# Power by Two Paths

How two 1933 measures changed power in Germany

**TOT.C.4.4.D** "Enabling Act; Concordat of 1933"

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline the Enabling Act's change to lawmaking, circle a promise or restriction in the concordat, and label one consequence of each measure 1 and 2.

### Two Routes to Power

1 In March 1933, Nazi guards watched as Reichstag members entered a Berlin meeting hall. Communist deputies had been arrested or kept from taking their seats, and other lawmakers faced threats. Hitler's government wanted the Enabling Act, which needed a two-thirds vote because it changed the constitutional balance of power. The Catholic Centre Party voted for it after receiving assurances about church rights. The Social Democrats voted against it. Passed on March 23, the act let the cabinet make laws, even laws that departed from the constitution, without a Reichstag vote. Parliament remained, but its power to block the cabinet's laws was sharply reduced.

2 Four months later, Germany and the Holy See, the governing body of the Catholic Church, signed the Reichskonkordat, often called the Concordat of 1933. The treaty promised protections for Catholic worship, church organizations, and religious instruction in schools, subject to its terms. It also required clergy to avoid party politics. Unlike the Enabling Act, the concordat was an agreement with an outside institution, not a German law handing legislative power to the cabinet. For the Nazi government, the agreement could ease conflict with a major church. For church leaders, its written promises offered a basis for defending Catholic institutions.

3 These measures did not do the same thing, and neither guaranteed lasting cooperation. The Catholic Centre Party dissolved on July 5, before the concordat was signed on July 20; the treaty did not itself dissolve the party. The Enabling Act provided the cabinet with a tool to rule around parliament, while the concordat set rules for the church's relationship with the state. Nazi authorities later violated the treaty by interfering with Catholic schools and organizations. Its promises therefore did not prevent repression. Together, the measures show how a dictatorship can weaken checks on its power through both domestic law and an international agreement.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Enabling Act reduce the Reichstag's ability to check the cabinet?

2. How could the concordat affect political activity differently from the Enabling Act? Name a treaty rule that supports your answer.

3. Why is it inaccurate to say that the concordat dissolved the Catholic Centre Party?

4. What evidence shows that the concordat's promises did not ensure lasting protection for Catholic institutions?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A museum label claims, “Both 1933 measures gave Hitler the same power and secured the Catholic Church's lasting support.” Write a replacement label of 75 to 95 words that distinguishes the measures, explains one political effect of each, and notes a limit of the concordat.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · TOT.C.4.4.D

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the Enabling Act's change to lawmaking, circle a promise or restriction in the concordat, and label one consequence of each measure 1 and 2. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How did the Enabling Act reduce the Reichstag's ability to check the cabinet? | **It allowed the cabinet to make laws, including laws that departed from the constitution, without a Reichstag vote.** |
| 2 | How could the concordat affect political activity differently from the Enabling Act? Name a treaty rule that supports your answer. | **The concordat restricted clergy's political activity by requiring them to avoid party politics. It did not transfer lawmaking power to the cabinet.** |
| 3 | Why is it inaccurate to say that the concordat dissolved the Catholic Centre Party? | **The party dissolved on July 5, before the concordat was signed on July 20, and the treaty did not itself dissolve the party.** |
| 4 | What evidence shows that the concordat's promises did not ensure lasting protection for Catholic institutions? | **Nazi authorities later violated the treaty by interfering with Catholic schools and organizations.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Passed in March 1933 under intimidation, the Enabling Act allowed Hitler's cabinet to make laws without a Reichstag vote, weakening parliament's ability to check the government. The July concordat was different: it was a treaty between Germany and the Holy See that promised protections for Catholic institutions but barred clergy from party politics. It could reduce conflict with church leaders while limiting clergy's political activity. Those promises did not ensure lasting protection. Nazi officials later interfered with Catholic schools and organizations despite the treaty.

Accept equivalent explanations that distinguish a domestic law from a treaty and identify a political effect of each. Do not accept claims that the concordat dissolved the Centre Party or prevented later interference with Catholic institutions.