RISE OF THE NAZIS (1930 – 1932):

- **Effects of the Depression** – In Germany, after the US froze the inflow of money and called in existing loans, the economy collapsed. Banks began to fail as people rushed to try to convert their savings into either gold or stronger currencies; in 1931 Germany's banks were forced to shut down, including the high level ones such as Darmstadter. By 1932 German industrial production fell by 60% (heavy industries such as that of steel were hit particularly hard), its exports fell by 55% in 1931 and unemployment soared to a staggering 12 million total (33% of the population). In Germany it was the middle class or Mittelstand suffered the most. The income of farmers fell by 50%. In 1932 when Von Papen became Chancellor, Germany even began demanding the return of Saar. The political impact on Germany was that this state of disenchchantment is what ultimately allowed Hitler and the Nazis to gain so much support, from having 12 seats in the Reichstag in 1928 the Nazis won 107 in 1931. Not only were the people suffering from immense poverty, Brüning’s government had begun making further cuts to keep the economy afloat by taking away pensions and other welfare aspects.

- **Nazi Campaigning** – As the people became more and more discontented, the Nazi Party began being met with support. Each of its claims regarding the unfairness of the Treaty of Versailles (particularly reparations) and the incompetency of the Weimar Republic now resonated with the common people. Hitler now began speaking in his speeches about the supposed three major enemies of Germany, the ‘November Criminals’ (Weimar Republic), the Allied Powers and the Jews. By the time elections were held again in July 1932 the Nazis were the largest party with 230 seats.

There are many reasons for the Nazis rise to power. The first, as we saw before, is the effect the Great Depression had upon the German people. Several others see that Nazi campaigning itself played a major role. The Nazis relied on getting 12 ‘slogans to gain the public’s attention; they gave no details regarding their policies but promised the people that under Nazi rule, Germany would once again be great, they spoke about the concepts of lebensraum (living space) for the German people. Hitler’s vorksgemeinschaft (National Community). This campaigning was all organized by the Nazi Party’s propaganda chief, Joseph Goebbels. Pamphlets about the Nazi agenda were available everywhere and posters were hung up all over the cities citing Nazi symbols and slogans.

- **Cult of Personality** – Another great asset to the Nazi Party was Hitler himself. In 1932 Hitler ran for President and while he lost to Hindenburg, having 13 million votes to Hindenburg’s 19 million, the rallies and speeches he gave all across Germany greatly strengthened the Nazi’s public support. Hitler’s speeches were heard all across the country and ignited a sense of patriotism and passion within the people; towns that had no local Nazi Party nor had Hitler visited them, such as Neidenburg in East Prussia had Nazi support of over 25%. Speaking of Hitler’s rallies we see that at these rallies are an important reason why they were so attractive to the Germans is because of the incredible discipline of the SA and SS, this order and perfection appealed to the people in the middle of what was at the time, a very chaotic nation. Not only were the SA symbol of discipline and order, they even raised public support by fighting against communist instigated violence such as gangs and uprisings.

- **Negative Cohesion** – The last and possibly the most important reason for the rapid rise of Nazi power was the ‘negative cohesion’ in Germany at the time. The term negative cohesion is used to describe the popularity of Hitler and the Nazis because it seemed that people did not really support them but voted for them, as they were ‘the lesser evils’. Faced with a choice between the incompetent Weimar Socialists, the radical Communists and the Nazis. The obvious choice was the latter. In the elections of 1932 63% of the German people never even voted but out of the 37% that did 57% voted for the Nazis.