The Months of Opportunity

October 1931 - 30 January 1933
15 – 16 Months: Not that Long
Hitler Can’t Make Friends

- Hitler tries to impress Chancellor Heinrich Brüning » Doesn’t work...
- 10/10/1931 – AH unsuccessfully meets with President Paul von Hindenburg » “Hitler was an odd fellow who would never make a Chancellor” (96)
10/17 – AH goes to Brunswick, presents 24 new standards & has a big parade » Demonstrates popular support

December, 1931 – Unemployment hits 5M, HB’s emergency measures failing, Nazi membership reaches over 800,000

Kurt von Schleicher (PvH’s advisor) notices AH in Nov. & Dec. and wants to “bring Hitler into the game” (98)

AH writes another letter to HB saying he’s coming for him (legally) (98)
HB’s plans hinged upon economic recovery & PvH staying in office » HB asks AH to let it happen » AH now has leverage “Now I have them in my pocket” (99)

2/22/1932 – Joseph Goebbels announces candidacy in 1932 presidential election
Hitler’s Platform

- Dominant consideration in GER politics should NOT be foreign relations
- Determining factor in national life is inner worth of people & spirit
- Communism = Threat » Unless stopped, it would “gradually shatter the whole world” (102)
- Politics, not economics, formed prime factor in national life (103)
Losing the Election (Twice)

- 3/13/1932 – AH wins nearly 1/3 of national vote, but still a loss...
- **BUT** PvH slightly short of absolute majority required » So reelections are held!
- AH goes ham for second campaign covering GER by plane
- 4/10/1932 – AH gets 2 million more votes but... He still lost
New Plan

- AH wants Nazi majority in the Reichstag » Starts with Prussia
- Big campaigning again, 4/5 show up to the polls but...
- “Three times the trumpet had sounded and still the walls refused to fall” (108)
Kurt von Schleicher

- Close advisor to PvH and sought to do anything to keep him in power
- Wanted to absorb the S.A. into the republic’s military
- Wilhelm Groener (Minister of Defense/Interior) wants to get rid of S.A. » KvS has PvH write a letter denouncing WG » Letter leaked » WG comes under fire and resigns » Point KvS
- Now HB under fire which reflects poorly on PvH so KvS cuts a deal with AH and tells PvH to force HB’s resignation (110)
Bye-Bye Brüning

- HB resigns at PvH’s request » Succeeded by Franz von Papen
- FvP – Catholic family, Westphalian nobility, charm, well-connected, & ambitious
- KvS thinks FvP will be a puppet » Wrong (112)
- FvP’s cabinet widely unpopular, ¾ of GER major political parties openly opposes him » Leaves GER with no one but the Nazis
AH can’t yet win an election alone so he’s forced to join forces with FvP

Both AH and FvP want to run things their way and constantly butt heads

Finally AH tells FvP he’s planning to replace him (113)

So... FvP decides to DISSOLVE THE PRUSSIAN GOVERNMENT to undermine Nazi successes there

Ultimately still helps extremist causes because Weimar Republic no longer acting as a legitimate democracy
The Winning Begins

- July, 1932 – Federal elections held » Nazis now the largest party in the Reichstag by far (not majority)
- AH gains confidence and demands control of entire GER government from KvS
- PvH, KvS, FvP, & AH meets and AH is only offered Vice-chancellorship » AH erupts with rage confirming fears that AH was seeking a dictatorship
AH infuriated by humiliation from PvH » contemplates political assassinations via the S.A. » Shows restraint and sticks to his guns (legality)

Nazi’s need majority in Reichstag » Joined forces with Centre Party

9/12/1932 – Reichstag meets and Communists propose to overthrow FvP’s government by a vote of 513 – 32, but... FvP dissolved the Reichstag before the vote was cast... » Attempt #4 is another failure

But AH doesn’t give up (124)
KvS wants FvP to resign so that he may commence negotiations with AH » Papen accepts (11/17/1932) thinking that negotiations will fail and the public will demand his return

PvH and AH meet again » PvH offers AH chancellorship *IF* he can gain Reichstag majority (not possible) » AH declines » Humiliated again

PvH, KvS, & FvP meet » PvH wants to give chancellorship back to FvP, but FvP no longer has military’s support » PvH gives chancellorship to Schleicher (12/3) with a strong warning (128)
KvS offers Gregor Strasser vice-chancellorship to undermine AH

12/5 - GS returns to discuss the offer with his party » AH undermines him by banning him from further meetings with KvS

12/7 - GS doesn’t have the cojones to stand up to AH so he resigns and takes the family on vacation to Italy

KvS tries to gain support from other parties, but no one trusts the gov.
1/4/1933 – AH and FvP meet » FvP wants to overthrow KvS’s government with AH so the two of them can rule as co-chancellors

AH wants full control, but FvP and his supporters can have minister positions AND all social democrats, communists, & Jews must be removed from office » FvP agreed

But... the meeting was leaked and made headlines the next day » Awkward... » But they continue with plan anyway
Things Go South...

- 1/20/1932 – It is clear that KvS’s plan to gain support has failed
- 1/22/1932 – AH, FvP, Oskar von Hindenburg (PvH’s son), and assorted others meet to negotiate » AH bribes and blackmails OvH into supporting him
- Next day, KvS goes to PvH to dissolve the Reichstag » PvH turns him down
HEIL.

- PvH wants to create a new cabinet position for General Field Marshall Werner von Blomberg to head with AH as chancellor
- PvH calls WvB secretly with his offer » WvB accepts
- Papen & Alfred Hugenberg learn of agreement and create Nationalist-Nazi coalition
- January 30th 1933 – Adolf Hitler becomes the Chancellor of Germany
Discussion Question

Who was most responsible for letting the Weimar Republic fail?

1. Paul von Hindenburg
2. Heinrich Brüning
3. Fritz von Papen
4. Kurt von Schleicher