3 Establishment and consolidation of Nazi rule

Timeline

1933 Mar: Enabling Act is passed – the ‘Law for terminating the suffering of the people and the nation’ – giving Hitler dictatorial powers for four years

Apr: Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service is passed

May: All trade unions are dissolved and workers forced to join the DAF (the German Labour Front)

Jul: Concordat is concluded with the Pope whereby the Catholic Church is banned from political activity in return for a promise that its religious freedom will be upheld; law is passed against the formation of new parties (with KPD/SPD banned and other parties dissolving themselves, Germany becomes a one-party state)

Nov: Elections are held in which the Nazi candidates win 92.2% of the vote

1934 Jan: Law is passed for the reconstruction of the state, placing federal states under Reich governors

Jun: Night of the Long Knives – the SS kill SA leaders and other opponents of Hitler

Aug: Hindenburg dies and Hitler becomes head of state – Führer and Reich chancellor; army swears a personal oath of loyalty to Hitler

1938 Feb: Army is reorganised to increase Hitler’s control

Key questions

- How did Hitler consolidate his position and create a one-party state between March and July 1933?
- What part did propaganda and repression play in Hitler’s consolidation of power?
- Why did it take until 1938 for Hitler’s power to be fully consolidated?
- Was there any organised opposition to Nazi rule?
- Was Nazi Germany a totalitarian state and was Hitler ‘Master of the Third Reich’?

Overview

- Without removing the old structures entirely, Hitler nevertheless ensured that the Nazi Party gained control over government at both central and local level.
- Hitler made sure that no sectional interests that might conflict with Nazism would be able to exist, by banning trade unions and other political parties and concluding a Concordat with the Catholic Church.
- Hitler made extensive use of propaganda to promote his dictatorship, but also relied on the repression of his enemies, including perceived enemies within the party – such as the SA, which was purged in the Night of the Long Knives.
- Hitler tried to bring all areas within the state under his control but the army was too powerful for him to challenge immediately and he did not assume complete control until 1938.
- There appeared to be little opposition to Nazi rule but, beneath the surface, political, ideological and religious hostility remained and an element of dissension continued in some groups of young people.
- Despite the consolidation of power, Hitler’s actual style of rule suggests that his position at the top of the party and state hierarchy was not as authoritarian as it might seem in theory. Some historians have described him as a ‘weak’ rather than a ‘strong’ dictator.
How did Hitler consolidate his position and create a one-party state between March and July 1933?

Between March and July 1933, all other political parties were forced to disband. The KPD (German Communist Party) had been banned under the presidential decree of February, after the Reichstag Fire, shortly after Hitler became chancellor. Many less extreme socialists had also been imprisoned, although the SPD was not officially banned until 22 June. Similarly, the DNVP (the right-wing nationalist party) lost its role once it became part of the Nazi coalition, and disbanded itself. On 5 July the Catholic Centre Party followed as part of the Concordat with the Pope, which was signed later that month (see page 107). The culmination of this activity was the Law Against the Establishment of Parties of 14 July 1933. This made it a criminal offence to organise any party outside the NSDAP. Consequently, although there was an election in November 1933, only the Nazis were able to stand and so took all the Reichstag seats.

Hitler's one-party state was a centralised state. In the localities, the Nazis had begun to infiltrate state (Länder) governments from early in 1933, seizing public buildings and newspaper offices, and from March many state governments had been forced to resign since they had proved unable to control SA violence.
The Nazi government had already appointed many loyal commissioners to the states before a law passed in January 1934 formalised the situation. The old provincial assemblies of the Länder of Germany were abolished and all areas placed under the control of Nazi governors (Reichstatthalter) and subordinated to the Reich government in Berlin. These Nazi governors often also had positions as local Nazi Gauleiters (the party representatives in the area).

By the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service of April 1933, non-Aryans were forced to retire and Jews and other opponents described as 'alien elements' were purged from positions in the administration, courts, schools and universities. However, it was not until 1939 that membership of the Nazi Party became compulsory, and in the interests of efficient government there was a remarkable continuity of personnel.

The left-wing socialist trade unions were dissolved in May 1933 and the German Labour Front (DAF) under Robert Ley was set up to replace them. Membership was compulsory and employees could no longer negotiate over wages and conditions with employers. New academies, or 'fronts', also controlled the professions and teachers were, for example, required to join the National Socialist Teachers' League (NSLB), while in November 1933 university lecturers were required to sign a declaration in support of Hitler and join the Nazi Lecturers' Association.

Hitler's one-party state was legally established by 'the Law to Ensure the Unity of Party and State' (December 1933). However, the situation was not as simple as it sounds. Hitler allowed parallel institutions to develop rather than creating undiluted party rule, so there was competition within the state between different agencies, and sometimes between different branches of the Nazi Party itself. For example, in local government the minister-presidents of each Land were retained alongside the new Reich governors. Some intentionalist historians, such as Karl Bracher and Klaus Hildebrand, believe Hitler did this on purpose so that he could retain ultimate control. Structuralists such as Martin Broszat and Hans Mommsen believe that this situation was unintentional and resulted from Hitler's disinterest and neglect. Furthermore, although by the end of July 1933 most major interest groups had been brought under Nazi control and a one-party state had been created, Hitler was not secure until he had dealt with the radical wing of the SA, while the army had also largely survived Hitler's early measures unscathed.

**Night of the Long Knives**

Hitler had been content to use the paramilitary SA to destroy the communist movement when seeking power. However, he was concerned about the SA's violent and sometimes uncontrollable behaviour and about the demands of its leader, Ernst Röhm, who had ambitions to place himself at the head of a merged SA and army. Röhm openly condemned Hitler's compliance with the élite in 1933 and called for a second revolution to complete the 'Nazi uprising'.

Hitler could not afford to upset the army, whose loyalty he needed. Since the army was hostile to the SA, he increasingly took the view that the SA had served its purpose and was expendable. When Heinrich Himmler and Hermann Goering (see page 86) spread rumours of a planned coup by the SA, Hitler decided that it was time to take action.

According to official pronouncement, Röhm and 85 others were killed in the Night of the Long Knives on 30 June 1934 in order to forestall a revolt. In
realities, the figure may have been nearer 200 and the reasons were far more complex. Not all the murders were of SA men. The Nazi Gregor Strasser (who had attempted to split the party in 1932) was shot, as was Kurt von Schleicher, the former chancellor. Von Papen was put under house arrest and was lucky to escape with his life.

The Night of the Long Knives helped to confirm Hitler's authority. He justified his actions to the Reichstag, two weeks after the event, by saying that he alone had acted on behalf of the German people at a time of emergency and he thus gained credit for a 'heroic' action. The Reichstag confirmed that Hitler's powers had no constitutional bounds and that his authority was derived from the will of the people and could not be challenged. In condoning his action, the Reichstag effectively made murder acceptable.

The purge also had other important consequences. Goebbels was able to portray Hitler as a man who had personally saved the country, and this helped in the growing cult of the Führer. The purge also left the way open for Himmler's SS to assume dominance in Germany, while Hitler gained the support of the army commanders. When Hindenburg died in August, all members of the armed forces swore a personal oath of loyalty to Hitler. Henceforward, Hitler combined the chancellorship and presidency.

What part did propaganda and repression play in Hitler's consolidation of power?

The use of propaganda

One of Hitler's first tasks as chancellor, in March 1933, was to set up a new Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda under the control of Goebbels. Hitler believed that the masses, for whom he had little respect, could easily be won over through regular exposure to propaganda in schools, towns and the workplace, and in their leisure pursuits. Consequently, the ministry established separate chambers to oversee the work of the press, radio, theatre, music, the creative arts and film.

The ministry controlled the press through censorship and by allowing the Nazi publishing house, Eher Verlag, to buy up private newspapers until by 1939 it controlled two-thirds of the press. A German news agency regulated the supply of news and Goebbels held a daily press conference with editors to ensure the right messages arrived in print. Editors were held responsible for their papers and were liable for prosecution if they published unapproved material.

The Nazis made extensive use of the radio as a medium for reinforcing Nazi rule, with the Reich Broadcasting Corporation, set up in 1933, controlling all that was broadcast. Workplaces, shops, cafés and blocks of flats were expected to relay important speeches through loudspeakers for all to hear, while in the home, the Volksbauer (people's receiver) became a standard item. These radio sets had a limited range, preventing individuals from listening to foreign broadcasts, and they were deliberately sold cheaply. Consequently, ownership of sets increased from under 25% of households in 1932 to over 70% by 1939 and the population could be subject to daily exposure to Nazi views.

Stamps carried Nazi slogans and posters bearing Nazi quotations were put up in offices and public buildings. Furthermore, the 'Heil Hitler' salute became the official form of greeting and helped reinforce enthusiasm for the leader.
Fact
The 'cult of Hitler' was almost like an alternative religious cult, giving Germans something to believe in. Nazi propaganda portrayed Hitler as all-powerful and all-knowing. The media carried details of what he wore, said and did; and posters and books of photographs were sold. He was depicted as a father figure, a friend of children and a leader who really cared about his people. He was also portrayed as a strong man and a powerful statesman. Anything that showed a human 'failing', such as wearing glasses, was carefully erased.

A Nazi poster from c. 1935 depicting Adolf Hitler bearing the German flag at the head of a vast army, with the caption 'Es lebe Deutschland!' ('Long Live Germany!')

The cinema was another propaganda tool, although the Nazis used film less effectively than the radio. Nevertheless, all films were censored and 'degenerate' artists forbidden. Light-hearted entertainment – even romances, thrillers and musicals – had to conform to Nazi ideological principles.

Activity
Find out about some Nazi films and the messages they tried to convey. You could start with films such as Hitlerjunge Quex (1933) about the Hitler Youth, Triumph des Willens (Triumph of Will) (1934) about the Nuremberg Rally, Der Ewige Jude (The Eternal Jew) (1940), Jud Süß (1940) reinforcing anti-Semitism, and Ich klage an (1941) (I Accuse) about euthanasia.

It was hard to avoid the propagandist messages in Nazi Germany. Even culture became a form of propaganda, with concert halls bedecked in swastikas (see Unit 4). There were constant meetings, rallies, festivals, such as that established to celebrate Hitler's birthday and the anniversary of his appointment as chancellor, and sporting events that provided opportunities to extol Nazism.

Of course, it is not easy to evaluate the success of propaganda, since the German people were also subject to a number of other influences, most notably repression. However, the very ubiquity of propaganda must have played some role in strengthening the regime. Propaganda was, according to the historian David Welch, more successful in reinforcing than in countering existing attitudes. Insofar as it was able to do that, however, it must take some credit for the ease with which Hitler was able to consolidate his rule.
Establishment and consolidation of Nazi rule

The use of repression

The consolidation of Nazi rule also involved considerable infringement of personal liberty. Repression took various forms, ranging from comparatively mild censorship and intimidation through warnings and job dismissal to arbitrary arrest, imprisonment, a period in a concentration camp or even execution. Under Hindenburg's decree of February 1933 (see page 71), 300,000 communists were rounded up and 30,000 executed. The decree allowed imprisonment without trial for an indefinite period for anyone deemed dangerous to the state. In March 1933, there was a further decree against malicious gossip and, thereafter, any critical comment or unauthorised action could lead to arrest.

The police were centralised under Himmler as Chief of Police from 1936. Himmler was also Reichsführer SS and head of the Gestapo, the main security agent of the state. There was also the SD (Sicherheitsdienst), or security police, headed by Reinhard Heydrich and in 1939 the Reich Main Security Department was set up to oversee all this security apparatus. The individual was made well aware of the consequences of non-conformity, be it political, racial or moral. The state employed a stream of informants, including the dreaded 'block wardens', who paid regular visits to individuals' homes, creating an image of power that must have helped to reinforce obedience.

Even when those arrested were given a trial, the law courts were no longer impartial. Under the 1933 Civil Service Law, judges whose political beliefs conflicted with Nazism lost their positions. Lawyers had to be members of the Nazi Lawyers Association and were required to study Nazi ideology, so although the law itself did not always change, it was interpreted differently by Nazi lawyers. This was summed up by Ernst Hübner, who was at the time a prominent constitutional law professor at the University of Kiel. He defined the Nazi concept of law, stating that the individual can be judged by the law only from the point of view of the individual's value for the völkisch (people's) community. The law was re-interpreted according to the will of the Führer and the 'best interests' of the German community.

Although the concentration camps were not extermination camps in the years before 1939, they could be brutal places in which prisoners were forced to work for long hours on meagre rations. Between 1933 and 1939, around 225,000 Germans were convicted of political crimes and a further 162,000 were placed in 'protective custody' in prison without trial.

Why did it take until 1938 for Hitler's power to be fully consolidated?

Even after the Night of the Long Knives and the army's oath of loyalty in August 1934, Hitler knew that the army was the one institution that still retained the power to prevent his ambitions from being realised. Hitler was therefore careful not to cause trouble, and left the army structurally unchanged until 1938. However, every attempt was made to Nazify the institution through the adoption of the swastika insignia, Nazi training schemes and indoctrination. Hitler referred to the army as the 'second pillar of the state', working alongside the Nazi Party and, since most officers shared Hitler's nationalist aspirations, the relationship was reasonably successful. The army favoured the Nazis' enforcement of law and order, and Hitler's repudiation of the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles in March 1935, restoration of conscription and promise to expand the peacetime army to more than 500,000 men also met with favour.

SS (Schutzstaffel) The SS – and its subsection the SD (Sicherheitsdienst), the security service – was a highly trained and élite Aryan organisation with extensive powers as a military force and as political police. The SS ran the concentration camps, beginning with Dachau in March 1933. They joined with the Gestapo (see below) in 1934 and in 1936 Himmler became Reichsführer SS. By 1939, the SS Death's Head Units guarded the concentration camps and SS men ran racial superiority and genetic programmes, controlled labour supplies and factories and by 1940 had their own fighting units, the Waffen SS, to rival the regular army.

Gestapo (Geheime Staatspolizei) The Gestapo was the state secret police force, established by Goering in April 1933. It served to root out and intimidate potential opposition. However, the number of Gestapo officers was limited and many were engaged in routine bureaucratic work, so the regime had to rely on spies and informers. This has led to the conclusion that the survival of the Nazi regime rested on the compliance of the public, who were prepared to betray their colleagues and neighbours, rather than on an atmosphere of terror. For example, Robert Gellately put forward the theory that surveillance was dependent on the reports provided by ordinary German people rather than a ubiquitous force of the Gestapo.

Discussion point

Do you consider propaganda or repression more important in the consolidation of power in a totalitarian state such as Hitler's? Why?
Hermann Goering (1893–1946) Goering joined the Nazi Party in 1923 and after 1933 became minister of the interior and prime minister of Prussia, taking control of the Gestapo. He helped establish the concentration camps, arranged (with Himmler) the Night of the Long Knives and ran the 1936 Four-Year Plan. He was also behind the purge of Werner von Blomberg and Werner von Fritsch in 1938. In February 1938, he became head of Germany's armed forces and in 1939 Hitler's deputy and heir. He was in charge of the Luftwaffe (air force) during the war and found guilty at the Nuremberg Trials of German war criminals in 1945–46. He committed suicide before he could be hanged.

Adolf Hitler giving a Nazi salute to a crowd of soldiers at a Nazi rally, 1 May 1938

However, there was some friction, which grew in proportion to Hitler's military ambitions. Some generals condemned the pace of rearmament, and the commander-in-chief, Werner von Fritsch, complained that Hitler was 'rushing everything far too much and destroying every healthy development'. There was also concern about the role of the SS, which Hitler had always claimed to be a domestic police force, but which expanded markedly after the destruction of the SA. The SS-Verfügungstruppe (eventually known as the Waffen SS) was established to be 'part of the wartime army' in August 1938. This caused considerable unease among the professional army leadership. The SS-Totenkopf (Death's Head) units were also expanded as a reserve military force and, according to the historian Bernd Wegner, 'It was no longer a question of whether the SS units would be allowed to share in military conquests in the years to come; the disputes now concerned only their assignment, size and organisation.'

Another argument concerned Hitler's expansionist policies themselves. The army favoured the reversal of the Treaty of Versailles and limited conquest to restore the old empire. However, it was strongly against the idea of war with Russia, the traditional ally of the Prussian Junkers (the landed nobility of Prussia, who dominated the officer class of the German army), and did not support Hitler's policies of Lebensraum. Top army generals were critical when, at
the Hossbach Conference of 5 November 1937, Hitler laid down aggressive plans for rapid expansion in the east. The plans were summarised in the ‘Hossbach memorandum’. Only Goering spoke in Hitler’s favour; von Fritsch and Hitler’s war minister, General Werner von Blomberg, opposed the plans.

Consequently, in 1938 Hitler contrived to dismiss the war minister General von Blomberg, alleging that the woman he had just married in January had been a prostitute. Commander-in-Chief von Fritsch was also dismissed, on the grounds of alleged homosexuality (which was later disproved, although he was never reinstated).

With the departure of von Blomberg and von Fritsch, Hitler became his own war minister, so combining his position as supreme commander (the president’s role) with an additional political role. To reinforce his intentions, he changed the name of the War Ministry into the ‘High Command of the Armed Forces’ (the OKW) and Wilhelm Keitel was appointed as its chief. In practice, Keitel was little more than an office manager and worked under Hitler’s direct control.

These changes were accompanied by a drastic reshuffle of those who had failed to support Hitler’s ideas. Sixteen generals left the army and 44 were transferred. Although many aristocratic officers still remained suspicious of Hitler, this effectively brought Hitler’s consolidation of power to a close.

Hitler’s popular triumphs, beginning with the remilitarisation of the Rhineland in 1936 and embracing Anschluss with Austria and entry into Czechoslovakia in 1938, made him virtually unassailable and the new generation of commanders such as Heinz Guderian and Erwin Rommel became his faithful followers.

**Was there any organised opposition to Nazi rule?**

There would seem to have been very little opposition to Nazi rule in Germany. This has been explained by the propaganda, repression and general success of Hitler’s policies both at home and, until 1943, abroad. However, there were acts of defiance, of both private and public nature.

In private, individuals might read banned literature, listen to foreign news broadcasts, protect Jews and other Nazi victims or even refuse to join Nazi organisations or contribute to campaigns. Some, particularly among the young, listened to American jazz music or even joined the Swing Movement or Edelweiss Pirates (see page 102), while others simply grumbled or told anti-Nazi jokes. Such ‘opposition’ is difficult to measure and, of course, not all such behaviour was politically inspired.

There was also more overt public opposition. Some brave socialists, for example, continued to distribute anti-Nazi leaflets or write slogans in public places. Others protested by emigrating and joining the SPD in exile, which operated from Prague and organised underground groups such as the Berlin Red Patrol and the Hanover Socialist Front. In November 1939, a socialist cabinet-maker, Georg Eiser, planted a bomb in a beer hall where Hitler was speaking, although it failed to kill him, since the Führer left the hall early. The KPD also formed underground cells, particularly in Berlin, Mannheim, Hamburg and central Germany, from where they issued leaflets attacking the regime. The Rote Kapelle (Red Orchestra) was a resistance network that gathered information to send to the Russians, but it was broken up in 1942.

**Fact**

In the 1930s, the term ‘homosexual’ was commonly used to describe a sexual relationship between people of the same sex, which was then illegal. Nowadays, following changes in attitudes and the law, the term is regarded by many as offensive and the terms gay, lesbian and bisexual are widely used and regarded as more acceptable.

**Historical debate**

Tim Mason, a Marxist historian, has suggested that absenteeism, strikes and sabotage amongst workers were common, and Richard Overy has indicated that certain working-class areas were ‘no-go’ zones for Nazi officials. Kershaw has produced evidence of public grumbling, while Detlev Peukert has identified extensive resistance among the young people of Cologne and Hamburg. Gelletly, however, has produced evidence to reinforce the traditional picture that most ordinary Germans were ready to accept or support the Nazi regime.

**Question**

If you had lived in Nazi Germany, would you have become involved in opposition?
Opposition to Hitler might also be seen in the action of judges who refused to administer 'Nazi' justice, and of churchmen, such as Bishop Galen (see page 107) and Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who spoke out against Nazi policies. One centre of opposition was the Kreisau Circle, which met at the home of Helmut von Moltke. Here, aristocrats, lawyers, SPD politicians such as Julius Leber, and churchmen such as Bonhoeffer engaged in discussion as to how to remove Hitler. The group held three meetings in 1942–43 before being broken up by the Gestapo.

Opposition also festered within the army. Between June 1940 and July 1944, there were six attempts on Hitler's life, all led by army officers. Following the last of these, the July Bomb plot of 1944, over 5000 army officers were executed, including Ludwig Beck, Hans Oster and Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg. Even the Nazi's own intelligence agency, the Abwehr, was rife with resistance workers. The head of the agency, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, supported resistance activities and did what he could to protect Jews.

The universities, most notably Munich University, were another centre of organised resistance in wartime. At Munich University, Hans Scholl formed the White Rose group in 1941. Members distributed pamphlets and revealed the truth about the Nazi treatment of Jews and Slavs. In 1943, they became even more daring and painted anti-Nazi slogans on public buildings. However, the members were caught, and Hans Scholl, his sister Sophie and other members of the movement were executed. Such activities and the alternative youth culture that flourished in a number of parts of Germany showed that not all young people were readily indoctrinated by the regime.

Was Nazi Germany a totalitarian state and was Hitler 'Master of the Third Reich'?

By 1938, outward appearances gave the impression of an effective and successful totalitarian regime. At its head was an all-powerful Führer with unlimited power which filtered down through his Reich cabinet and state governors to keep everyone in line. In theory, the party and state worked together, but studies of Nazi rule both at local level and in central government have suggested that the regime was not as effectively run as was once thought.

It is now more common to see the Nazi regime as a confused, polycratic system. This is because Hitler superimposed the party structure on to the state that he took over and deliberately generated competition within it. For example, within the Chancellery, made up of Hitler's close friends and followers, he allowed competences to overlap so that no one was quite sure who was responsible for what. There was, for example, considerable conflict between the authority of Goering and Albert Speer (see page 98) over the economy. Similarly, the Civil Service found some of its work was bypassed by party members (see Unit 4).

According to the historian Broszat, Hitler created a 'confusing system of "empires"'. He believes this accounts for the 'cumulative radicalism' that marked the Nazi regime. Broszat claims that policies grew more extreme because party leaders were constantly trying to go one stage further to please or impress Hitler.

This confusion fitted with Hitler's ideological belief in the survival of the fittest. Hitler encouraged competition. It provided an opt-out if things went wrong...
and left him to intervene only when it suited him. Having no clearly organised pattern to government also appealed to Hitler’s fundamental laziness and lack of interest in bureaucratic detail.

Although Hitler had plenty of fanaticism and charisma, routine governmental business failed to interest him. He was not an early riser and preferred to spend his days reading the newspaper, going for walks, watching feature films and talking with his cronies. It was well known that Hitler preferred to talk rather than to listen and that, when he did listen, he only heard what he wanted to hear – so much so that subordinates often withheld information they feared might displease him. From 1934, Hitler actually played very little part in the meetings of the Reich cabinet. From 1937, it ceased to meet altogether.

Hitler spent a considerable amount of time at his mountain retreat, the Berghof in the Bavarian Alps. Although government papers were conveyed to him for his signature, wherever he might be, there was no guarantee he would read them. Very often it was the case that individuals had to fight for access to the Führer to get approval for actions.

Hitler avoided making decisions as far as possible and, when he did so, often made them on the spur of the moment, perhaps over lunch or tea without full reference to all the facts. He had to be caught at the right time and patient Nazi officials had to be prepared to wait for a chance or casual remark which they could then claim to be the ‘authority’ of the Führer.

This state of affairs did not help a regime that depended on Hitler’s decisions to run smoothly. According to structuralist historians such as Mommsen, Kershaw, Jeremy Noakes and Broszat, the Third Reich was not a powerful totalitarian state and Hitler was a ‘weak’ dictator. Although the authority of the Führer was never questioned, these historians argue that the formation of policy and decisions about its implementation were such a matter of guesswork, as ministers and officials sought to ‘work towards the Führer’, that the regime was chaotic.

**SOURCE A**

> In the 12 years of his rule in Germany, Hitler produced the biggest confusion in government that has ever existed in a civilised state. During his period of government he removed from the organisation of the state all clarity of leadership and produced a completely opaque network of competencies.


Intentionalist historians, such as Bracher and Hugh Trevor-Roper, suggest that the overlapping of interests was deliberate and that Hitler was a powerful integrating figure at the centre of government. According to them, internal rivalries generated a degree of effectiveness, reinforcing Hitler’s position and power. Hitler was able to take the praise for effective policies and blame others for ineffective ones – making himself a ‘strong’ dictator.

**Questions**

1. How effectively did Hitler consolidate his power between March 1933 and August 1934?
2. Is the phrase a ‘weak dictator’ a contradiction in terms? Explain your views.
End of unit activities

1. Draw a flow chart to show the stages by which Hitler consolidated his rule.
2. Write an obituary for Röhm (who died on the Night of the Long Knives). You could decide whether your obituary is for a pro-Nazi German newspaper or a more neutral British one.
3. Imagine you are interviewing Hitler for a TV news programme at the end of 1934. Produce ten questions and (after swapping scripts with another member of your group) fill in the replies that Hitler might have given.
4. Find one piece of visual propaganda and one piece of contemporary written evidence illustrating the 'cult of Hitler'. Explain your findings to your group.
5. Make a chart on which you can record the arguments that Hitler was a strong dictator and those that suggest he was a weak dictator. Try to add historians’ names to the arguments and where possible find quotations from their books to support what you write.