

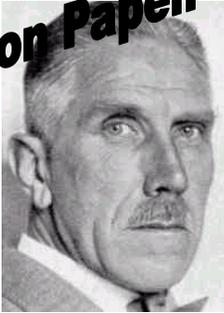
Hindenburg

Hitler plots his way into power 1932-1933

By July 1932, the Nazis were by far the largest party in the Reichstag with 230 seats. Hitler was growing in popularity and he had given Hindenburg a good race in the presidential elections of the same year. Despite Nazi political success, Hindenburg was reluctant to appoint Hitler as Chancellor of Germany.



Von Papen



Hindenburg used his powers to make Fritz Von Papen, the leader of the Centre Party, Chancellor instead of Hitler. The army did not really support Von Papen, so he had to step down. Hindenburg appointed one of his advisers, Von Schleicher, as Chancellor in December 1932. Von Schleicher failed to win support in the Reichstag and resigned after eight weeks.

On 30th January 1933, Hindenburg appointed Hitler Chancellor. Von Papen had convinced the President, that he and other Weimar politicians could control Hitler. In Hitler's cabinet there were only three Nazis, all the other positions were taken up by politicians from other parties. Von Papen became Hitler's Vice-Chancellor, thinking that he could control Hitler and rule Germany through him.



Von Schleicher

On paper, it looked as if Hitler's position was still quite weak. In reality, Hitler was Chancellor of Germany, Goring was in charge of much of the Prussian police (by far the largest state in Germany) and Hitler knew that once in power he could pick off his enemies one by one. Many of the other cabinet ministers, although not Nazis, were from the right wing nationalist parties and actually agreed with many of Hitler's policies.

In the March 1933 elections, Hitler finally gained an overall majority by making an alliance with the nationalists and expelling the Communists after the Reichstag Fire. This majority gave Hitler the ability to pass the Enabling Act that gave him the powers of a dictator.

Hitler



By the summer of 1933, Hitler's position had been greatly strengthened. He had seized control of the government through political deals and manipulation, he had destroyed the Communists and he had passed the Enabling Act. Nevertheless, he still faced potential opposition from the aging President Hindenburg and from other leading Nazis, in particular Ernst Rohm, head of the 2.5 million strong SA.