



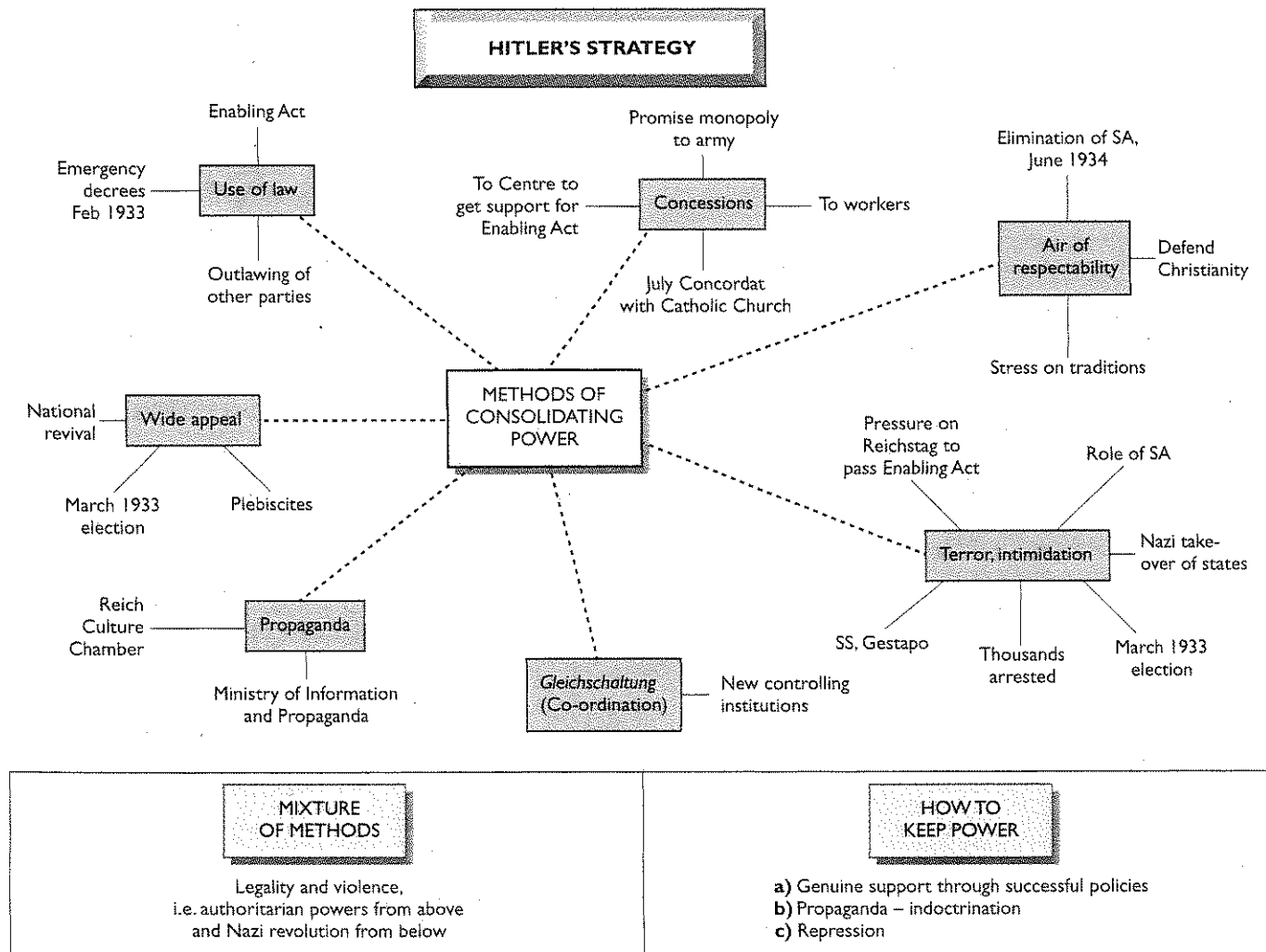
Review: Why was Hitler able to consolidate his position in power?

You have studied how Hitler established himself in power, choosing to reassure the elite and control his more radical supporters. As Chart 10E shows, in some

10E Routes to power

	Before 1933	After January 1933
Radical approach	<p>SEIZE POWER IN PUTSCH Tried 1923, but failed. Some, especially in SA, still urged this method until Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in 1933</p> <p>Danger: The army would suppress any putsch, as it had done in 1923</p>	<p>CONTINUE REVOLUTION Nazis and SA gain full power</p> <p>Danger: The elite would turn against Hitler and remove him from office</p>
More cautious approach	<p>GAIN POWER LEGALLY Win mass support Win over 50 per cent of votes to gain a majority in Reichstag: Hitler could then demand to be made Chancellor</p> <p>Win support of the elite Negotiate with key groups to be appointed Chancellor</p> <p>Danger: Heterogeneous (varied) Nazi Movement could disintegrate if power not achieved and if economic conditions improved</p>	<p>CO-OPERATE WITH ELITE Rely largely on inherited administrative, economic and military machine to fulfil aims</p> <p>Control radical elements Use the SS to control the SA</p> <p>Appease elite Establish personal dictatorship</p> <p>Danger: Hitler would be used (as planned by the elite) to smash communism and move the system in a more authoritarian direction; then would be discarded</p>

10F How Hitler consolidated his position

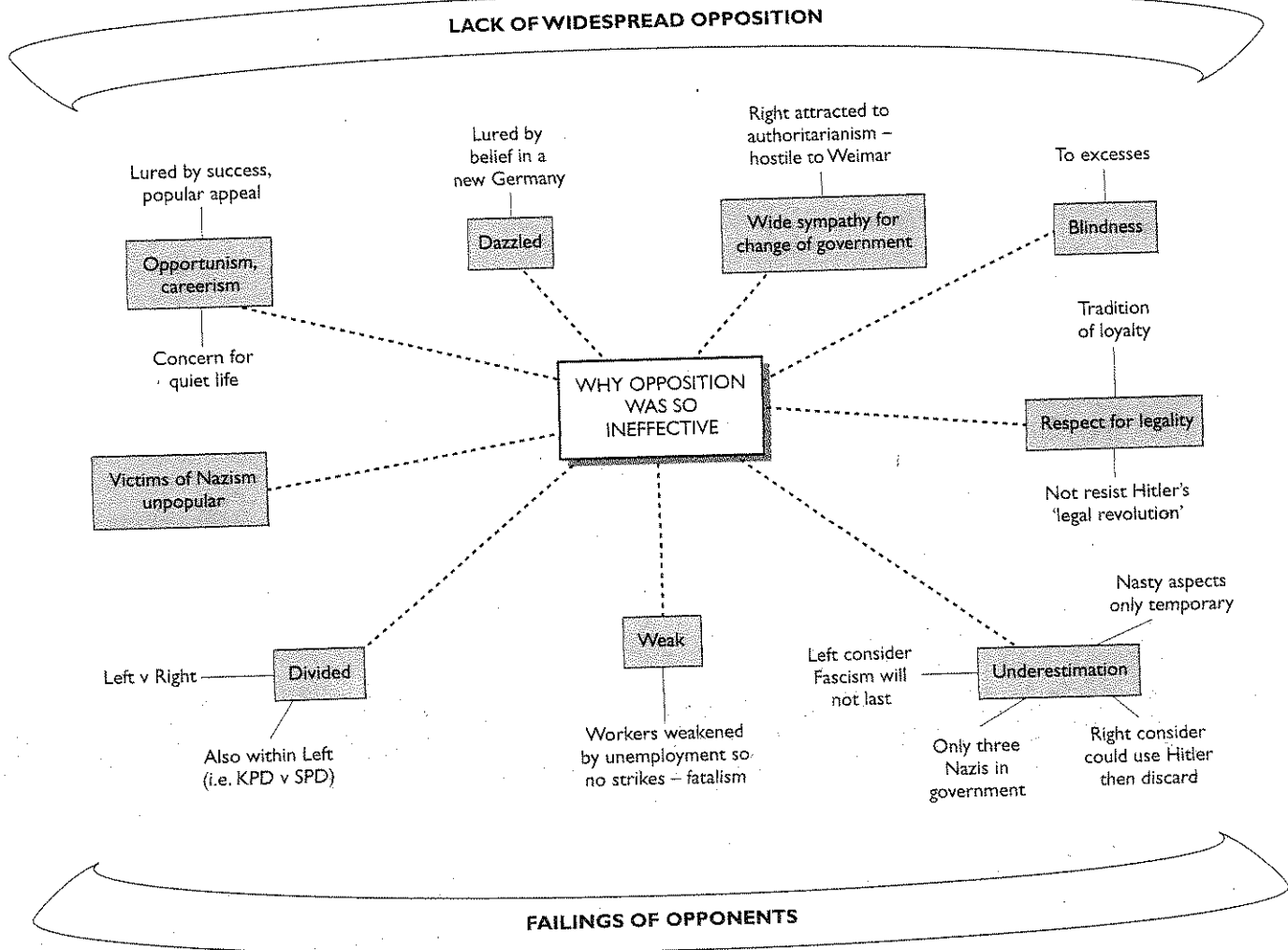


ways this was following the cautious route he had chosen since his failure in 1923. Once he became secure, however, he was more prepared to embark on his own radical vision of the future.

We have looked chronologically at the measures Hitler's government took. Chart 10F identifies the methods Hitler used to gain full power and the reasons why he faced little opposition. With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that the best time to have removed Hitler would have been right at the beginning, in 1933. There were a few attempts by some on the conservative Right to move against Hitler once they realised how violent he was becoming, but they were intimidated by the Long Knives massacre.

ACTIVITY

- 1 a) Study Chart 10F. Elaborate (orally or in writing) on the various methods Hitler used to consolidate his position, giving examples of each method.
- b) Why was there so little opposition to Hitler in his first crucial eighteen months in power?
- 2 Hitler talked of a 'legal revolution' and a 'national revolution'. Röhm, on the other hand, advocated a 'second revolution'. Explain what each meant by these phrases.
- 3 Bullock describes the way Hitler consolidated his power as a 'symbiosis [mixture] of legality and terror ... a characteristic interplay of "legal" authorisation from the highest level of government with a mixture of threats, blackmail and terrorism at local level.' What evidence is there to support this view?



■ Talking point

How useful to a historian are a politician's own statements about their role in government for understanding their methods?

■ Activity

Either:

As an ambitious Italian journalist, write an assessment in 1930 of Mussolini's qualities as a ruler.

Or:

As a non-Fascist career civil servant, write a letter to an English friend trying to correct the widespread view of Mussolini as a wise statesman.

Let us now try to penetrate beneath the image to get closer to reality. Mussolini believed that communication was at the heart of the political process. He was skilled at inspiring crowds, and devoted much time to propaganda. His exhibitionism fascinated many Italians, impressed by his supermasculinity and sexuality. Unfortunately his gesturing did not produce the policies and actions which his ambitions for Italy required.

He did not lead an efficient government team. His advisers served one key function: to bolster his own image of himself. He did not want to hear contrary opinions. Discussion was not part of the 'Fascist style'. He wanted acclaim not criticism. He was increasingly protected from unpleasant truths. This was especially so after 1931 when his brother Arnaldo, one of the few people prepared to tell Mussolini the truth, died.

Like many dictators, Mussolini sowed discord amongst his ministers and encouraged them to tell tales about each other. Distrustful, he failed to train any deputy leaders, or a successor. By 1933 he had dismissed arguably his most able ministers – such as Rocco, Federzoni, Bottai, Grandi and Turati – replacing them with more subservient (submissive) officials. He treated officials with contempt, requiring them to run the twenty metres to his desk in his office.

His reliance on his intuition (instinct), his MONOPOLISING of so many positions, and his concern for trivia all militated against effective policy making. The chasm between his portrayal as a superhuman ruler and his administrative inadequacies says a lot about Fascist Italy – strong on style and weak on substance. Mussolini, indeed, considered the former more important. His orders were meant to impress; he frequently failed to check whether they were carried out.

However, when you consider the career of Mussolini, both how he became Prime Minister, and how he then held power for far longer than any other modern Italian leader, you have to acknowledge his political skill. As well as his obvious abilities as a speaker, he was able to hold together a heterogeneous movement (one made up of many different parts). He knew how to compromise with the traditional elites by satisfying their essential self-interest, yet led a potentially revolutionary movement. He won domestic and international praise for his work.

Historians' assessments of Mussolini

Let us now consider how some historians have assessed Mussolini's qualities as leader.

SOURCE 5.10 A. de Grand, *Italian Fascism, its Origins and Development*, 1982, p. 42

Mussolini was an extraordinary political tactician, but his skill at manoeuvre was due in part to the absence of any ethical foundation or an overall political vision. Every individual or institution became an instrument to be used only as long as it served his immediate purpose. Unlike Adolf Hitler, he was not mentally unbalanced. He operated on the level of ordinary calculation and rationality. In his case, however, the myth of his own indispensability corroded and corrupted to the point that during the 1930s he had to be consulted when the Roman police wanted to wear summer uniforms earlier than usual.

SOURCE 5.11 T. Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, 1985, pp. 4, 9, 245

Mussolini's greatest talent, perhaps his only genuine talent, was his ability to manufacture and communicate myths and slogans that captured the popular imagination... Mussolini was a consummate [very skilled] propagandist, actor and stage manager. His political style reflected his thought processes, which were less intellectual than instinctual. In politics he relied on his own understanding of group psychology and his intuition, what he referred to as his 'animal instinct', rather than on strict adherence to IDEOLOGY and logic... His approach to politics was not based upon principles, at best useful nails on which to hang a particular policy, but rather on an intuitive grasp of what he perceived as the psychological needs of the masses...

Mussolini was a man tragically out of touch with reality. He had no tolerance for real administration but an inexhaustible capacity for trivial detail. He was supposed to be all-powerful, and yet he constantly changed his mind. He wanted no bad news, but because after a certain point the news was almost all bad, he heard little truth.

SOURCE 5.12 A. J. P. Taylor's video, *Men of Our Time: Mussolini*

He liked the glamour of his public appearances. Others did the work... Mussolini only appeared when treaties had to be signed and the cameras began to run... The one thing that Mussolini worked at was the strengthening of his own power... There was only one man in Italy, Mussolini.

SOURCE 5.13 Cassels, p. 54

DEMAGOGUERY [whipping up popular feeling] came easily to him... The facial contortion and the trick of rolling his eyes... proved effective when viewed from the piazza... His voice was his major asset. Trained in hundreds of street-corner speeches, it was at once powerful and flexible... It was a series of sharp, usually unconnected statements, declamatory rather than persuasive... The presentation was everything. All who heard him, friend and foe alike, have testified to his unerring ability to establish rapport with a crowd and to stimulate it. He possessed that mystic quality of leadership known as CHARISMA.

Although he might move men to action, Mussolini himself shied away from it... It was not that he was devoid of physical courage... but in a crisis his habit was to stand aside. He seemed to lack self-confidence... The picture of the strong, resolute Duce that was sold to the world was the work of a superb public relations expert whose forte [strength] lay in words and images, not in deeds and actuality.

SOURCE 5.14 Clark, p. 240

Mussolini proved to be a rotten manager. He had a lively journalistic intelligence, but he was impulsive. He oversimplified and dramatized everything, and had no patience for prosaic [matter of fact] long-term planning. He was also distressingly vulgar and vulnerable to flattery. Corruption and incompetence were tolerated, even encouraged. Intensely suspicious of rivals, he dismissed most of his competent subordinates... He deliberately isolated himself... He worked long hours, but to little purpose. Much of his time was spent reading newspapers, or deciding trivial questions... His initial M was needed on every document, and it was rarely refused. Senior civil servants and ministers pursued their own policies, often quite contradictory to those of their rivals, and each of them would produce an initialled paper from the Duce to overcome his colleagues' opposition. The Council of Ministers met only once a month, and even then did not co-ordinate policy. Perhaps Mussolini had grown bored; perhaps he was simply too contemptuous of arguments and of men to keep everyone dependent on him. At any rate, it was no way to run a country.

SOURCE 5.15 R. Lamb, *Mussolini and the British*, 1997, p. 1

His popularity with ordinary Italians, particularly during his early years of power, cannot be overestimated. He had considerable personal charm and a hypnotic personality; large crowds filled the piazzas whenever he spoke, listeners raptly awaiting every word. His technique was superficial, flamboyant and vulgar, but it worked – though not always with people of taste and culture, who often abhorred him...

Mussolini's principal weakness as head of state was that he based his decisions on whether they would increase his own popularity and that of the Fascist Party; the well-being of the Italian nation came only second.

D Why did Stalin become party leader?

ACTIVITY

1 You will already have developed your own ideas about why Stalin emerged as the leader of Soviet Russia by 1929. The writers of Sources 10.3–10.10 indicate some of the key reasons why they think Stalin won the power struggle and whether this was to do with his skills or the weaknesses of his opponents. Read the sources carefully. Decide which column of the table below they would fit into.

Importance of control of party organisation	Policies	Stalin's personal characteristics and political skills	Weaknesses of opponents, especially Trotsky	Luck

- 2 How do these sources suggest that perceptions of Stalin changed considerably between 1924 and 1928?
- 3 What does this tell us about how Stalin conducted his campaign for the leadership?
- 4 Add new information from these sources to the table of factors which helped Stalin and worked against his opponents (page 182).

SOURCE 10.3 G. Hosking, *A History of the Soviet Union*, 1985, p. 140

To his comrades in the Party leadership he [Stalin] was known, rather condescendingly, as 'Comrade Card-Index' (Tovarishch Kartotekov): they were content to leave him to assemble and classify the personnel files, not yet realising what power was accumulating therein. Most of them, being well read in the history of past revolutions, were obsessed by a very different danger: that of finding the revolutions hijacked by another Bonaparte.

[Note: Bolsheviks were very knowledgeable about the French Revolution and expected, after the initial period of violent revolution, that a Napoleon Bonaparte figure would emerge as a dictator in Russia.]

SOURCE 10.4 I. Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed: Trotsky 1921–29*, 1959, p. 93

The truth is that Trotsky refrained from attacking Stalin because he felt secure. No contemporary, and he least of all, saw in the Stalin of 1923 the menacing and towering figure he was to become. It seemed to Trotsky almost a bad joke that Stalin, the wilful and sly but shabby and inarticulate man in the background, should be his rival.

SOURCE 10.5 E. H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, 1958, p. 151

[Trotsky] ... the great intellectual, the great administrator, the great orator lacked one quality essential – at any rate in the conditions of the Russian Revolution – to the great political leader. Trotsky could fire masses of men to acclaim and follow him. But he had no talent for leadership among equals. He could not establish his authority among colleagues by the modest arts of persuasion or by sympathetic attention to the views of men of lesser intellectual calibre than himself.

SOURCE 10.6 Bukharin, at a secret meeting with Kamenev in July 1928

Stalin is a Genghis Khan, an unscrupulous intriguer, who sacrifices everything else to the preservation of power ... He changes his theories according to whom he needs to get rid of next.

SOURCE 10.7 I. Deutscher, *Stalin*, rev. edn, 1966, p. 277

In the Politburo, when matters of high policy were under debate, he [Stalin] never seemed to impose his views on his colleagues. He carefully followed the course of debate to see what way the wind was blowing and invariably voted with the majority, unless he had assured his majority beforehand. He was therefore always agreeable to the majority. To Party audiences he appeared as a man without personal grudge and rancour, as a detached Leninist, a guardian of the doctrine who criticised others only for the sake of the cause.

SOURCE 10.8 C. Ward, *Stalin's Russia*, 1993, pp. 35–36

All Bolshevik leaders were trying to find their feet in an unfamiliar and unanticipated world, and the doctrine of socialism in one country at least had the merit of describing things as they really were . . . The theory evoked a sympathetic response from two groups: the new sub-elites advanced by the crises of the immediate post-revolutionary years and workers sickened by the manifold injustices and inequalities of the NEP. The latter were men and women indifferent to factional squabbles and impatient for socialist reconstruction; the former were people . . . for whom the Revolution was primarily a Russian achievement – Soviet patriotism sat easily with the enjoyment of the fruits of offices. A Stalinist constituency was in the process of formation and Stalin's 'left turn' (rapid industrialisation and collectivisation) brought most of them round to his way of thinking.

SOURCE 10.9 R. Conquest, *Stalin: Breaker of Nations*, 1991, pp. 129–30

In 1923 Stalin had been on the point of political ruin. In 1924 he was one among equals, but without any outright supporters in the full membership of the Politburo. Six years later he would be in unchallenged power . . . In six years Stalin outmanoeuvred a series of opponents; first in alliance with the rest of his colleagues, he opposed and demoted Trotsky. Then in alliance with the Bukharin–Rykov 'Right' he defeated the Zinoviev–Kamenev 'Left' bloc . . . and finally he and his own following attacked their hitherto allies, the 'Rightists'.

SOURCE 10.10 M. McCauley, *Russia 1917–41*, 1997, p. 78

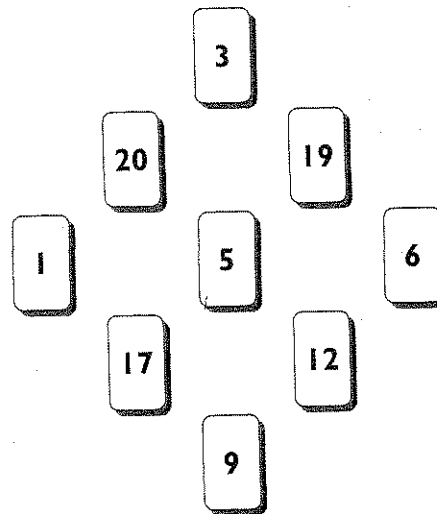
Stalin had luck on his side. Had Lenin not died Stalin would probably have been sent to the provinces to work for the Party. Dzerzhinsky, the head of the Cheka, from its inception to his death in 1926, was never one of Stalin's fans. His death allowed Stalin to infiltrate his supporters into the political police and eventually use them against his opponents.

ACTIVITY

Write an essay entitled: Why did Stalin rather than Trotsky emerge as the leader of the USSR in 1929?

You will have collected a lot of information to help you to answer this question as part of the Focus Route activity on page 182 but how are you going to structure your essay and deploy the information? The twenty-one cards on page 194 can help you to do this. Five of the cards are paragraph headings. They represent the **main points** which directly answer the essay question. The other cards represent points which **support** the main points.

- Using your own copy of the cards and working in groups of three or four, find the **main points** and arrange them in a row. Then find the **supporting points** that go with each main point and put them in the correct column. The columns are not evenly balanced. Some main points have three cards, others have only two.
- But how much weight should you give to each of the different explanations – which are the most important reasons? Try this: choose **nine** cards that you think are the most important in answering this question. Arrange them in the shape of a diamond like the one shown here. Put the one you think is the most important at the top, the next two most important on the second line and so on. (N.B. We have **not** shown a correct answer in the example.)



- Discuss the cards you chose and the order you put them in with other members of the class. Argue the case for your ordering compared with theirs.
- Now write your essay. Don't just use the information given on the cards. Use the rest of the information in this chapter to develop your points fully. You don't have to stick to our paragraph headings. The important thing is that you decide what your main points are to answer the question and how you are going to explain/support these main points.