**The death of Hindenburg: Hitler becomes Fuhrer**

2nd August 1934, Hindenburg died. He combined the role of president and chancellor to become Fuhrer, he was head of state and commander of armed forces.

The same day, the men in the German army were made to swear an oath of loyalty to the Fuhrer. In a referendum (19 August) Hitler got 90% of vote.

**The Night of the Long Knives, 30 June 1934**

Hitler became worried about the power of Ernest Rohm’s SA. On the 30 June 1934 he issued an order to carry out a purge known as ‘Operation Hummingbird’. 400 enemies of the state were murdered, they included Rohm, Von Schleicher and Von Kahr. This was important as-

Seen as turning point in Hitler’s rule / It eradicated any opponents / Secured the support of the army / it relegated the SA to a minor role / provided Himmler with chance to expand SS

**The removal of Hitler’s political opponents**

Hitler wanted Gleichschaltung to create a nationalist service. He got rid of any organisations who could oppose him -

* Trade Unions- German labour front (DAF), decided wages and workers could only get work with a DAF work book.
* Political Parties- KPD had been banned after Reichstag fire. In July, law against formation of parties was passed.
* State government- replace Landers with Reich governors

**The 1933 election and the Enabling Act**

Nazis won 288 seats but lacked a majority. Formed a coalition with the national party. Hitler needed 2/3 of seats to pass enabling bill.

On the day of the bill, Hitler banned communists and political opponents from the temporary Reichstag, encircling it with the SA. The Catholic Centre party gave Hitler their votes, giving him the win 444-94 votes. It became known as the ‘Foundation Stone’ of the third Reich.

Hitler established his dictatorship and impose his policy of gleichschaltung- bringing all activities under state control, for example:

Control of the states- abolished assemblies, established governors. Control of the Press- imposed strict control and censorship of press. Ban on Political Parties- Nazi party was the only legal party. Trade Unions- all banned, replaced by German Labour front, strikes were made illegal. Purge of Civil Service- removed Jews and opponents from civil service.

Between January 1933 and August 1934, Hitler turned Germany into a one-party dictatorship. The roles of chancellor and president were merged into one- the Fuhrer. For the next twelve years, Germany was ruled by a totalitarian regime- the Third Reich.

**The importance of the Reichstag fire**

When Hitler became chancellor there were only two other Nazis in the cabinet. He did not have a majority in the Reichstag. Hitler persuaded Hindenburg to dissolve the Reichstag and call for a general election in march. The Nazis used propaganda and the SA took to the streets to harass left wing parties.

On 27 February, the Reichstag building was set on fire. A young Dutch communist, Marius Van der Lubbe was charged with starting the fire. Hitler used this to his advantage-

* Argued communists were starting a revolution. Communist and Socialist newspapers banned.
* Persuaded Hindenburg to sign ‘Decree for the Protection of the People and State’ – this gave power to Hitler to restrict free speech, limit freedom of press, and to imprison enemies of the state without trial.

Consolidation of power, 1933-34