East Prussia
- 1916 Chief of the German General Staff
- 1919 Retires (again); testifies before Reichstag committee that German army had been “stabbed in the back”

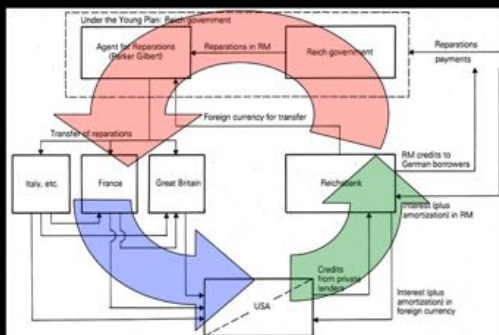
## HINDENBURG



Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg (left) and General Eric Ludendorff (right) in 1918

- 1925 Reluctantly stands for President of Germany, narrowly defeating Center candidate Wilhelm Marx
- 1929 First “presidential” chancellor (Heinrich Brüning)
- 1932 Reluctantly re-elected President of Germany
- 1933 Fourth “presidential” chancellor (Adolf Hitler)
- 1934 Dies at age 86; office of President abolished in his honor

## POLITICAL ECONOMY



Circulation of Reparations under the Dawes Plan, 1924-29

- 1873 First “Great Depression” (ends 1896)
- 1914 First World War (ends 1918)  
Mark trades at ~200 to 1 versus USD
- 1923 Ruhr crisis, climax of hyperinflationary policy
- 1924 Deflationary recovery capitalized by American loans provided under the Dawes Plan
- 1928 Beginning of agricultural depression
- 1929 American stock market collapses
- 1930 German unemployment exceeds 5M
- 1933 Franklin Roosevelt becomes President  
Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor

## ELECTORAL POLITICS

	May-28	Sep-30	Mar-32	Jul-32	Nov-32	Mar-33
Total Parties [New]	41 [25]	37 [17]	Hindenburg	61 [45]	51 [18]	14 [1]
Communists	10.6	13.3	53	14.3	16.9	12.3
Social Democrats	29.8	24.5	Hitler	21.6	20.4	18.3
Catholic Center	12.1	11.8	36.8	12.5	11.9	11.3
Others	44.9	32.2		14.3	17.7	14.2
Nazis	2.6	18.2		37.3	33.1	43.9

## DEMOCRACY BETWEEN THE WARS






1920



1928



1938

## BREAKTHROUGH

1929

Feb Lateran Treaty between Italy and the Papacy




Aug Young Plan announced (referendum in Dec)

Oct American stock market crash  
Government spending / borrowing collapses

1930

Mar Müller “Grand Coalition” government resigns  
when SPD rejects cuts to benefits

Clockwise: Alfred Hugenberg, Fritz Thyssen, Heinrich Brüning

## BREAKTHROUGH

1930

Mar Heinrich Brüning chancellor (financial expert)  
Central concerns are reparations and protection  
of the military budget  
SPD refuses to support austerity budget

Sept Federal election returns 107 Nazi delegates

Dec Press censorship | Ban on political uniforms

Clockwise: Alfred Hugenberg, Fritz Thyssen, Heinrich Brüning



## ELECTORAL POLITICS

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Nazis now senior partner with Nationalists

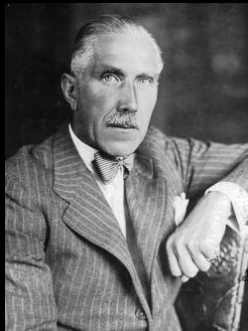
33% of Nationalist voters in 1928 voted NS in 1930

25% of new voters

White collar civil servants

Communist gains validate fear of Bolshevism for middle class, civil war within the military.

Street violence now a central strategy, as it had not been in 1928.



1931

Feb Reichstag adjourned for six months

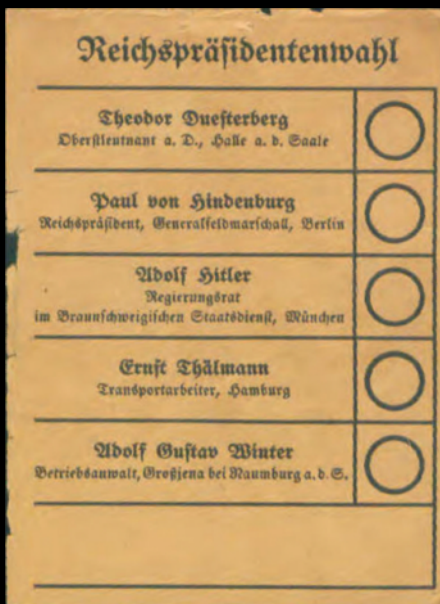
1932

April Presidential election (second round in May)  
SA and Red Front-Fighters banned  
Hitler runs as successor rather than opponent  
New technology: air travel, radio

June Franz von Papen chancellor  
Hitler refuses to enter government, demands  
fresh election (called for July)

Left: Franz von Papen; Right: Kurt Schleicher

## PARADE'S END



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Presidential ballot listing Hitler as an "official serving in Braunschweig"

## PARADE'S END



Altona ("Little Moscow"), 1932

## THE MILITARY OPTION

1932

- Apr Democratic majority lost in Prussian *Landtag*
- July Ban on SA lifted | "Bloody Sunday" (Altona)  
Federal rule in Prussia | General strike fails  
Nazis largest party in Reichstag
- Aug Hindenburg rejects Hitler government because it suggested return to parliamentary regime
- Nov Papen attempts to dissolve parliament, fails  
New election shows leveling of NS support
- Dec Schleicher chancellor | appeals to Gregor Strasser  
Hugenberg rejects massive job creation scheme  
Hindenburg rejects proposal for military government



Above: Hitler's first cabinet include two other Nazis - Hermann Göring [without portfolio], on Hitler's right, and Wilhelm Frick [Interior], behind them; Werner Blomberg [Defense] stands to Frick's left



Right: Marinus van der Lubbe

## COORDINATION

1933

- Jan Hitler chancellor of coalition government  
Immediate task is to prepare for new election
- Feb Hitler speech to officer corps (3rd)  
Budget | Rearmament | Expansion | "Neutrality"  
Meeting with industrialists (20th)  
Reichstag fire (27th) | Emergency decree (28th)  
Communist party leadership arrested
- Mar Election (5th): narrow "national" majority  
"Enabling Act" (23rd) over SPD opposition









Above: Original Dachau barracks (old factory buildings)



Right: Heinrich Himmler in 1933

## COORDINATION

1933	
Mar	Dachau concentration camp opens (9th)
May	Membership in Nazi Party closed Trade Union office closed
June	SPD dissolved based on charges of treasonous activity by leaders who had fled the country  Hugenberg resigns after Hindenburg refuses to protect Stahlhelm (dissolved)
July	Concordat with Catholic church Center Party dissolved

## THE NIGHT OF THE LONG KNIVES

1931	Ernst Röhm resumes leadership of SA (Jan)
1933	
Apr	Reich Defense Council (Blomberg)
Aug	Göring rescinds SA auxiliary police order; new rules for who can order “protective custody”
1934	
Jan	SA member exceeds 3M SA invades army celebration of Kaiser’s B’d day
Feb	Hitler tells Eden of plan to demilitarize SA
June	Papen’s Marburg Speech (17 <sup>th</sup> ) “Rohm Purge” (30 <sup>th</sup> )

Clockwise: Gregor Strasser, Ferdinand von Bredow, Ernst Röhm, Gustav Ritter von Kahr





## THE HITLER OATH 2 AUG 1934

*I swear this sacred oath by God, that I shall render unconditional obedience to the Leader of the German Empire and people, Adolf Hitler, supreme commander of the armed forces, and that as a brave soldier I will at all times be prepared to lay down my life for this oath.*



19 Aug Referendum (89% yes) approves merger of the offices of President and Chancellor

20 Aug Law on the Allegiance of Civil Servants and Soldiers of the Armed Forces

Clockwise: Werner von Blomberg, Walther von Reichenau



*What the King conquered, the Prince formed, the Field Marshal protected, the Soldier has rescued and united.*

