



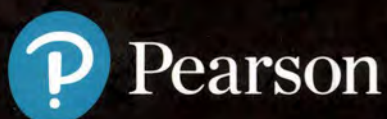
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HISTORY PAPER 3



European states in the inter-war years (1918–1939)

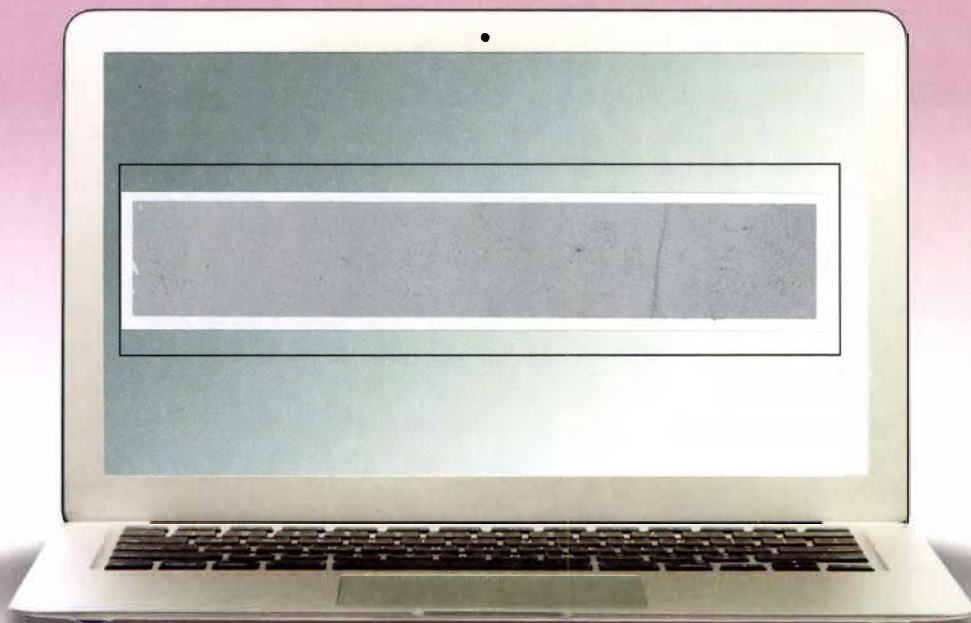
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European states in the inter-war years (1918–1939)

KEELY ROGERS • JO THOMAS

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Introduction

How will this resource help you in your IB examination?

Coverage of Paper 3 content and skills

This book is designed to be your guide to success in your International Baccalaureate examination in History. It covers the Paper 3 European region, Topic 14, European states in the inter-war years (1918–1939), and it follows the outline of content as prescribed by the IB for this topic. Thus the domestic policies of Germany, Italy and Spain for this period are covered in depth. For the additional case study we have chosen to cover the Soviet Union, as policies and events within this country are key to the dynamics of Europe in the inter-war period.

As well as covering the content for this topic, this resource aims to equip you with the knowledge and skills that you will need to effectively answer the essay questions in this section of the exam. Later in this section you will find some general tips on essay writing. In addition, within each chapter you will find:

- in-depth coverage and analysis of the key events
- a summary of, or reference to, historiography
- guidelines on how to answer Paper 3 essay questions effectively
- timelines to help you put events into context
- review and research activities to help you develop your understanding of the key issues and concepts.

Focus on History concepts

Throughout the book we also focus on and develop the six key concepts that have particular prominence in the Diploma History course: **change, continuity, causation, consequence, significance, and perspectives**. Each chapter will identify the key concepts covered within it.

Focus on History assessment objectives

This resource covers the four IB assessment objectives that are relevant to both the core externally examined papers and to the internally assessed paper. So, although this book is essentially designed as a textbook to accompany Paper 3, Topic 14, it addresses all of the assessment objectives required for the History course. In other words, as you work through this book, you will be learning and practising the skills that are necessary for each of the core papers.

Nevertheless, the main focus will be the assessment objectives assessed in Paper 3. Specifically these assessment objectives are:

Assessment Objective 1: Knowledge and understanding

- Demonstrate detailed, relevant and accurate historical knowledge.
- Demonstrate understanding of historical concepts and context.

Assessment Objective 2: Application and analysis

- Formulate clear and coherent arguments.
- Use relevant historical knowledge to effectively support analysis.

Assessment Objective 3: Synthesis and evaluation

- Integrate evidence and analysis to produce a coherent response.
- Evaluate different perspectives on historical issues and events, and integrate this evaluation effectively into a response.

Assessment Objective 4: Use and application of appropriate skills

- Structure and develop focused essays that respond effectively to the demands of the question.

The following objectives are linked to Paper 1 and IA and are also practised throughout.

Assessment Objective 1: Knowledge and understanding

- Demonstrate understanding of historical sources (IA and Paper 1).

Assessment Objective 2: Application and analysis

- Analyse and interpret a variety of sources (IA and Paper 1).

Assessment Objective 3: Synthesis and evaluation

- Evaluate sources as historical evidence, recognizing their value and limitations (IA and Paper 1).
- Synthesize information from a selection of relevant sources (IA and Paper 1).

Assessment Objective 4: Use and application of appropriate skills

- Reflect on the methods used by, and challenges facing, the historian (IA).
- Formulate an appropriate, focused question to guide a historical inquiry (IA).
- Demonstrate evidence of research skills, organization, referencing and selection of appropriate sources (IA).

Use of mark schemes

For the externally assessed components – Paper 1, Paper 2 and Paper 3 – there are two different assessment methods used:

- Markbands.
- Detailed specific markschemes for each examination paper.

For the internally assessed / moderated IA – there are set assessment criteria.

We will use and refer to the Paper 3 markbands extensively throughout the book. (See end of this section for the Paper 3 markbands.)

Links to IB programme as a whole

The regular use of command terms, inquiry based research tasks, the source based activities and reflection will not only prepare you fully for the Paper 3 essay questions, it will also help to prepare you for the requirements of your Paper 1 exam and your Internal Assessments.

'The Soviet Union 1918–1929' chapter is also relevant to Topic 12 of the Paper 3 syllabus.

ATL

Approaches to teaching and learning (ATL) reflect the IB learner profile attributes, and are designed to enhance your learning and assist preparation for IAs and examinations.

ATL run throughout the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP). They cover thinking, social, communication, self-management and research skills. These skills encompass the key values that underpin an IB education.

ATL skills are addressed in the activity boxes throughout the book, and each Historians' perspectives feature addresses ATL thinking skills.

Extended Essay section

At the end of this book you will find a section on the Extended Essay. History is one of the most popular choices for Extended Essays. Students that choose to write their EE in History benefit from gaining a better understanding of this subject. The skills are also transferable to their other diploma subjects and are excellent preparation for tertiary level studies.

How this book works

As well as the main text, there are a number of coloured boxes in every chapter, each with their own distinctive icon. These boxes provide different information and stimulus:

Essay questions

The essay questions that are at the start of each chapter will offer Paper 3 style questions for you to think about while working through the chapter. At the end of the chapter we will look at how you could approach these questions in the exam.

Information boxes

These boxes contain information which will deepen and widen your knowledge, but which do not fit within the main body of the text.

Pact of San Sebastián

An agreement by Republican parties to move towards the establishment of a Republic in Spain. A 'revolutionary committee' was set up to prepare for the overthrow of the monarchy.



Historians' perspectives

This feature was requested by teachers and offers students an insight into different historians' opinions and sometimes opposing contemporary opinion on a historical event, action or period in time. Students will often be asked to identify evidence to support different perspectives, to consider the reasons why sometimes contemporaries and historians have drawn different conclusions and to reflect on the similarities and differences between historians' views and their own perspectives.

Historians' perspectives

In pairs, discuss the following views of historians and decide whose views you mostly agree with. You should be able to support your viewpoint with evidence from this chapter.

Why did Primo de Rivera's regime fall?

- British historian, Hugh Thomas: Economic factors were the main problem for Primo de Rivera. The juxtaposition between people's high expectations in the new age of consumerism with the onset of the economic slump in the 1920s led to his demise.
- Tangiers-born Israeli historian, Shlomo Ben Ami (considered a leading authority on Primo de Rivera): Political factors were the main issue for Primo de Rivera. These political issues were caused by economic migration from the countryside to towns and cities, as people were drawn by potential employment in public works and expanded industries. This migrant population was more open to radical politics as they were now free of the *caciquismo*.
- The Spanish academic, A Ramos Oliveira: Primo de Rivera's regime was 'strangled' by opposition from the groups whose interests it had damaged.

Significant individuals

This feature provides background information on key figures, enhancing understanding of events.

Significant individual: Manuel Azaña Díaz

Manuel Azaña was minister of war in the first Left government of the Spanish Second Republic. When Prime Minister Alcalá-Zamora resigned in October, Azaña became prime minister of a coalition government of left-wing parties. Azaña implemented a major series of reforms, although he was a liberal Republican and not a socialist.

Challenge yourself

These boxes invite you to carry out additional research on an aspect discussed in the chapter.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

ATL Social, research, communication, and thinking skills

Research more into the life of Rosa Luxemburg and her role in left-wing politics during this period. Also see if you can find out about other women who took an active part in politics during the Weimar era.

Hints for success

These boxes can be found alongside questions, exercises, and worked examples. They provide insight into how to answer a question in order to achieve the highest marks in an examination. They also identify common pitfalls when answering such questions and suggest approaches that examiners like to see.

For top markbands for Paper 3 essays:

Introduction and main body paragraphs

Responses are clearly focused.

The question is fully addressed and implications are considered.

The essay is well structured and the material effectively organized.

Supporting knowledge is detailed, accurate, relevant to the question and used to support arguments.

Arguments are clear, well developed and consistently supported with evidence.

There is evaluation of different perspectives.

Conclusion

The conclusion is clearly stated and it is consistent with the evidence presented.

	Structure	Focus on demands of the question	Knowledge
0	No structure.	No clear understanding of the set question.	No relevant knowledge.
1–3	Limited attempt to structure response.	Little understanding of the set question.	Knowledge is limited, inaccurate and/or lacks relevance.
4–6	Some attempt to structure. Some paragraphing. Lacks clarity.	Some understanding of the question.	Some knowledge, however tends to be inaccurate and/or lacks relevance.
7–9	The answer has structure but is not always coherently focused on set question.	There is understanding of the set question. Question is only partially addressed.	Knowledge is usually accurate. Lacks depth and detail.
10–12	Sound structure throughout and focuses on set question. Sometimes lacks clarity.	Whole question is understood and addressed.	Knowledge is consistently accurate and relevant. Evidence and examples used to support arguments.
13–15	Consistently well structured and clearly focused on set question.	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the question and its implications.	Knowledge is consistently detailed, accurate and relevant to the question. Evidence and examples are effectively used to support all arguments.

Writing Paper 3 essays

Your Paper 3 essays will be assessed using the set markbands and the markschemes specific to each examination paper. The key difference between your Paper 2 and Paper 3 essays is that for Paper 3 you need to demonstrate a depth of knowledge and understanding of the topics covered, give very detailed supporting evidence and examples, and fully develop your critical analysis of the set question.

When planning and writing your Paper 3 essays you could use the grid below to check where your response meets the markband descriptors.

Context and concepts	Critical Analysis	Perspectives
No understanding of context and relevant concepts.	No analysis.	None.
Limited understanding of context of question and lacks development of relevant concepts.	Mainly description rather than analysis.	None.
Some basic understanding of context of question. Lacks or has limited development of relevant concepts.	Some limited analysis, however usually descriptive.	None.
The context of the question is established. Lacks development of relevant concepts.	Some analysis. Tends towards description.	None.
The context of the question is fully established, and there is clear understanding of historical concepts.	Analysis is clear and coherent. Arguments are well developed and supported with detailed examples. The conclusion is consistent with the analysis and evidence.	There is an awareness of different perspectives.
The context of the question is fully established, and there is thorough understanding of historical concepts.	There is consistent critical analysis and all arguments are fully developed. All points are supported with detailed evidence and the conclusion is well reasoned and consistent.	There is evaluation of different perspectives and this is synthesized into analysis.

Command terms

In order to write a focused and well-structured essay that addresses the demands of the set question you need to understand the **Command terms**.

Analyse

You need to break down the topic or theme of the question in order to establish key relevant elements. To avoid a descriptive approach you should attempt to find relevant analytical or thematic points. For example, for the question, 'Analyse the reasons for the outbreak of civil war in Spain' you could look at long-term and short-term political, ideological, economic and social causes.

Compare

You need to identify and develop an analysis of the similarities between two or more case studies, events or developments. You must refer to both or all throughout your response. For example, compare economic and social developments in Italy and Germany in the 1920s and 1930s.

Contrast

You need to identify and develop an analysis of the differences between two or more case studies, events or developments. You must refer to both or all throughout your response. For example, contrast economic and social developments in Italy and Germany in the 1920s and 1930s.

Compare and contrast

You need to identify and develop an analysis of the similarities and differences between two or more case studies, events or developments. You must refer to both or all throughout your response. For example, compare and contrast economic and social developments in Italy and Germany in the 1930s.

Discuss

You must offer a 'balanced' analysis. Usually this would involve identifying the successes or failures of, for example, a policy or the benefits and disadvantages of an inter-war economic or social development.

Evaluate

You need to identify and develop the strengths and limitations, or the successes and failures, of an assertion made in the question or, for example, a policy or development in the inter-war period.

Examine

You need to develop the concept or theme of the set question through different 'lenses'. For example, if you were asked to 'Examine the economic developments in Spain in the 1930s' you would begin by analysing the economic developments, then consider how these impacted social and political developments.

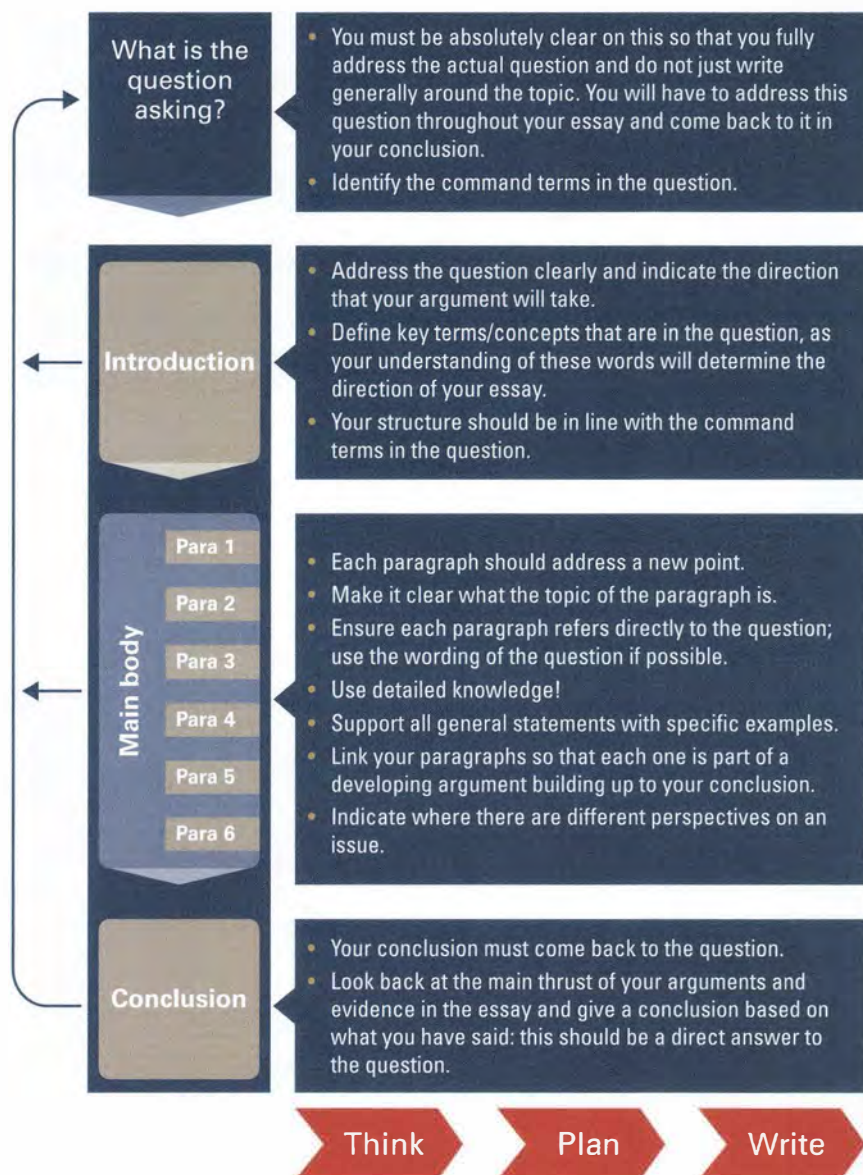
To what extent

You need to set up arguments supporting and challenging the factor or concept of the question. You would have a 'for' and 'against' approach. For example, for the question 'Nationalist strengths led to the defeat of the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War' you would develop arguments supporting the statement, i.e. Nationalist military, political and economic strengths led to victory, and then challenge the assumption in the question by developing the role of Republican weaknesses.

Structuring your essay

Use the tips below to help you structure your essay; this will help you to meet the descriptors in the markbands on page viii.

How do I write a History essay?





01

Weimar Germany: 1918–1933

Born in 1918 of military defeat and domestic revolution, it was riddled with compromises and burdened with difficulties.

Mary Fulbrook (2008). *A History of Germany, 1918–2008*. Wiley-Blackwell, p. 15.

Essay questions:

- To what extent was the Treaty of Versailles responsible for the difficulties faced by the Weimar Republic between 1919 and 1923?
- Examine the reasons for the collapse of the Weimar Republic by 1932.
- To what extent were the years 1924–29 a 'golden age' for the Weimar Republic?
- Discuss the reasons for Hitler's rise to power, 1929 to 1933.

Because the failure of democracy in Weimar Germany was followed by a ruthless dictatorship that had devastating effects, not just for Germany but for the whole of Europe and indeed the world, the events of 1919 to 1932 within Germany have been the subject of much analysis and debate by historians. As Ian Kershaw writes, *'The Weimar Republic... has been overshadowed by its end and what followed'*.

Destroyed columns of the National Monument, 1918.

Germany after 1870



Map showing the unification of the different German states into one German Empire by 1870

Key concept: Causation

In order to understand the Weimar Republic and the issues that it faced, it is necessary to look back at the key characteristics of Germany before the First World War. In fact, Germany had only been a unified country since 1870; before that time it had been a collection of 39 states. Otto von Bismarck, the Chancellor of the largest German state, Prussia, had used the economic and military might of Prussia to expel the influence of both Austria and France and to bring all the states into a united Germany. Von Bismarck had proclaimed the Second German Reich at the Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles, outside Paris.

The new German Reich was ruled over by the Prussian Kaiser. There was also an assembly, the Reichstag, which was elected by universal male **suffrage**; however, this lacked real power. The leading minister, known as the Chancellor, and the other ministers were appointed by the Kaiser and could not be removed or replaced by the Reichstag. Political tension grew in the years 1871 to 1914 as opposition parties developed to challenge the rule of the Kaiser.

Economically, the new Germany was one of the most powerful states in Europe. The rapid industrialization that took place after 1870 increased social and political problems. The leading industrialists and aristocratic landowners known as the *Junkers* wanted political stability and so supported the existing **authoritarian** regime of the Kaiser and opposed any reform. However, many of the workers in the towns supported the Socialist Party, the SPD, which wanted political reform and social change. They also joined trade unions to campaign for improved wages and working conditions.

These divisions within German society and politics were becoming acute by 1914. Indeed, the ambitious foreign policy pursued by Kaiser Wilhelm II in the years before the First World War had the aim of winning working-class support and thus avoiding the threat of a socialist revolution.

Significant individual: Wilhelm II

Wilhelm II acted very much as an autocratic monarch. He was a keen advocate of all things military and loved wearing his numerous uniforms and having himself photographed while dressed in them. He also surrounded himself with the elite of Germany's military society. He was a strong opponent of socialism and he vigorously believed in *Weltpolitik* – increasing the strength of Germany through building up the German navy and expansion overseas. This policy was to bring Germany into conflict with other European powers, such as Britain.



What was the impact of the First World War on Germany, 1914–18?

Key concept: *Consequence*

The outbreak of war in 1914 temporarily united Germany. There was a wave of patriotism as all parties, including the SPD, united in favour of the war effort. However, the speedy victory that was expected in 1914 did not happen and Germany became tied into a war of attrition, fighting on two fronts. By the winter of 1916–17, support for the war was fast ebbing away as a result of severe food shortages and rapidly rising food prices. The British blockade of Germany exacerbated this situation.

The economic and military crisis faced by Germany increased when the US entered the war in 1917. In a last attempt to secure victory before US troops arrived in Europe, the German General Ludendorff gambled on a huge offensive on the Western Front. With German troops transferred from the Eastern Front after Russia withdrew from the war, Ludendorff launched his attack in March 1918. However, although the German attack nearly broke through the Allied lines, it faltered due to lack of supplies and high casualties, enabling the **Allies** to counter-attack and halt the advance with the help of the newly arrived American troops. By August 1918, the German army was in retreat along the Western Front. It was clear that defeat was only a matter of time; Germany's allies had sued for peace and within Germany there was growing unrest fuelled by the economic crisis.

What was the political impact of the war in 1918–19?

Timeline of events – 1918

1918	1 Oct	Ludendorff asks Reichstag to sue for peace
	3 Oct	Prince Max of Baden appointed Chancellor; asks for peace based on Wilson's Fourteen Points
	3 Nov	German Grand Fleet mutinies at Kiel. Workers' and sailors' councils established
	9 Nov	General strike in Berlin. Kaiser flees to Holland. Ebert becomes Chancellor Republic declared
	11 Nov	Armistice signed
	30 Dec	German Communist Party (KPD) established

Revolution from above

With Germany facing defeat and the threat of invasion, General Ludendorff decided that Germany's best hope lay in asking the Allies for an **armistice**, which he hoped would be based on American President Wilson's Fourteen Points (see Significant individual box). However, realizing that Germany's autocratic system was an obstacle to negotiation, he persuaded the Kaiser to transform the Second Reich into a constitutional monarchy by handing over political power to a civilian government. Not only would this be likely to gain better peace terms from the Allies, but he hoped that it would also prevent the outbreak of political revolutionary demands from below and save the Kaiser's rule. In addition, he wanted to switch the blame for the military defeat of Germany onto a new civilian government. (This would help lay the

The impact of war on Germany

German soldiers killed in war: 2 million.

Wounded in war: 6.3 million.

War widows: 600,000.

Cost of war: £8,394 million.

Between 1913 and 1918 the German mark lost 75 per cent of its value.

Industrial production: two-fifths of wartime levels.

Grain production: about half of the pre-war level.

Civilian deaths from starvation and hypothermia: 293,000 in 1918.



Significant individual: President Wilson

President Wilson of the US believed that any future peace needed to be based on certain key principles if it was to be durable. He thus came up with a list of 'Fourteen Points', which included reduction of armaments, self-determination for nationalities in Europe and the establishment of a peacekeeping body, the League of Nations. Wilson also believed that Germany would need to be treated moderately; this, however, was in contrast to Clemenceau of France, who wanted to see Germany punished.

Key political terms**Left wing and right wing:**

left wing refers to those wanting social and political change as opposed to right-wing people, who want to maintain the existing situation. The term comes from the French Revolution in the Estates General; those sitting on the left of the King wanted radical change and those who supported the King and the status quo sat on the right of the King.

Socialist republic: this is a system of government without a monarchy that aims to bring in social and economic changes such as welfare improvements and nationalization of industry that will benefit everyone.

Soviet republic: this is a system of government without a monarchy that aims to introduce a communist state such as that established in Russia following the 1917 Revolution. It would be organized by workers' councils and supported nationalization and workers' control of major industries.

Conservatism: this is linked to 'right wing'. Conservatives tend not to like change and they tend to support the traditional aspects of society and forces of law and order.

Authoritarian government: this is when there is an emphasis on strict obedience to the law at the expense of individual freedoms.

foundations of the 'stab in the back' myth, which would play a key part in the history of the Weimar Republic, see page 12).

Thus, in October 1918, Prince Max of Baden was appointed Chancellor and in the following month a series of constitutional reforms took place:

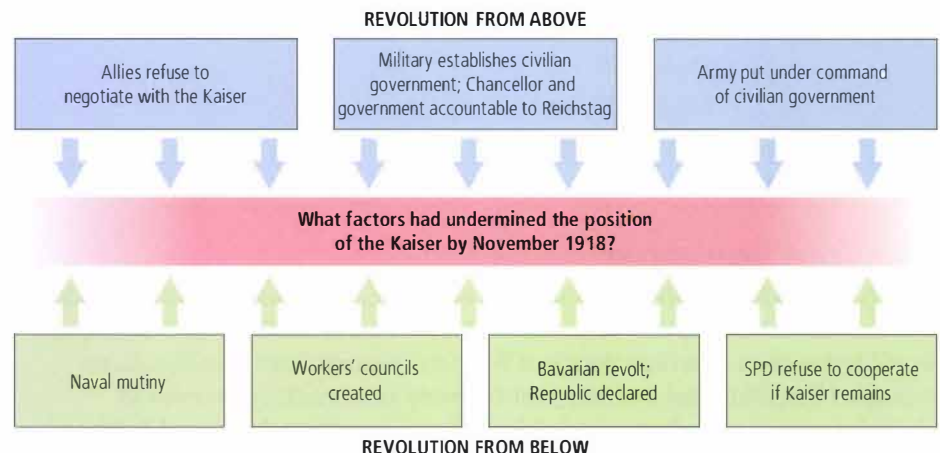
- The Chancellor and his government were made accountable to the Reichstag, instead of the Kaiser. Prince Max of Baden set up a new government based on the majority parties in the Reichstag.
- The armed forces were put under the control of the civil government.

At the same time, negotiations were opened with the Allies to agree on an armistice. The news that the new government was asking for peace terms was a shock to the German population, who had expected a great victory; they now became aware for the first time that their country was no longer in a position to keep fighting. In this situation, they were no longer prepared to put up with their suffering. Opinion hardened and by early November it was clear that a revolutionary situation was developing.

Revolution from below

The first serious trouble began in late October when sailors at the naval bases of Kiel and Wilhelmshaven refused to obey orders. The mutiny soon spread to other ports and cities, with the establishment of workers' and soldiers' councils, or soviets. On 8 November, the Bavarian monarchy was deposed and a republic was proclaimed.

With the SPD now refusing to support the new government if the Kaiser did not abdicate, Prince Max made the desperate move of announcing that the Kaiser would renounce the throne. He then handed over the Chancellorship to Friedrich Ebert, who was the leader of the SPD. At the same time one of the provisional government's leaders, Philipp Scheidemann, appeared on the balcony of the Reichstag building and proclaimed Germany a republic. In fact it was only later that day that the Kaiser abdicated. His position was no longer tenable. Wilson was refusing to negotiate with Germany while the Kaiser was still in position, and his generals told him that they would no longer fight for him. He thus had no choice but to sign the abdication, after which he fled to Holland.



Ebert's coalition government

In order to give the new government legitimacy, Ebert was determined to establish a new constitution and to hold elections as soon as possible. On 9 November 1918, Ebert created a provisional coalition government. It was to be provisional until a national election was held to vote for a National Constituent Assembly, and it was a coalition of the SPD and the German Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) (see table showing the socialist parties, page 18). Two days later, on 11 November, Ebert signed the Armistice to end the war.

Ebert was a moderate who wanted to maintain law and order and to prevent the country falling into a civil war. His main concern was that the extreme left wing in Germany would try to take power; they were already using the newly established workers' and soldiers' councils to challenge the new government. He was also worried about the large numbers of soldiers who would be returning to Germany with the end of the war. Thus in the following months he made a key agreement with the army known as the Ebert-Groener Pact. By this agreement, General Wilhelm Groener, Ludendorff's successor, agreed to support the new government and to use troops to maintain the stability and security of the new republic. In return, Ebert promised to resist the demands of the soldiers' councils to democratize the army, and to resist any moves towards a communist-style revolution.



Friedrich Ebert

Activity 2

ATL Thinking skills

1. Why would the Ebert-Groener Pact be seen as a 'betrayal' by the left?
2. What justification would Ebert have given for signing this pact?

Ebert was criticized by the left for being too moderate and for compromising with the forces of conservatism. In December 1918, the USPD left the government. In January 1919, the Spartacists attempted a revolution (see next section).

What political challenges did the Weimar Republic face, 1919–23?

Key concepts:

Change, continuity and consequence

Timeline of events - 1919–23

1919	8 Feb	National Constituent Assembly meets at Weimar
	11 Feb	Ebert becomes president of new Republic
	29 June	Signing of Treaty of Versailles
1920	March	Kapp Putsch
1922	June	Rathenau assassinated
1923	Jan	Invasion of Ruhr by French and Italian troops
	Aug	Stresemann becomes Chancellor
	Sept	Hyperinflation
	Nov	Attempted putsch by Hitler in Munich

The Weimar Republic faced several political challenges after 1919: creating a new constitution, signing a peace settlement with the Allies, threats from political extremism and the instability created by weak coalitions.

Activity 1

ATL

Social and thinking skills

In pairs, brainstorm the problems that Ebert would have faced in 1919.

Divide the problems up under the following themes: political, economic, social and military.

1. The writing of a new constitution

Overnight we have become the most radical democracy in Europe.
Ernst Troeltsch, 29 December 1918.

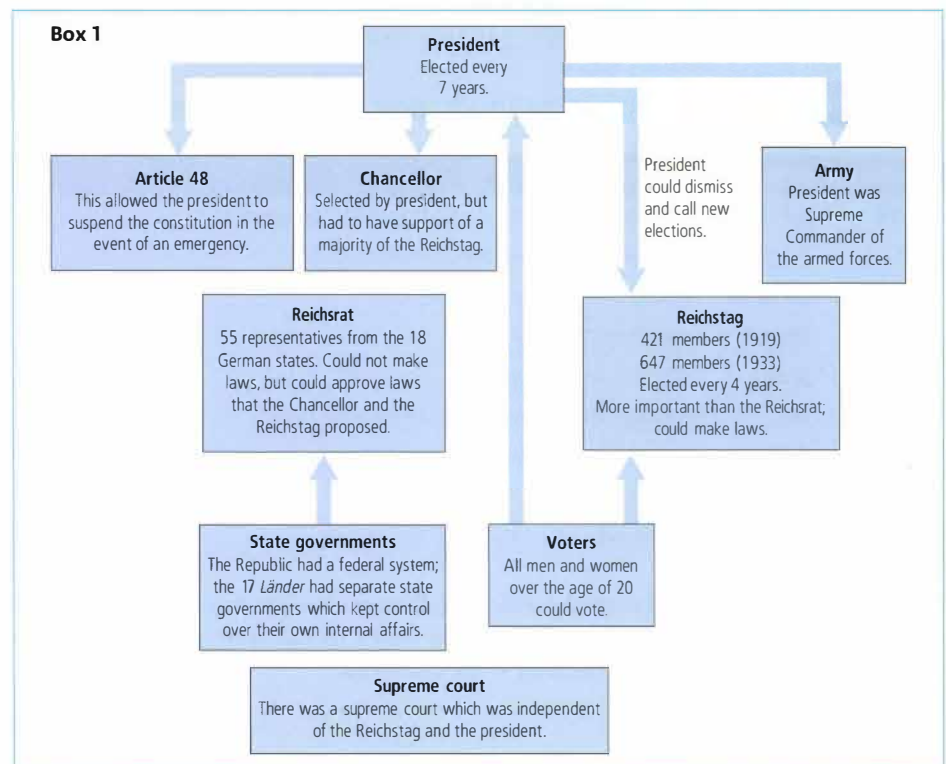
Now we have a Republic; the problem is that we have no Republicans.
Walther Rathenau, 1919.

The government, which was elected in January 1919 against a backdrop of street-fighting, strikes and demonstrations, met in the town of Weimar rather than Berlin in order to keep away from the ongoing turmoil. The SPD had secured the largest share of the vote and had the largest number of seats. Under the voting system of proportional representation, however, it did not have an overall majority and so it had to form a coalition with the Catholic Centre Party and the liberal German Democratic Party (DDP). Ebert was elected as president of the Republic with Philipp Scheidemann leading the new government as head of the coalition cabinet.

One of the first challenges faced by this new government was writing a new constitution. There was a general consensus that this should be a break from the previous autocratic constitution, which had been drawn up in 1871, and that it should enshrine and guarantee the rights and powers of the people. However, as the Weimar Republic was only to last for 14 years, the constitution itself has been the focus of much scrutiny regarding its role in undermining the Republic and allowing Hitler to come to power. The focus has fallen particularly on:

- the role of the voting system, proportional representation, in creating weak governments;
- the relationship between the president and the Reichstag, particularly the role of Article 48;
- the continued existence of traditional institutions which helped maintain traditional, conservative values.

The following boxes show the main features of the new constitution:



Box 2

Key articles of the constitution

- Article 1: The German Reich is a republic. Political authority derives from the people.
- Article 22: The Reichstag delegates are elected by universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage by all men and women over 20 years of age, in accordance with the principles of proportional representation.
- Article 23: The Reichstag is elected for four years.
- Article 41: The President is chosen by the whole German people.
- Article 47: The National President has supreme command over all the armed forces of the Federation.
- Article 48: If public safety and order in the Federation is disturbed or endangered, the National President may take the necessary measures to restore public safety and order.
- Article 53: The National Chancellor and the National Ministers are appointed and dismissed by the National President.
- Article 54: The National Chancellor and Ministers require for the administration of their offices the confidence of the Reichstag. They must resign if the Reichstag withdraws its confidence.

Box 3

Part Two: Fundamental Rights and Duties of Germans

- Article 109: All Germans are equal before the law.
- Article 114: Personal liberty is inviolable (cannot be taken away).
- Article 117: Every German has the right, within the limit of general laws, to express his opinions freely, by word, printed matter or picture, or in any other matter. Censorship is forbidden.
- Article 124: All Germans have the right to form unions and societies.
- Article 135: All inhabitants of the Reich enjoy full religious freedom and freedom of conscience.
- Article 153: The right of property is guaranteed by the Constitution.
- Article 156: The Federation may... [with compensation] ... transfer to public ownership private business enterprises adapted to socialization.
- Article 161: The Reich shall organize a comprehensive system of [social] insurance.
- Article 163: Every German has the moral obligation... to exercise his mental and physical powers in a manner required by the welfare of all. Every German shall be given the opportunity to earn his living through productive work. If no suitable opportunity can be found, the means necessary for his livelihood will be provided.
- Article 165: Workers and employees are called upon to cooperate, on an equal footing, with employers in the regulation of wages and of the conditions of labour.

Box 4

Proportional representation: how it worked

With this voting system, the number of deputies that a party could send to the Reichstag was directly linked to the percentage of votes that they received. For every 60,000 votes in a district, a party would be able to choose one deputy from its list of candidates to send to the Reichstag. This system enabled the smaller as well as the large parties to gain seats in the Reichstag. It also meant that it was hard for one party to have an overall majority and so it was necessary for parties to create coalitions in order to rule; for example, this involved the largest party negotiating with several smaller parties until it had enough deputies to create a majority government.

Activity 3



Thinking and communication skills

Task One

Study the information in Boxes 1–4 (on pages 8–9) carefully and then discuss the following questions in pairs:

1. Which features of the Weimar constitution would you consider to be the most democratic?
2. Which features could be considered undemocratic?
3. Which of the rights in Part Two of the constitution (Box 3) would appeal to workers and socialists?
4. Which rights would appeal to the more conservative groups in society such as the industrialists?

Task Two

Read the following verdicts on the constitution made by historians. What weaknesses in the constitution are highlighted by each historian? Add these points to your answers for questions 1 and 2 in Task One.

Source A

In the event, the nature of the party system in the Weimar Republic, and what might be called the 'political culture' of a number of Weimar parties, rendered post-election bargaining over possible governmental coalitions much more difficult than it has proved to be in other democracies where proportional representation prevails; thus, as we shall see, it was not so much the rules of the game, as the nature of the parties playing the game, that rendered proportional representation a serious liability for Weimar democracy.

Mary Fulbrook (2008). *A History of Germany, 1918–2008*. Wiley-Blackwell, p. 25.

Source B

The final document... was in many ways a mirror image of the social dissonances of German society. The Weimar Constitution was a hodge-podge of principles drawn from Socialist and liberal agendas; it represented so much confusion in regard to economic objectives and unresolved class conflict that German democracy was stymied [impeded] from the beginning...

[It was] one of the most democratic documents in the world. In 1919, however, it was doubtful whether such a democratic constitution could work in the hands of a people that was neither psychologically nor historically prepared for self-government.

Klaus Fischer (1995). *Nazi Germany: A New History*. Continuum, pp. 56–59.

Source C

[The] social and economic responsibilities [in the constitution] turned Weimar governments into uncritical upholders of the demands of workers and tenants in the eyes of industrialists and landlords. Many on the Right saw the new regime as a 'workers' government' and sought to undermine its authority. Furthermore, the political parties which contested the early elections and formed coalition governments were unused to operating on a national scale or to working with each other... the right-wing parties never gave the new parliamentary system their wholehearted support, although they were prepared to work through it to secure their particular interests.

Christopher Culpin and Ruth Henig (2002). *Modern Europe 1870–1945*. Longman, p. 265.

Conclusions on the constitution

In conclusion, the constitution contained several flaws that would contribute to the collapse of Weimar democracy.

Proportional representation

This enabled smaller parties, many of which were anti-Republican, to gain seats and hold influence in coalitions. The fact that proportional representation tended to lead

to coalitions between parties with different aims and goals, meant that governments tended to be short-lived and this contributed to instability. As society became more polarized throughout the 1920s, so it became increasingly difficult for the centre, moderate parties to form stable coalitions.

We Republic governments, 1919-1923			
Appointment	Chancellor	Party	Members of governing coalition
February 1919	Philipp Scheidemann	SPD	SPD, Centre, DDP (moderate socialist-centre)
June 1919	Gustav Bauer	SPD	SPD, Centre, DDP (from October) (moderate socialist-centre)
March 1920	Hermann Müller	SPD	SPD, Centre, DDP (moderate socialist-centre)
June 1920	Konstantin Fehrenbach	Centre	DDP, Centre, DVP (centre-right)
May 1921	Joseph Wirth	Centre	SPD, Centre, DDP (moderate socialist-centre)
October 1921	Joseph Wirth	Centre	SPD, Centre, DDP (moderate socialist-centre)
November 1922	Wilhelm Cuno	None	DDP, Centre, DVP, BVP (centre-right)
August 1923	Gustav Stresemann	DVP	SPD, Centre, DDP, DVP (centre-right with socialists – the 'Great Coalition')
October 1923	Gustav Stresemann	DVP	SPD, Centre, DDP, DVP ('Great Coalition')
November 1923	Wilhelm Marx	Centre	(centre-right)

Article 48

This was intended as a safety measure and it was not anticipated that it would be used other than in a situation of national emergency. However, Ebert ended up using it on 136 separate occasions. Although some of these, such as in the crisis of 1923, were emergency situations, it was also used in non-emergency situations where he wanted to override opposition in the Reichstag. As historian Stephen Lee puts it, *'The presidential powers meant the existence of a "reserve" or "parallel" constitution – which had no need of parliamentary parties'*.

The continuity of traditional institutions

The need for stability in the new constitution meant that there was a failure to reform the old traditional institutions of Imperial Germany; thus conservative forces were able to exert much influence.

The civil service: this was left in the hands of those who tended to conform to the anti-democratic, conservative values of Imperial Germany. These civil servants had a lot of power in the government, especially when ministers in coalition governments were frequently changing.

The judiciary: this was made up of judges who had held positions under the Kaiser. Article 54 of the constitution guaranteed the independence of the judges, but these men were conservative in nature and anti-democratic in their views. In their verdicts against those who threatened the constitution in the years after 1919, they handed out severe sentences to left-wing agitators, and acted leniently towards those on the right.

The army: as with the judiciary, the officer corps was made up of those who had trained under the Kaiser. Many of the generals were linked with the Prussian landowners and their sympathies were anti-Republican. It continued to have great status and influence in the new Republic.

Nevertheless, it is also important to note that the constitution was supported by many Germans who saw it as a great improvement on the undemocratic constitution that had existed before the First World War. It was perhaps the conditions in which it was created that would undermine its credibility and ensure that it faced an uphill battle in trying to establish its political legitimacy.

Activity 4

ATL Thinking skills

Refer back to the quotes at the start of this section by Troeltsch and Rathenau. What justification could be given for each of these verdicts on the Weimar constitution?

2. The Versailles peace settlement

Key to the credibility of the Weimar Republic would be the peace terms that it managed to secure with the Allies.

When the German government sued for an end to fighting, they did so in the belief that the Armistice would be based on Wilson's Fourteen Points (see page 5). In reality, the Armistice terms were very tough, and were designed not only to remove Germany's ability to continue fighting, but also to serve as the basis for a more permanent weakening of Germany. The terms of the Armistice ordered Germany to evacuate all occupied territory including Alsace-Lorraine, and to withdraw beyond a 10km-wide neutral zone to the east of the Rhine. Allied troops would occupy the west bank of the Rhine. The Germans also lost all of their submarines and much of their surface fleet and air force.

When the German army returned home after the new government had signed the Armistice, they were still greeted as heroes. As already mentioned, however, for the German population, the defeat came as a shock. The German army had occupied parts of France and Belgium and had defeated Russia. The German people had been told that their army was on the verge of victory; the defeat did not seem to have been caused by any overwhelming Allied military victory, and certainly not by an invasion of Germany.

Several days after the Armistice had been signed, Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, the most respected German commander, made the following comment: *'In spite of the superiority of the enemy in men and materials, we could have brought the struggle to a favourable conclusion if there had been proper cooperation between the politicians and the army. The German army was stabbed in the back.'*

Although the German army was in disarray by November 1918, the idea that Germany had been *'stabbed in the back'* soon took hold.

Thus, at the start of the Versailles Conference, the German population believed that they had not been truly defeated. Furthermore, the new Weimar government still believed that Germany would play a part in the peace conference and that the final treaty, based on Wilson's principles, would not be too harsh. There was, therefore, a huge difference between the expectations of the Germans and the expectations of the Allies, who believed that Germany would accept the terms of the treaty as the defeated nation.

Germany was not involved in the treaty discussions and was not allowed to see the terms of the final treaty until 7 May. There was then national shock and outrage at the terms. The first Weimar government under Scheidemann resigned, but the Allies were not prepared to negotiate and so the Reichstag finally had to accept the treaty, which was viewed by Germans as a *'diktat'*. The signing ceremony took place in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, where the Germans had proclaimed the German Empire 50 years earlier following the Franco-Prussian War.

The terms of the Treaty of Versailles

The 440 clauses of the peace treaty covered the following areas:

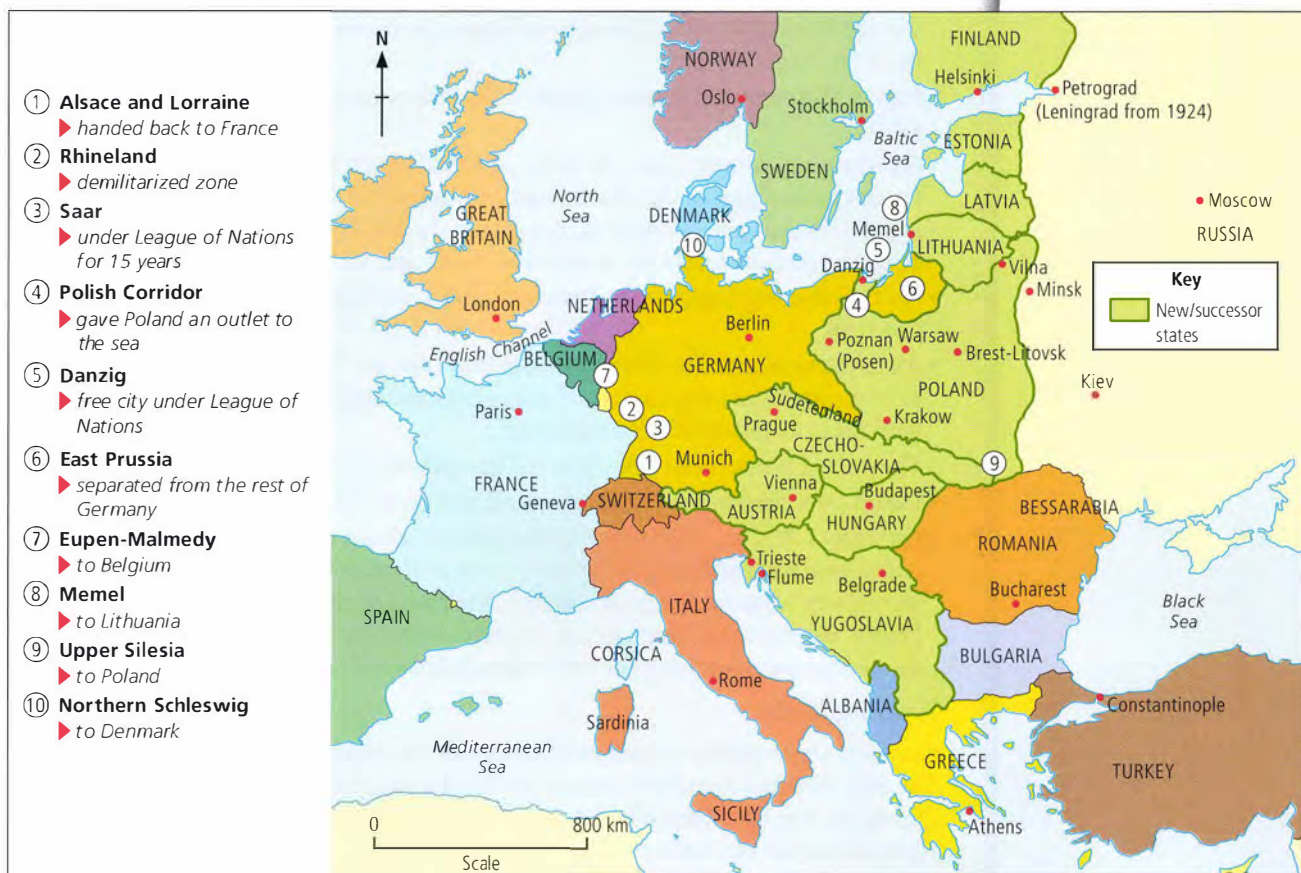
War guilt

The infamous Article 231, or what later became known as the 'war guilt clause', lay at the heart of the treaty:

The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.

Article 231, Treaty of Versailles, 1919.

This clause allowed moral justification for the other terms of the treaty that were imposed upon Germany.



The territorial changes that took place as a result of the Treaty of Versailles

Disarmament

It was generally accepted that the pre-1914 **arms race** in Europe had contributed to the outbreak of war. Thus the treaty addressed disarmament directly. Yet while Germany was obliged to disarm to the lowest point compatible with internal security,

there was only a general reference to the idea of full international disarmament. In addition, the west bank of the Rhine was demilitarized (i.e. stripped of German troops) and an Allied army of occupation was to be stationed in the area for 15 years.

Territorial changes

Wilson's Fourteen Points proposed respect for the principle of **self-determination**, and the collapse of large empires gave an opportunity to create states based on the different nationalities. This ambition was to prove very difficult to achieve and, unavoidably, some nationals were left in countries where they then constituted minorities.

The following points were agreed upon:

- Alsace-Lorraine, which had been seized from France after the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, was returned to France.
- The Saarland was put under the administration of the **League of Nations** for 15 years, after which a **plebiscite** was to allow the inhabitants to decide whether they wanted to be annexed to Germany or France. In the meantime, the coal extracted there was to go to France.
- Eupen, Moresnet and Malmedy were to become parts of Belgium after a plebiscite in 1920.
- Germany as a country was split in two. Parts of Upper Silesia, Poznan and West Prussia formed part of the new Poland, creating a 'Polish Corridor' between Germany and East Prussia and giving Poland access to the sea. The German port of Danzig became a free city under the mandate of the League of Nations.
- North Schleswig was given to Denmark after a plebiscite (South Schleswig remained German).
- All territory received by Germany from Russia under the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was to be returned. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were made independent states in line with the principle of self-determination.
- The port of Memel was to be given to Lithuania in 1922.
- Union (*Anschluss*) between Germany and Austria was forbidden.
- Germany's African colonies were taken away because, the Allies argued, Germany had shown itself unfit to govern subject races. Those in Asia (including Shandong) were given to Japan, Australia and New Zealand, and those in Africa to Britain, France, Belgium and South Africa. All were to become 'mandates', which meant that the new territories came under the supervision of the League of Nations.

Reparations

Germany's 'war guilt' provided justification for the Allied demands for reparations. The Allies wanted to make Germany pay for the material damage done to them during the war. The Inter-Allied Reparations Commission, in 1921, came up with the reparations sum of £6,600 million.

Activity 5



Review questions

1. Which clauses of the Treaty of Versailles were likely to be most problematic to enforce?
2. Which aspects of the treaty were most likely to a) annoy Germany, and b) damage Germany?

Activity 6

ATL Thinking skills

What was the contemporary response to the Treaty of Versailles?

Read through the source below and then address the questions following.

Source A

From John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, 1919. Keynes was a British economist who worked at the Treasury during the First World War and was a chief representative at negotiations prior to the Treaty of Versailles, although he resigned from the British delegation.

“... the future life of Europe was not their concern: its means of livelihood was not their anxiety. Their preoccupations, good and bad alike, related to frontiers and nationalities, to the balance of power, to imperial aggrandisements, to the future enfeeblement of a strong and dangerous enemy, to revenge, and to the shifting by the victors of their unbearable financial burdens onto the shoulders of the defeated.

Source B

From Harold Nicolson's diary, 1919. Nicolson was a junior member of the British Foreign Office and was attending the Versailles Conference.

“Now that we see [the terms] as a whole, we realise that they are much too stiff. The real crime is the reparations and indemnity chapter, which is immoral and senseless. There is not a single person among the younger people here who is not unhappy and disappointed with the terms. The only people who approve are the old fire-eaters.

Source C

Extract from a German newspaper, *Deutsche Zeitung*, 1919.

“Today in the Hall of Mirrors of Versailles the disgraceful Treaty is being signed. Do not forget it! The German people will with unceasing labour press forward to reconquer the place among nations to which it is entitled. Then will come the vengeance for the shame of 1919.

Source D

A conservative DNVP deputy speaking in the Reichstag debate on the treaty.

“Our Fatherland finds itself in the most difficult hour of its history. ... We in our party are aware of the results for our people which a rejection of the peace treaty will entail. The resulting harm, however, will only be temporary, but if we accept this treaty we will abandon countless generations of our people to misery. ... For us, the acceptance of the treaty is impossible for many reasons. ... In addition to making Germany defenceless, there is also the matter of the theft of our territory.

1. What are the main criticisms of the treaty put forward in sources A and B?
2. What were Germany's assessments of the treaty in sources C and D?
3. What common themes can you identify in these sources regarding the treaty?
4. With reference to its origin, purpose and content, analyse the value and limitations of Source D for historians studying the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany.

Criticisms of the Treaty of Versailles

As you can see from the sources above, there was already strong criticism of the Treaty of Versailles at the time that it was signed, not just from the Germans but also from among the Allies. These criticisms, summarized below, became stronger in the 1920s, forcefully expressed by contemporary observers like Harold Nicolson and Norman H Davies, and economist JM Keynes.

The issue of war guilt

The 'war guilt' clause was particularly hated by the Germans, who felt that all countries should bear responsibility for the outbreak of war in 1914. It was especially harsh to put the whole guilt for the war on the new republic, which was already struggling for survival.

Disarmament clauses

These were hard for the Germans to accept. Germany now had an army of only 100,000, which was small for a country of this size. Germany was also very proud of its army. Germany's anger grew when, despite Wilson's call for disarmament in his Fourteen Points, efforts by the other European powers to disarm came to nothing in the 1920s and 1930s.

Reparations and loss of key resources

The economist J M Keynes led the criticisms of the treaty in the area of reparations. In *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, he argued, *The treaty ignores the economic solidarity of Europe and by aiming at the destruction of the economic life of Germany it threatens the health and prosperity of the Allies themselves.* Not only could Germany not pay the huge reparations bill, but taking away the country's coal and iron resources meant that its economy would be unable to recover. The fact that Germany was to face hyperinflation in the early 1920s seemed to provide evidence for his predictions.

Territorial changes to satisfy the issue of self-determination

On this issue, Germany believed that it was treated unfairly. Thus, while the Danes were given the chance of a plebiscite in North Schleswig, the Germans in the Sudetenland and Austria were not given any such choice. Many German-speaking peoples were now ruled by non-Germans.

Removal of colonies

Wilson's reason for removing regions like South-West Africa and Rwanda-Urundi from German administration was to remove them from the harsh nature of German rule. Yet this action was clearly hypocritical. States that received German colonies – South Africa and Belgium, for example – could not themselves claim to be model colonial rulers.

League of Nations

The failure of the peacemakers to invite Germany to join the newly created body of the League of Nations, which was designed to deal with disputes between members and thus maintain peace, not only insulted Germany and added to its sense of grievance, but made it less likely that the League could be effective in promoting international cooperation.

Alternative views of the Treaty of Versailles



Historians' perspectives

Many historians take a different view of the Treaty of Versailles, and its impact on the events of Europe after 1920, to that which was prevalent in the years after 1919. In fact, it is now argued that the treaty was '*relatively lenient*' (Niall Ferguson) and that, given the huge problems facing the peacemakers, it would have been difficult for them to have achieved a more satisfactory settlement. This is supported by historians such as Sally Marks, Anthony Lentin, Alan Sharp and Ruth Henig. The arguments of these historians are summarized below.

Compared to the treaties that Germany had imposed on Russia and Romania earlier in 1918, the Treaty of Versailles was quite moderate and the Allies can be seen to have exercised considerable restraint. The treaty deprived Germany of about 13.5 per cent of its territory (much of this consisted of Alsace-Lorraine, which was returned to France), about 13 per cent of its economic productivity and just over 10 per cent of its population. In addition, it can be argued that France deserved to be compensated for the destruction of so much of its land and industry. German land had not been invaded and its farmland and industries therefore remained intact.

The treaty in fact left Germany in a relatively strong position in the centre of Europe. Germany remained a dominant power in a weakened Europe. Not only was it physically undamaged, it had gained strategic advantages. Russia remained weak and isolated at this time, and Central Europe was fragmented. The peacemakers had created several new states in accordance with the principle of self-determination and this was to create a power vacuum that would favour the expansion of Germany in the future. Anthony Lentin has pointed out the problem here of creating a treaty that failed to weaken Germany, but at the same time left it *'scourged, humiliated and resentful'*.

The huge reparations bill was not responsible for the economic crisis that Germany faced in the early 1920s. In fact, the issue of banknotes by the German government was a major factor in causing hyperinflation. In addition, many economic historians have argued that Germany could have paid the 7.2 per cent of its national income that the Reparations Schedule required in the years 1925–29, if it had reformed its financial system or raised its taxation to British levels. However, it chose not to pay the reparations as a way of protesting against the peace settlement.

Thus it can be argued that the treaty was reasonable, and not in itself responsible for the chaos of post-war Germany. Why, then, did the divisions over the signing of the treaty dominate German political life after 1919? The key issue is that while the treaty was not in itself exceptionally unfair, the Germans thought it was. Nationalist propaganda was very successful in persuading ordinary Germans that the diktat was the cause of the country's problems and that it was harsh and unjust. This meant that:

- Weimar socialist politicians were associated with the Treaty: they were called *'the November criminals'* and were accused of *'betraying'* Germany; this lost the Weimar Republic much support from ordinary Germans and it meant that democracy became associated with national humiliation (and later, economic ruin);
- it helped contribute to the recovery after 1919 of right-wing political forces, who now had ammunition with which to attack the Republic;
- it perpetuated the *'stab in the back'* myth which again gave justification for continued Nationalist attacks on the Republic.

3. The threat from political extremism

Against the backdrop of resentment caused by the Treaty of Versailles, the Weimar government also had to face a series of political challenges from both the left and the right during the next few years. Violence on the street became the norm as politics became more polarized.



The influence of Karl Marx and Communism in Europe after 1917

In October 1917, the Bolshevik Party, which followed the ideas of Karl Marx, took control in Russia (see Chapter 7). Marx argued that a proletarian revolution was inevitable once society had become industrialized, due to the fact that the middle classes, or bourgeoisie, who dominated the means of production in an industrialized society, would always oppress the workers (proletariat) who would eventually rise up. Following the revolution there would be a dictatorship of the proletariat in order to put the factories and the means of production into the hands of everyone, to abolish the class system and deal with counter-revolution. Once that had happened, the dictatorship for the proletariat would no longer be needed and a communist society would have been reached in which everyone would work according to the principle, *'From each according to their ability, to each according to their needs'*. The Bolsheviks hoped that their success in Russia would inspire the workers to rise up across Europe. Such a threat was terrifying to the middle and upper classes of Europe.



Rosa Luxemburg

CHALLENGE YOURSELF



Research skills

Research more into the life of Rosa Luxemburg and her role in left-wing politics during this period. Also see if you can find out about other women who took an active part in politics during the Weimar era.

The Freikorps

These units were made up of right-wing nationalist soldiers who were mainly demobilized junior army officers – though the ranks were swelled with many others. They were given uniforms and weapons but they were not an official part of the army and so lacked the discipline of regular troops.

Threats from the left

The German left-wing movement; socialist groups and parties, 1918

	SPD (German Social Democratic Party)	USPD (German Independent Social Democratic Party); formed in 1917 as a breakaway from the SPD	Spartacists (Spartacus League); established in 1905
Aims	To establish a moderate <i>socialist republic</i> by having free elections to establish a parliamentary democracy.	To create a <i>socialist republic</i> governed by workers' and soldiers' councils alongside a national Reichstag.	They believed that Germany should enact a Russian-style revolution and create a <i>soviet republic</i> based on the rule of workers' and soldiers' councils.
Leaders	Friedrich Ebert Philipp Scheidemann	Karl Kautsky Hugo Haase	Rosa Luxemburg Karl Liebknecht
Support	Working class. In 1912 it became the largest party in the Reichstag and in 1919 had about 1 million members.	Working class. In 1919 it had membership of about 300,000 and it was in a coalition with the SPD in November and December 1918.	Working class. In 1919, it had membership of about 5,000.

On 5 January 1919, the Spartacus League, also known as the Spartacists, staged an uprising in Berlin. Their aim was to set up a revolutionary regime. However, the uprising had little support from the working class. Ebert called in the army but as General Groener could not rely on some of his units, he also used the **Freikorps** to put down the rebellion (see Information box). Ebert's reliance on the army and the Freikorps, along with the brutality used to suppress the revolt, caused bitterness within the left.

The Spartacist uprising was followed by other revolts by the left. However, none of these were successful. This was due to the fact that the activities of the left lacked effective coordination and, after its ablest leaders such as Liebknecht and Luxemburg were killed, it failed to find inspiring leaders. In addition, the brutal suppression of the rebels by the government made it difficult to make any headway. Thus the government was never seriously threatened by the left-wing revolts, though the continuing fear of a communist revolution, such as that which had happened in Russia, frightened many of the middle classes into supporting right-wing parties.

Threats from the right

A more serious threat to the Weimar Republic came from the right wing whose ideas were prevalent among the key institutions of the Republic. As we have seen, those on the right were united in their hatred of democracy and the values of the Weimar Republic, and their disgust with what they saw as a betrayal over the Versailles Treaty. They were also united in their hatred of **Marxism** and in a belief in the restoration of some kind of authoritarian regime. However, while some wanted a return to the monarchy others wanted some form of dictatorship. Such divisions weakened their ability to effectively challenge the Republic in the years 1919–23.

The first major crisis from the right was the Kapp Putsch in March 1920. In February 1920 the defence minister, Gustav Moske, ordered two Freikorps units to disband. General Walther von Luttwitz, the commanding general, refused to disband one of them; he was joined by the leader of the Fatherland Party, Wolfgang Kapp, and

other disgruntled officers in a bid to overthrow the government. Crucially, however, the army refused to support the Freikorps – though it also failed to support the government, which was forced to withdraw to Dresden. However, the **putsch** quickly collapsed in the face of a general strike in Berlin which paralysed the capital. After four days, Kapp's government fled.

Although this was a victory for the government, which had retained the support of the people of Berlin, the events of the putsch highlighted the weaknesses of the Republic. The army had failed to actively support the government but no action was taken against its leaders. Indeed, Seeckt was appointed chief of army command and went on to remodel the army, continuing to uphold its independence, which placed it beyond government control. Meanwhile, those involved in the putsch were treated leniently by the courts; out of the 705 involved, only one was actually punished (with a five-year prison sentence).

Political assassinations

Right-wing nationalists also turned to political assassinations in order to weaken the Republic – a trend that was encouraged by the lenient sentences given out by the judges against the assassins. Between 1919 and 1922 there were 376 political assassinations. Of these, 354 were carried out by right-wing assassins and 326 went unpunished.

The most famous victim was Walther Rathenau, the foreign minister who was killed in June 1922. His involvement at Versailles and his Jewish background made him a target for right-wing nationalists. There was general dismay and revulsion, however, at this assassination, and 70,000 people demonstrated in Berlin. Despite this, Rathenau's killers and their accomplices received an average of only four years each in prison.

These murders did not succeed in overturning the Republic; however, the various revolts and assassinations helped to foster disillusionment with the government while the confidence of the anti-Republican right wing continued to grow.

The Munich Putsch



The leaders of the Munich Putsch, 1923

Following the ending of **passive resistance** in the Ruhr in 1923 by Gustav Stresemann (see page 24), there were again cries that the government had betrayed Germany. In Bavaria, the right-wing government declared a state of emergency and appointed Gustav von Kahr, who was an extreme conservative. Along with the army commander in Bavaria, General von Lossow, and Adolf Hitler, the leader of the National Socialist German Worker's Party (NSDAP), they called for '*a march on Berlin*' to overthrow the government.

Although Kahr and Lossow abandoned this plan, Hitler decided to continue. On 8 November, he took over a Munich beer hall where Kahr and Lossow were addressing a meeting and declared a '*national revolution*'. Under pressure, Kahr and Lossow cooperated and agreed to proceed with the march on Berlin, which would also involve installing Ludendorff as the new commander-in-chief. However, they quickly lost their nerve and support for Hitler's putsch melted away. Hitler's supporters, the SA (see page 31), were unable to gain control of the Munich army barracks and the march through Munich, on 9 November, ended in a gun battle in which 14 Nazis were killed and Hitler himself arrested on a charge of treason. Ludendorff handed himself into the police.

Once again the Weimar Republic had survived, and once again the army had stayed on the side of the government. However, the whole incident highlighted the importance of the army to the political survival of the regime and the judiciary's sympathy towards right-wing conspirators charged with treason. Hitler was only given a five-year sentence, which was the minimum possible for a charge of treason, but released after ten months. Ludendorff, meanwhile, was acquitted.

4. Weak coalitions

While the country struggled to deal with violence and extremism, the government itself struggled to create stable, strong coalitions that could deal with the threats and win public support. In the four years from 1919 to 1923, Weimar had six governments. The longest of these lasted for six months. It also became clear that public support was shifting from the centre parties to the more extremist parties.

Political parties in the Reichstag

The non-socialist parties in the Reichstag	
ZP <i>Zentrumspartei</i> (Centre Party)	Formed in 1870 to defend the interests of the Roman Catholic Church. Enjoyed a wide range of support from landowners to trade unionists. Supported the Republic (from late 1920s it became more sympathetic to the right wing).
DDP <i>Deutsche Demokratische Partei</i> (German Democratic Party)	A left-leaning liberal party that had support from professional middle classes. Committed to a democratic constitution.
DNVP <i>Deutschnationale Volkspartei</i> (German National People's Party)	A nationalist party based on the old Conservative Party. Support from landowners and some business owners. Monarchist and anti-Republican.
DVP <i>Deutsche Volkspartei</i> (German People's Party)	A right-leaning liberal party. Support came from upper middle class and business interests. At first voted against the new constitution, but under its leader, Gustav Stresemann, became a supporter of parliamentary democracy.

Activity 7



Thinking and self-management skills

1. What does the table of elections 1919–20 (in the margin) indicate about the shift in public opinion between 1919 and 1920. What factor/s could have impacted on this change?
2. Review the political threats to the Weimar Republic in the years 1919–23. Create a timeline with the political challenges along the top of the line (you will add the economic challenges after the next section).
3. Which do you think was more dangerous for the long-term stability of the Weimar Republic: the threat from the left, or the threat from the right? Explain your answer.
4. Why might Republicans have been (a) dismayed, or (b) encouraged by the impact of the political crises 1919–23?

What economic challenges did the Weimar Republic face, 1919–23?

The impact of war

Four years of **total war** had a serious impact on the German economy. Assuming that victory would provide the means to pay off Germany's debts, wartime governments had financed the war through increased borrowing and by printing money. Thus, defeat in 1919 left Germany with severe economic problems:

- a huge debt of 144,000 million marks;
- rising inflation;
- the cost of paying reparations (see page 14);
- the loss of industry and resources from areas such as the Saar, and Alsace and Lorraine;
- the loss of traditional trading links.

The causes and impact of the hyperinflation of 1923

Germany's economic problems reached a crisis point in 1923, when hyperinflation took hold. This meant that prices spiralled out of control and money became worthless.

Why did this happen? The long-term cause of this situation was the war which, as mentioned above, had created massive debts for Germany and started the process of inflation; however, the first years of the Republic also added to this situation. Unwilling to risk unpopularity by raising taxes or curbing government spending in areas such as benefits or salaries to civil servants, the Weimar government instead opted to keep taxation low and to continue to borrow and print money. This, they hoped, would not only shore up support for the government but would also allow economic growth to continue and unemployment to stay low.

In this situation, payment of reparations was not the primary cause of inflation. In fact reparations could only be paid in hard currency such as dollars or gold – not the deflated mark. Even so, reparations certainly contributed to the inflationary crisis because in order to buy hard currency to pay the reparations, the Weimar government continued to print millions of marks. This printing of money was also needed to pay wages to civil servants, to pay welfare benefits and to give the industrial sector subsidies to help it to readjust to peacetime and to continue to provide jobs.

The 1919 and Reichstag elections

Party	Seats in January 1919	Seats in June 1920
USPD	22	83
SPD	163	103
DDP	75	39
Centre	91	64
DVP	19	65
DNVP	44	71
KPD	0	4

The final factor that led to the hyperinflation of 1923 was the action of the French and Belgian governments, who ordered their troops to occupy the Ruhr in response to Germany's failure to keep up with reparations payments. The occupying troops, who eventually numbered 100,000, took over the mines, factories, steelworks and railways. In response, the German government, led by Wilhelm Cuno, stopped all reparations payments and ordered '*passive resistance*'; no one was to cooperate with the French authorities. A general strike was also declared in the Ruhr area. This situation brought more economic burdens for the German government:

- It had to keep paying the wages of the striking workers.
- It lost tax revenue from closed businesses in the Ruhr.
- Deprived of deliveries of coal from the Ruhr to the rest of Germany, it had to pay for imported coal.

Within six months, the German currency had collapsed completely. Everyday items now cost millions of marks. Those with mortgages, debts or who had access to foreign currency made fortunes in this situation. However, the results of hyperinflation were devastating for those who had savings or fixed incomes; overnight they found themselves impoverished by the depreciation of the currency.

How did hyperinflation end?

In November 1923 the new Chancellor, Gustav Stresemann, took decisive action to end the crisis:

- He called off passive resistance in the Ruhr and promised to continue to pay reparations.
- He appointed the expert financier, Hjalmar Schlacht, to the Reichsbank.
- The old currency was replaced with a new stable currency, the Rentenmark.
- Government expenditure was cut sharply in order to reduce the deficit; 700,000 civil servants were sacked.
- He persuaded the Allies to hold an international conference to consider Germany's economic plight. This resulted in the Dawes Plan (named after the conference's chairman, the American banker Charles Dawes), which reduced the amount of reparations that Germany would have to pay each month and stated that Germany should receive a loan of 800 million marks from the US.



A German woman uses banknotes as fuel, 1935

Activity 8

ATL Thinking skills

The impact of hyperinflation

1. List the ways in which the hyperinflation of 1923 impacted on different groups of people and on the government.
2. Who were the 'winners' and who were the 'losers' of this situation?

Activity 9

ATL Thinking and self-management skills

1. Add the economic problems of the Weimar Republic to your timeline.
2. In pairs, use your timelines to review the threats and crises faced by the Weimar Republic in the years 1919–23. Which of these do you consider constituted the greatest threat to the Republic?
3. How strong was the Weimar Republic by 1924? Does the fact that it had survived so many crises indicate that in fact it had many strengths?

Essay writing

To what extent was the Treaty of Versailles responsible for the difficulties faced by the Weimar Republic from 1919 to 1923?

Intro: You need to show that you understand the significance of the dates in the question and what exactly the 'difficulties' faced by the Republic during this time were.

Also, you need to set out your main argument; was the Treaty of Versailles responsible or were other factors more important?

Paragraph 1: Start with the focus of the question – the Treaty of Versailles – and make sure your opening sentence links directly to this issue e.g.

The Treaty of Versailles played a key role in destabilizing the new government. Firstly...

You could consider the discontent among key sections of the German population regarding this treaty – particularly among conservatives and nationalist groups – and how this was directed against the new government, which had signed the treaty and was thus associated with it.

Paragraph 2: *In addition, the issue of reparations demanded by the Treaty of Versailles led to the invasion of the Ruhr by French troops, which created a political and economic crisis.*

Now move on to other factors to provide balance in your essay.

Paragraph 3: *However the economic crisis of 1923 was also the result of the impact of the First World War and the politics of the Weimar government after 1919...*

Paragraph 4: *The political instability of the Weimar Republic was also caused by other factors, including the nature of the constitution itself.* Here you could talk about the impact of proportional representation and also the failure to reform the traditional institutions. Give detailed evidence to support any points that you make.

Paragraph 5: *In addition, many in Germany found it difficult to adjust to a republic after the autocratic rule of the Kaiser:* Here you could talk about the difficulties faced by political parties as identified by the sources on page 10.

Conclusion: Make sure you answer the question directly and that your answer is based on the weight of your evidence in the main body of your answer, so that you have a consistent argument running through your essay.

Hints for success

Make sure you do not just write a long description of the terms of the Treaty; keep focused on how it created difficulties for the Weimar Republic.

The Golden Era under Stresemann 1924–29

Timeline of events – 1923–29

1923	Aug	Stresemann becomes Chancellor
	Oct	Radical left-wing governments in Saxony and Thuringia are overthrown
	Nov	Hitler's Munich Putsch fails
		Hyperinflation is ended with introduction of Rentenmark
		New government: Stresemann becomes foreign minister
1924	Apr	Dawes Plan
	May	Election
	Dec	Election



Gustav Stresemann

1925	Feb	Ebert dies
	April	Hindenburg is elected president
	Oct	Locarno Conference
1926	Sept	Germany joins League of Nations
1928	May	Müller's Grand Coalition
	Aug	Kellogg-Briand Pact
1929		Young Plan
	Oct	Death of Stresemann
	Oct	Wall Street Crash

Key concepts:**Significance and change**

After the chaos and instability of the years 1919–23, the years from 1924 to 1929 are often seen as 'a golden age'. Indeed, there was improvement in Germany's economic position and relative political stability. In addition, there was great social and cultural progress and it seemed that Germany was once again being accepted as an equal on the international stage. Gustav Stresemann played a key role in this recovery.

How far was there economic recovery?

The economic position is only flourishing on the surface. Germany is dancing on a volcano. If the short-term loans are called in, a large section of our economy would collapse.

Stresemann, 1928.

The economic measures taken by Stresemann in 1923 and 1924 (see page 22) allowed the German economy to begin its recovery, and by 1925 Germany appeared more stable and prosperous. The American loans agreed in the Dawes Plan helped German industry to modernize, and cartels were established that had better purchasing power than smaller industries. Advances were also made in 'new' industries such as the chemicals, car and aeroplane industries. Between 1925 and 1929, German exports rose by 40 per cent and wages for workers correspondingly increased.

Alongside improved living standards caused by rising wages, the government also introduced generous pensions, and sickness and unemployment benefits. In addition, state subsidies helped to finance the building of housing, schools, parks and sports facilities. All of this gave the impression that the Weimar economy was in a healthy state.

Nevertheless, there were signs of weakness in the Weimar economy:

- Unemployment never fell below 1.3 million.
- Economic growth remained uneven and in 1926 actually declined. Imports continued to exceed exports.
- Not everyone benefited from the 'boom': the professional middle classes had been bankrupted by the inflation and did not see their wages rise in this period.
- Farmers continued to be hit by a worldwide agricultural depression, which kept food prices low; this situation worsened in 1925–26, when there was a global grain surplus leading to a price slump. Many were in debt, leading to an increase in bankruptcies in the late 1920s.
- The government continued to run a deficit despite the higher taxes.

How far was there political stability?

The period from 1924 to 1929 saw a much calmer time in politics. There were no attempted **coups** and no assassinations of key political figures. In addition, elections seemed to indicate a swing back in support to the parties of the middle ground; by 1928, this allowed a 'Grand Coalition' to be formed under Hermann Müller, the leader of the SPD. As this enjoyed the support of over 60 per cent of the Reichstag there seemed to be some hope for stable democratic politics.

Nevertheless, the weaknesses of Weimar politics remained very apparent during the years 1924–29. There were seven governments during this time, each one with a coalition that was a consequence of the proportional representation system, which we discussed earlier. As in the period 1919–23, the different parties found it difficult to cooperate; they tended to put self-interest before those of stable government. In addition, the parties themselves were often divided internally. This made it impossible to hold the coalitions together for any substantial length of time, or to allow any long-term planning. Minor issues, such as which flag to use, could bring about the collapse of a government. Most significantly, this situation discredited the political system in the eyes of many Germans, who viewed the continual political wrangling with increasing dismay and contempt.

Weimar Republic governments, [1923–1930]		
Time in office	Chancellor	Make-up of the coalition
1923–24	Wilhelm Marx	Centre, DDP, DVP
1924–25	Wilhelm Marx	Centre, DDP, DVP
1925	Hans Luther	Centre, DVP, DNVP
1926	Hans Luther	Centre, DDP, DVP
1926	Wilhelm Marx	Centre, DDP, DVP
1927–28	Wilhelm Marx	Centre, DDP, DNVP
1928–30	Hermann Müller	SPD, DDP, Centre, DVP

An indication of public attitudes came in 1925 during the presidential elections. These were due in 1925 and it was assumed that Ebert would be re-elected. His unexpected death in February 1925 brought forth a wide range of candidates; these included the war hero General Hindenburg, who went on to win in the second ballot.

Those who lacked confidence in the Weimar Republic were reassured by Hindenburg's election, seeing him as an authoritarian figure who might be capable of bringing stability to the Republic. However, for others, his election was a defeat for the Republic; the considerable powers of presidential office were now placed in the hands of a military figure, inexperienced in the ways of democracy and surrounded by army officers and fellow *Junkers*.

What were the achievements of Stresemann?

The one element of continuity in this period was Gustav Stresemann, who remained foreign minister between 1924 and 1929. Stresemann was a pragmatic nationalist. He wanted to restore Germany's position in Europe and to free Germany from the restraints imposed on it by the Versailles Treaty. However, he realized the best way of achieving these goals was to comply with the terms of the Versailles Treaty, in order to improve relations with Britain and France. This would then allow him to put pressure on them to revise the treaty.

As a result of this policy, Stresemann gained several successes:

- Locarno Pact, 1925: Stresemann guaranteed Germany's western borders, which reassured France and brought a degree of rapprochement between France and Germany. As a result, he was able to secure some withdrawal of allied forces from Germany (see below).
- League of Nations, 1926 (see page 14): Germany was accepted into the League of Nations and given great power status on the League council with veto power.
- The Treaty of Berlin, 1926: this renewed the earlier Treaty of Rapallo that had been signed in 1922 with Russia, thus continuing good relations with the USSR (which helped put pressure on the West to improve its relations with Germany as they did not want Germany moving closer to the USSR).
- The Young Plan: the US agreed to give further loans to Germany and a much reduced scheme of repayments for reparations was established to spread the cost over the next 50 years.

Stresemann's policy also secured the objective of removing foreign forces from German soil – an aim which was shared by all parties. Following Germany's cooperation in the Locarno Pact, by December 1925 the Allies had withdrawn from Zone 1, which was situated around Cologne. Once the reparation issue had been resolved in the Young Plan, the remaining Allied forces were withdrawn. The final zone was evacuated in June 1930, five years ahead of the schedule laid down in the Treaty of Versailles.

There is thus no doubt that by 1929 Germany was once more accepted on the international stage and that its relations with Britain and France had markedly improved. Indeed, Stresemann's contribution to the new atmosphere of cooperation, known as the Locarno Spring, earned him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1926 alongside his French counterpart, Aristide Briand.

Despite his achievements, during this period Stresemann was bitterly attacked by nationalist politicians, who claimed that his actions amounted to an acceptance of the Versailles Treaty. They believed that Locarno only benefited the French and that Germany should stay out of the League of Nations, which was associated with the victors of the First World War and thus with those who had imposed suffering on Germany via the Versailles Treaty. The Young Plan was also opposed as it confirmed the principal that Germany still had to pay reparations. They further condemned Stresemann for failing to secure the disarmament of the other countries.

As Stresemann died in 1929, it is not clear how far he meant to go in revising the Treaty of Versailles or what, for example, his aims were for the eastern borders of Germany, which had not been guaranteed by Locarno. The Wall Street Crash in 1929 in any case fundamentally altered the international atmosphere.

Society and culture in the Weimar Republic

Although this era of the Weimar Republic lasted only a few years, it was nevertheless marked by an explosion of creativity and experimentation in the sciences and the arts. There were also challenges to traditional norms in society during this period.

Activity 10



Research and communication skills

In groups, research the following aspects of Weimar culture and society: painting, literature, music and opera, theatre, architecture, film, cabaret, science, the status of women.

Prepare a presentation to the rest of your class on your topic. Make sure you show:

- the key developments/changes in this area and how they challenged traditional culture or norms (you may also want to consider areas where there was little change, or where in fact change had started before this period);
- reasons why these changes took place;
- the reaction to these developments within Germany;
- the influence that the developments had on other areas of Weimar society and culture, or on developments in other countries;
- the impact that these developments had on the Weimar Republic as a whole.

Essay writing

To what extent did the Weimar Republic experience a 'golden age' between 1924 and 1928?

For this essay, you will need to identify the positives and the negatives of this era for the Weimar Republic: the ways in which it saw a 'golden age' and the ways in which this was perhaps only a façade hiding more deep-rooted problems. Consider organizing your information thematically so that you have separate paragraphs for political, economic and social issues. Also remember that 'To what extent' questions require you to develop arguments for and against the assumption/assertion in the question.

Examiner's hint Refer to the markbands for Paper 3 in the margin to check that you are meeting the criteria for the top markband

Essay frame

Intro: Set out why the period 1924–28 could be seen as a golden age and explain what this means regarding Weimar, i.e. political stability, economic upturn, acceptance on the international stage and a flowering of the arts. Set out your judgement as to whether this was a golden age or whether in fact this was only a superficial respite in a turbulent decade.

Here are some suggestions for opening or topic sentences; you need to add detailed evidence to support each point.

Paragraph 1: *The years 1924 to 1928 saw a decrease in the political violence of the previous years and a return to more moderate stable politics, thus indicating a 'golden age' in the area of politics.*

Paragraph 2: *However, despite these improvements, key areas of instability still existed.*

Paragraph 3: *Economically, the reforms carried out by Stresemann in 1923 led to economic recovery.*

Paragraph 4: *Despite the growing prosperity that allowed many Germans to experience a golden age financially, there were warning signs that this stability was quite fragile.*

Paragraph 5: *In international affairs, there were clear signs that Germany was once more becoming accepted as a member of the international community. Thus, this was indeed a golden age in comparison to the position that Germany had held before, which had culminated in the invasion of the Ruhr in 1923.*

Paragraph 6: *Despite Stresemann's success in restoring Germany's international position and gaining significant concessions, many in Germany criticized this and claimed that it was not in Germany's interest.*

Paragraph 7: *Perhaps the most uncontroversial area in which Weimar Germany experienced a golden age was in the area of culture.*

Conclusion: Come back to the overall argument that you set out in your introduction; make sure you answer the question directly.



For top markbands for Paper 3 essays:

Introduction and main body paragraphs

Responses are clearly focused.

The question is fully addressed and implications are considered.

The essay is well structured and the material effectively organized.

Supporting knowledge is detailed, accurate, relevant to the question and used to support arguments.

Arguments are clear, well developed and consistently supported with evidence.

There is evaluation of different perspectives.

Conclusion

The conclusion is clearly stated and it is consistent with the evidence presented.

The crisis years and the rise of Hitler (1929–33)

Timeline of events - 1929–33

1929	Oct	Wall Street Crash
1930	March	Collapse of Müller's Grand Coalition government Brüning appointed as Chancellor
	Sept	Reichstag election; Nazis and Communists make gains
1931		Financial crisis in Germany
1932	Apr	Ban on SA Hindenburg re-elected as president
	May	Brüning replaced by Papen as Chancellor
	June	Ban on SA lifted
	July	Election; Nazi Party becomes largest party in the Reichstag
	Sept	Reichstag passes vote of no confidence in Papen's government
	Nov	Election; Nazis still biggest party
	Dec	Papen forced to resign; Schleicher replaces Papen
1933	Jan	Hitler offered Chancellorship in a coalition government with Papen

Key concepts:

Causation and consequence

The face of German politics was dramatically changed in the years 1929 to 1933. In October 1929, the New York Stock Exchange in America crashed, wiping tens of thousands of dollars off the value of share prices. This was to have a profound effect in America, leading to the Great Depression. However, the ramifications of this economic crisis were felt across the world, particularly in Germany, whose financial recovery had been based largely on US loans. These loans were rapidly called in by American banks with a catastrophic effect on industry which needed the money for investment. In addition, the US market for German goods ceased to exist as the US economy shrank. The result was closure of factories and spiralling unemployment. By 1932, the number of unemployed had risen to 6 million, with catastrophic effects on the living standards of millions of Germans.

The political implications of the economic crisis of 1929


The economic crisis put further strains on an already fragile political system. The coalition that had been formed following the 1928 election was led by Müller and was one of the most broadly based coalition governments in the Weimar period (see table, page 25). In the face of rising unemployment benefits, combined with falling tax revenues, the coalition fell apart: the DVP on the right wanted to reduce unemployment benefits, while the SPD on the left wanted to protect the level of benefits and raise taxes. In March 1930, Müller resigned.

President Hindenburg appointed Heinrich Brüning, leader of the Centre Party, as Müller's successor. Although it was a logical appointment, in that Brüning was leader

of the second largest party in the Reichstag, it was also a crucial step towards the end of parliamentary government. In choosing Brüning, Hindenburg had been influenced by two key military figures: General Groener and General Kurt von Schleicher. This was an indication of the growing influence of the army in politics; these men were keen to see a more authoritarian government and saw Brüning as a respectable, conservative figure who would be prepared to take the Republic in this direction.

Brüning's coalition did not include the SPD and so he did not have enough support in the Reichstag to pass laws. Thus, Hindenburg used Article 48 to rule by presidential decree. However, when this was used to pass Brüning's budget, which aimed to solve the crisis by cutting spending and raising taxes rather than stimulating demand in the economy, there was a political crisis. The SPD won Reichstag support for a motion demanding that the decree be withdrawn on the grounds that Article 48 was to be used in an emergency, not for regular government matters. Brüning thus dissolved the Reichstag and called for new elections; these elections would be key in setting the stage for the rise of the Nazi Party.

The rise of the Nazi Party 1923–30


 *Hitler's triumph on 30 January 1933 was at no stage an inevitable outcome of the failure of Weimar democracy.*

Ian Kershaw (1990). *Why Did German Democracy Fail?* Weidenfeld & Nicolson, p. 25.

The economic crisis and the failure of the government to tackle it effectively led to the German people turning to extremist parties on the left and on the right. In addition, there was once again an increase in violence on the streets. Two parties in particular benefited from this situation: the Communist Party (KPD) and the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) – Nazi for short.

The Nazi Party, led by Adolf Hitler, had established a 25-point programme back in 1920 which stated:

1. We demand the union of all Germans in a Greater Germany on the basis of the right of national self-determination.
2. We demand equality of rights for the German people in its dealings with other nations, and the revocation of the peace treaties of Versailles and St Germain.
3. We demand land and territory to feed our people and to settle our surplus population.
4. Only members of the nation may be citizens of the State. Only those of German blood, whatever their creed, may be members of the nation. Accordingly, no Jew may be a member of the nation.
8. If it is impossible to sustain the total population of the State, then the members of foreign nations (non-citizens) are to be expelled from the Reich.
13. We demand the nationalization of all businesses that have been formed into corporations.
14. We demand a division of the profits of all heavy industries.
23. We demand that: a) all writers and employees of the newspapers appearing in the German language must be members of the race; b) Non-German newspapers must be required to have the express permission of the State to be published.
24. We demand freedom of religion for all religious denominations within the State, so long as they do not endanger its existence or oppose the moral senses of the Germanic race.
25. For the execution of all of this we demand the formation of a strong central power in the Reich.

 Key to Hitler's ideology were **points 3 and 4**. Point 3 referred to the idea of *Lebensraum* (or 'living space') for Germans, which was to be gained to the east of Germany. Point 4 sums up Hitler's obsessive hatred against the Jews, which was to be found in all of his writings and which was translated into vicious discriminatory policies once he became leader of Germany.



Nazi election propaganda poster for the presidential elections of 1932.

Activity 11

ATL Thinking skills

1. Which aspects of the 25-point plan would have been most attractive to Germans in the early 1920s?
2. What would be the practical implications of such a programme?

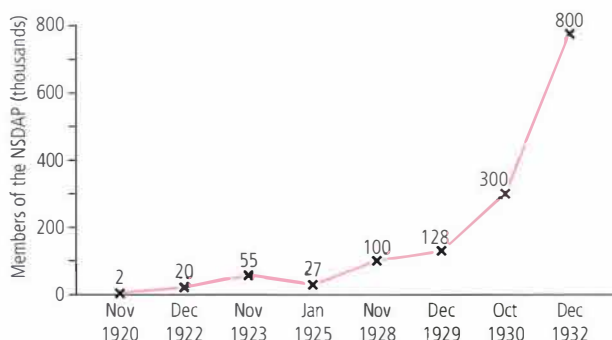
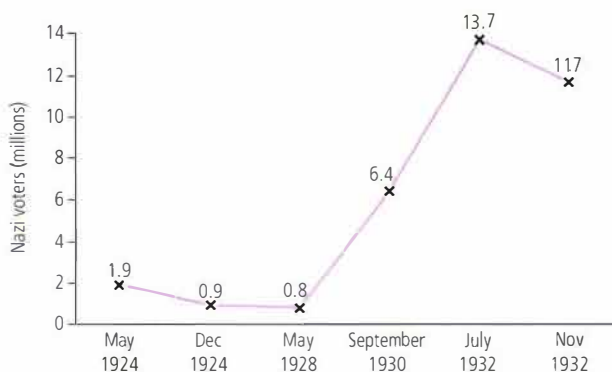
As you read on page 20, the Nazis attempted to seize power in a coup in 1923, in what became known as the Munich Putsch, and its failure led to Hitler being sentenced to prison. It was while in prison that Hitler further developed his ideas in *Mein Kampf*; this was a combination of autobiography and political philosophy – it covered racist and authoritarian theories and ideas for the direction of Nazi foreign policy.

When he was released from prison, Hitler reorganized the Nazi Party and made a decision to use the parliamentary system to achieve power. However, with the increased economic and political stability of the Stresemann years, the Nazis failed to achieve any substantial electoral success, as can be seen in the graphs below.

Activity 12

ATL Thinking skills

1. What is the message of the graphs below?
2. What is the message of the Nazi propaganda poster in the margin to the left?



Graphs showing the numbers of Nazi voters in elections and the growth of support for the Nazi Party.

The economic crisis changed this situation and over the course of three elections, between September 1930 and July 1932, the Nazis more than doubled their electoral support. Why was this?


Brüning's only economic policy had been to cut spending, reduce the levels of welfare payments and increase contributions to the unemployment insurance scheme. This failed to improve the economic situation and, with parties on the left unable to put forward an alternative approach, the Nazis stood out as the one party prepared to pledge themselves to provide work for all Germans.

However, it was not just the Nazis' economic policy that got them support. The economic crisis led to a surge in support for the KPD among the workers. The middle and upper classes were terrified of a Bolshevik-style revolution taking place in Germany and the Nazi emphasis on a hatred of communism, along with their actual physical attacks on Communists in the streets, increased their electoral support.

In addition, Nazi ideology combined with calculated tactics succeeded in getting them support across a broad range of classes, as explained by Fulbrook below.

Activity 13

ATL Thinking skills

 Nazi 'ideology' was a somewhat rag-bag collection of largely negative views combined with a utopian vision of a grandiose future coloured by nostalgic appeal to aspects of a mythical past. Thus Nazism opposed certain pernicious, potentially threatening tendencies of 'modern' capitalist society: the evils of big business (large department stores often owned by Jews), international finance ('Jewish'), and revolutionary communism. Nazis promoted a vision of a harmonious national community (Volksgemeinschaft) which would be racially pure... and which would overcome the class divisions which beset Imperial and Weimar Germany. Nazism claimed to be able to transcend the divisions and heal the wounds of capitalist society, and to be able to present a new way forwards to a great future... Hitler was able to appeal to a wide range of groups harbouring different resentments... precisely because he was never very specific about the details of the proposed new order.


Mary Fulbrook (2008). *A History of Germany 1918–2008*. Wiley-Blackwell, p. 44.

1. According to Fulbrook, what aspects of Nazi ideology appealed to voters?

Hitler's personal leadership was also crucial to the success of the party. He was a charismatic speaker able to mesmerize his audiences. He was backed up by a brilliant propagandist, Joseph Goebbels. The Nazis had their own newspapers; they published posters and leaflets, organized rallies and marches. As indicated in the sources above, the Nazis were able to appeal to a range of different groups, and their propaganda was adapted accordingly for different audiences. The organization of the Nazi Party, which had been set up in the 1920s, also allowed it to distribute propaganda via its local branches; indeed, by the 1930s it had built up a formidable election machine. By this point, it also had financial solvency through the contributions it levied on its membership.

Finally, the party's paramilitary force, the SA or *Sturmabteilung*, gave the Nazis an image of order and strength (see Information box on the **SA and SS**). The SA grew dramatically in the years 1930–34 and it was responsible for the growing violence on the streets after 1930. This violence was encouraged by the Nazi leadership. Although street battles with the KPD were often started by the Nazis, the SA claimed that they were in fact keeping order on the streets by dealing with the Communists.

The SA and the SS

 **The SA or Sturmabteilung**, also known as the Brownshirts, was a paramilitary wing of the Nazi Party. It played a key role in helping Hitler in his rise to power, providing protection for Nazi rallies and assemblies, disrupting the meetings of opposing parties, fighting the KPD (or Communist Party), and leading attacks against the Jews and other minority groups that the Nazis blamed for Germany's problems.

The SS or Schutzstaffel, also known as the Blackshirts, was considered to be an elite paramilitary force and was set up in 1925, initially to provide protection to Hitler. Members of the SS were expected to be totally loyal, obedient and racially pure. The SS went on to become one of the most feared and powerful organizations in Nazi Germany.

The political and economic crisis of 1930–33

Despite the strengths of the Nazis in campaigning and securing votes, the actual success of the Nazi Party in gaining political power was due to the political intrigues of 1932–33, which are outlined below.

March 1930 to April 1932: Brüning's government

Following the 1930 election, the Nazis obtained 107 seats in the Reichstag. The Communists also gained 23 seats, giving them 77 in total. With support from around only one third of the Reichstag's members, Brüning and Hindenburg now had to rely even more on Article 48. Brüning's economic measures continued as before and did little to reduce the impact of the economic crisis and growing unemployment. He also tried to persuade the Allied governments to cancel Germany's reparations; in this he was successful and reparations finally ended in 1932, but by this time German families were in a desperate situation.

With economic and political chaos escalating, a real fear developed that Germany was heading for revolution. In April 1932, Brüning banned the SA in an attempt to reduce street violence.

In March of 1932 there was a presidential election in which Hitler stood against Hindenburg. Hindenburg won the election but Hitler gained a respectable 37 per cent of the vote.

Hindenburg now lost confidence in Brüning and in May 1932 appointed Franz von Papen instead.

May to December 1932: Papen's government

Papen was a relative nonentity. In fact, the real power lay with Schleicher, who was appointed defence minister in the new cabinet.

General von Schleicher had turned against Brüning, believing that Brüning's opposition to the Nazis was wrong. Indeed Schleicher, along with other members of the conservative elite, started to believe the Nazis could be brought into government; this would give them the popular backing that they needed in order to replace the Weimar Republic with a more authoritarian government. However, Hitler was determined not to enter a coalition with anything less than the position of Chancellor. Schleicher would not agree to this and thus Papen took over as Chancellor for the time being in what became known as the 'cabinet of barons', none of whom were members of the Reichstag. As Culpin and Henig write, *'The Weimar Republic was now unquestionably dead'*.

In June 1932, Papen lifted the ban on the SA. He also agreed to Hitler's demand to call for new elections. Once again, the Nazi Party gained from the economic crisis and, against a backdrop of violence, they achieved their greatest electoral success. They got 37.8 per cent of the vote and increased their number of MPs from 110 to 230, making them the largest party in the Reichstag. In such a position of power, negotiations now started in earnest with the Nazis over the terms by which they could be brought into power. However, President Hindenburg, who despised the upstart '*Bohemian corporal*', refused to offer him anything more than the position of Vice Chancellor – which Hitler refused.

Papen did not, however, have the support of the Reichstag: as soon as it reopened following the election, on 12 September 1932, it passed a vote of no confidence against him, 512 to 42. Schleicher thus persuaded Hindenburg to allow new elections.


In the next election of November 1932, the Nazis lost 2 million votes. However, the KPD made further gains. To counter what conservatives saw as a dangerous situation, there was increased support for Hitler to be given a prominent role in government. In negotiations with Papen and then Hindenburg, Hitler continued to insist that he would only accept the position of Chancellor. Papen and Hindenburg refused; Papen wanted to continue as Chancellor and proposed to replace the Reichstag permanently and instead use the army, in order to suppress opposition.

Schleicher however was against this radical plan of a 'New State'. He convinced Hindenburg that a civil war, which the army would not be able to control, was likely, and persuaded him to dismiss Papen and appoint himself as Chancellor. He then tried to pull together various alliances, including trade unionists and the left wing of the Nazi Party led by Gregor Strasser. This failed and in fact alienated the industrialists, who were suspicious of his dealings with the unions.

Papen now took the initiative against Schleicher, seeking revenge for his early removal from power. He was now convinced that Hitler must be included in a coalition conservative-nationalist government and that, if necessary, Hitler would have to be Chancellor in order to achieve this. He was not alone in believing that as long as there were only a couple of other Nazis in the Cabinet, the Nazis could be controlled.

Finally, after a series of meetings, Hitler was offered the Chancellorship of Germany by a reluctant President Hindenburg.

As Ian Kershaw (2000) writes:

 Few... had Hitler as their first choice. But by January 1933, with other options apparently exhausted, most, with the big landowners to the fore, were prepared to entertain a Hitler government. Had they opposed it, a Hitler chancellorship would have been inconceivable. Hitler needed the elite to attain power. But by January 1933, they in turn needed Hitler as he alone could deliver the mass support required to impose a tenable authoritarian solution to Germany's crisis of capitalism and crisis of the state.

Hitler. Routledge, p. 55.

Activity 14



Thinking and communication skills

Why did the Weimar Republic fail?**Task One**

Most essay questions on this period focus on the overall question of why the Republic established in 1919 was unable to survive. Before tackling a question on this, consider how each of the following contributed to the collapse of the Weimar Republic. Work in pairs to make notes on the impact of each of these areas; look back through this chapter and also at any comments by historians. Then rank these factors according to how important you think they were in causing the downfall of the Weimar Republic. You may want to add to your notes when you have read the views of historians in Task Three.

- the Weimar constitution
- the political parties of the Republic
- the mindset of many Germans regarding Republicanism
- the Treaty of Versailles
- the Wall Street Crash
- the appeal of Nazism
- the skill of Hitler
- President Hindenburg
- the growth in support for the Communists after 1929.

Task Two

Discuss in pairs the *strengths* of the Weimar Republic.

Task Three

Identify the key points made in each of the following extracts regarding the collapse of the Weimar Republic. How far do you agree with each one?

Source A

“Democracy was not strengthened by the performance of the political parties. ... The traditional right – the DNVP – maintained a consistent hostility to the Republic and eventually welcomed its demise. Indeed, in collaborating openly with Hitler’s NSDAP they actually accelerated the process. The more moderate Centre Party did manage to keep a respectable level of support from the Catholic population, but it lurched to the right under the leadership of Brüning and also assisted in the re-election of Hindenburg as president in 1932. It was certainly no defender of parliamentary democracy.

Stephen Lee (2008). *The European Dictatorships*. Routledge, p. 148.

Source B

“[T]he real significance of [the 1923] inflation was that any future economic crisis would be bound to have a doubly serious impact. Hence from 1929 the Depression radicalized sections of the population which inflation had already rendered unstable, turning them either to the extreme right or to the far left. It also destroyed any possibility of political consensus and... returned Germany to the practice of authoritarian government.

Stephen Lee (2008). *The European Dictatorships*. Routledge, p. 150.

Source C

“In the years before 1945, and indeed in some respects beyond this, the fatal successes of Imperial Germany’s ruling elites, assisted by older historical traditions and new experiences, continued to exert an influence. In the widespread susceptibility towards authoritarian policies, the hostility towards democracy in education and political life, in the continuing influence of the pre-industrial ruling elites, there begins a long inventory of serious historical problems. A knowledge of the history of the German Empire between 1871 and 1918 remains absolutely indispensable for an understanding of German history over the last decades.

German historian Hans-Ulrich Wehler (1985). *The German Empire 1871–1918*. Berg Publishers, p. 246.

Essay planning

Work in pairs to plan out these essays:

Examine the reasons for the collapse of the Weimar Republic.

There are clearly many factors that you can choose to give as reasons for the collapse of the Weimar Republic in this essay, so an important part of your planning will be to identify about four key ones that you can analyse. It is better to choose fewer reasons that you can analyse in depth rather than just a list of many factors which you can only talk about briefly. Remember to stay focused on the question. So for each factor that you choose, ensure that you explain *how it contributed to the collapse* of the Weimar Republic. You may also want to decide which factor/s you think is/are most important and set this out in your introduction.

Discuss the reasons for Hitler's rise to power, 1929 to 1933.

The dates are key in this essay. You need to focus on the period from 1929 to 1933. Longer-term structural problems of the Weimar Republic may be relevant, but focus on the impact that these had after 1929.

Key for this essay will be:

- the economic crisis following the Wall Street Crash, the failure of the Weimar governments to deal with this and the impact it had on ordinary people;
- the rise of extremism as a result of the economic crisis;
- the appeal of the Nazi party after 1929;
- the political intrigues of 1932–33.



Hints for success

Look back at the last essay frame to remind yourself about how to write focused opening sentences for each paragraph.

Historians' perspectives

Historians differ in their interpretations on what caused the collapse of the Weimar Republic. While some argue that the circumstances of its 'birth' were so dire that it was doomed from the start, others believe that the Republic was gaining in popularity during the 1920s and that it was the economic crash of 1929 that caused its downfall. Still others have looked for long-term trends in German history that led towards Hitler's dictatorship or have focused on the factors of chance, such as the intrigue of the Weimar Republic's last months.



02

Hitler's Germany: 1933–1939

Hitler's consolidation of power

A portrait of Adolf Hitler.

Key concepts: *Causation and significance*

- The crisis of Weimar had gone so deep that Hitler only had to touch the remaining structures for them to fall apart.

Ian Kershaw (2000). *Hitler*. Routledge, p. 118.

When Hitler became Chancellor in January 1933, there was no indication that he would soon be in a position of unassailable power. The Nazis only held three cabinet posts out of 12, they did not have a majority in the Reichstag and Hitler's post was still dependent on Hindenburg, who could easily sack him. Papen, who was Vice Chancellor, believed that the real decisions would be taken by the remaining members of the cabinet, who were all part of the old aristocratic elite. Nevertheless, Hitler was still leader of the largest political party in Germany and, significantly, the Nazis had control over the Prussian Ministry of the Interior under Göring, which gave them extensive powers over the law and order of two-thirds of Germany. Hitler's speech below indicates the speed at which he started using the resources at his disposal to strengthen his position.

After only two months, Hitler was well on the way to establishing a Nazi dictatorship; after 18 months this process was complete.

Essay questions:

- To what extent was Hitler's consolidation of power the result of legal methods?
- Examine the significance of the Night of the Long Knives in Hitler's consolidation of power.
- Evaluate the successes of Hitler's social and religious policies in transforming German society.
- To what extent had Hitler solved Germany's economic problems by 1939?
- To what extent was Nazi economic success the reason for the lack of opposition to Hitler's policies in the years 1933 to 1939?
- Discuss the impact of Nazi policies on the Jewish population between 1933 and 1939.

Activity 1

ATL Thinking skills

1. With reference to the content and tone of this speech, identify the ways in which Hitler discredits the Weimar Republic.
2. How else does he seek to gain support from the German people in this speech?

“Over fourteen years have passed since the unhappy day when, dazzled by promises made by those at home and abroad, the German people forgot its most precious possessions, our past, the Empire, its honour and freedom, and thus lost everything. Since those days of betrayal the Almighty has withdrawn His blessing for our people. Discord and hatred came among us. With the deepest sorrow millions of the best German men and women from all walks of life saw the unity of the nation founder and disappear in a confusion of politically egotistical [selfish] opinions, economic interests and ideological conflicts. ... The breakdown of the unity of mind and will of our nation at home was followed by the collapse of its political position abroad. ... With an unparalleled effort of will and of brute force the Communist method of madness is trying as a last resort to poison and undermine an inwardly shaken and uprooted nation. ... Fourteen years of Marxism have undermined Germany. One year of Bolshevism would destroy Germany. ... It is an appalling inheritance which we are taking over. The task before us is the most difficult which has faced German statesmen in living memory. But we all have unbounded confidence, for we believe in our nation and in its eternal values. Farmers, workers, and the middle class must unite to contribute the bricks wherewith to build the new Reich.

Hitler's 'Appeal to the German People', which was broadcast on the radio on 31 January 1933, immediately after he had been made Chancellor.

Timeline of events - 1933–34

1933	30 Jan	Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany
	1 Feb	New elections called
	27 Feb	Reichstag fire
	28 Feb	Decree for the Protection of the People and the State
	5 Mar	Nazis win 43.9 per cent of vote in elections
	6–7 Mar	State governments taken over
	8 Mar	First permanent concentration camp set up at Dachau
	13 Mar	Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda established
	24 Mar	Enabling Act
	31 Mar	First Law for the Coordination of the Federal States
	7 April	Law for the Restoration of the Civil Service
		Second Law for the Coordination of the Federal States
	22 June	SPD outlawed
	14 July	Law against the Formation of New Parties
1934	12 Nov	Reichstag elections; Nazis win 92 per cent of the vote
	30 June	Night of the Long Knives
	2 Aug	Death of Hindenburg; Hitler combines offices of President and Chancellor. Army swears oath of allegiance
	19 Aug	Hitler takes title of <i>Führer</i>

Concentration camps

The first concentration or prison camp was set up in Dachau in 1933 and the first prisoners were political. However the camps were soon full of those who the Nazis saw as 'asocials' and 'racially undesirable' – such as Jews, Roma and homosexuals. Prisoners were classified into different categories denoted by coloured triangles worn on their uniforms. They experienced torture, killings, hard labour and every conceivable indignity at the hands of the SS units, known as the Deaths Head Units (see page 32), who ran the camps and who had been specially trained by Himmler. One camp commandant shouted to all new arrivals: *'Forget your wives, children and families, here you will die like dogs'*. Meanwhile, the gates of all camps were inscribed with the euphemistic slogan of *'Arbeit macht frei'* ('Work liberates').

The 'Legal Revolution', January–March 1933

The use of terror

As discussed in the previous chapter, the violence of the SA had already played a role in increasing support for the Nazi Party. Now, with the resources of the state at the party's disposal, Hitler was able to expand the activities of the SA and ensure that these gained legal authority. Gangs of the SA were able to attack the offices of trade unions and the KPD, to break up the meetings of the SPD and the KPD and to attack the homes of left-wing politicians. When the newspapers of the SPD and the Centre Party condemned these actions, they were banned. The first permanent **concentration camp** was established at Dachau in March 1933, and political prisoners were sent there and to around 70 other temporary camps. By the end of 1933, over 100,000 potential opponents had been arrested.

The Reichstag election, 5 March 1933

Within 24 hours of his appointment as Chancellor, Hitler had called new Reichstag elections believing that a new election would increase the Nazi vote and strengthen his own position. The election campaign gave the opportunity for an increase in terror by the SA; altogether 69 people died during the five-week campaign.

In this atmosphere of terror and repression, the Nazi Party continued to promote itself as the party that was combating the violence rather than creating it; the situation was blamed on the economic conditions and KPD terrorism.

A key moment of this campaign came with the burning down of the Reichstag building on 27 February. A Dutch Communist called Marinus van der Lubbe was arrested and charged with causing the fire. It has been widely assumed that the Nazis set der Lubbe up

to carry out the crime in order to be able to blame the Communists; however, no definitive evidence has actually emerged to prove this. Nevertheless, the incident certainly benefited the Nazis; they were able to claim that this was the onset of a Communist plot to start a revolution in Germany. Large numbers of Communists were arrested and, via the Decree for the Protection of People and State, most civil and political liberties were suspended. The decree was supposed to be temporary but in fact it remained in force until 1945.

Activity 2

ATL Thinking skills

What is the message of these election statistics for March 1933 regarding support for the Nazis?

Party	Left		Centre		Right		
	KPD	SPD	State Party	Centre Party	DVP	DNVP	NSDAP (Nazis)
Number of seats	81	120	5	73	2	52	288
% of vote	12.3	18.25	0.85	11.25	1.1	8.0	43.9

The election result saw the Nazis increase their vote from 33.1 per cent to 43.9 per cent, thereby gaining 288 seats in the Reichstag. However it is significant that, even with the intimidation and terror that accompanied the election campaign, they still failed to win the support of even half of the electorate, and could only claim a majority in the Reichstag with the help of the 52 seats won by the DNVP.

The Enabling Act, March 1933

Hitler decided to introduce the Enabling Act, which would allow him to make laws without the approval of the Reichstag, and without reference to the president, for a period of four years. However, as this was a change in the constitution, it needed a two-thirds majority to get it passed. The Communist Party delegates had already been excluded following the Reichstag fire and Hitler had the support of the DNVP. He just needed the support of the Centre Party, and this he secured by giving them the reassurance that he would not use his powers without first consulting the president. Only the SPD voted against the Enabling Act. Thus Hitler now had full executive and legislative powers.

Activity 3

ATL Thinking and communication skills

1. Read through Sources A to C. In what ways did the Decree for the Protection of People and State (Source A) and the Enabling Act (Source C) undermine the Weimar Constitution?
2. How does Hitler justify the Enabling Act in Source B?

Source A

Decree for the Protection of People and State, 27 February 1933.

On the basis of Article 48, Section 2, of the German Constitution, the following is decreed as a defensive measure against Communist acts of violence that endanger the state:

1

Articles 114, 115, 117, 118, 123, 124, and 153 of the Constitution of the German Reich are suspended until further notice. Thus, restrictions on personal liberty, on the right of free expression of opinion, including freedom of the press, on the right of assembly and the right of association, violations of the privacy of postal, telegraphic and telephonic communications, and warrants for house searches, orders for confiscations as well as restrictions on property are permissible beyond the legal limits otherwise prescribed.

2

If any state fails to take the necessary measures to restore public safety and order, the Reich government may temporarily take over the powers of the highest state authority.

Source B**A speech by Hitler given in the Sports Palace, March 1933.**

For fourteen years the parties of disintegration, of the November Revolution, have seduced and abused the German people. For fourteen years they wreaked destruction, infiltration, and dissolution. Considering this, it is not presumptuous of me to stand before the nation today, and plead to it: German people, give us four years' time and then pass judgement upon us. German people, give us four years, and I swear to you, just as we, just as I have taken this office, so shall I leave it. I have done it neither for salary nor for wages; I have done it for your sake!

Quoted in Richard Evans (2004). *The Coming of the Third Reich*. Penguin Books, p. 324.

Source C**The Enabling Act, 24 March 1933.**

Article 1. National laws can be enacted by the Reich Cabinet as well as in accordance with the procedure established in the Constitution.

Article 2. The national laws enacted by the Reich Cabinet may deviate from the Constitution as long as they do not affect the position of the Reichstag and the Reichsrat. The powers of the President remain undisturbed.

Article 3. The national laws enacted by the Reich Cabinet shall be prepared by the Chancellor and published in the Reichsgesetzblatt. They come into effect, unless otherwise specified, the day after their publication. Articles 68–77 of the Constitution do not apply to the laws enacted by the Reich Cabinet.

The consolidation of power, March 1933 to August 1934

The Enabling Act provided the basis for Hitler's dictatorship, which was established between March 1933 and August 1934. The process by which Hitler gained control was known as *Gleichschaltung* (coordination). It involved taking over or 'coordinating' as many aspects of German life as possible along Nazi lines so that the government had control of all key aspects of society. The priority in this process was to secure political supremacy, which meant that the first moves were made against the federal states, the political parties, the independent trade unions and the civil service. He then went on to deal with activists within his own party.

The federal states

There was a tradition of independence among the various states of Germany. Indeed, the Weimar constitution had agreed on a federal structure with 17 *Länder* (states) in which a large number of powers were devolved to regional governments. For Hitler, who wanted a strong unified Germany, this situation had to change. Thus, several laws were passed to centralize power:

- 31 March 1933: a law dissolved the regional parliaments and replaced them with Nazi dominated assemblies.
- 7 April 1933: Reich Governors were created to oversee the government of each state.
- 30 January 1934: regional parliaments were abolished; all state governments were formally subordinated to the central government.

The Nazi Party now used Nazi leaders called *Gauleiters* to control local government.

Political parties

Hitler's aim was a one-party state; political parties clearly could not be allowed to continue. In the course of the spring and summer of 1933 these were either outlawed or they dissolved themselves:

- The power of the Communists had effectively been destroyed since the Reichstag fire.
- The Social Democrats had been subjected to increasing repression and attacks by the SA since January 1933 and were officially banned on 22 June; following the attack on trade unionists, brutal acts of repression were carried out against Social Democrats all over Germany.
- The other major parties then agreed to dissolve themselves in late June.
- The Catholic Centre Party followed on 5 July.

The 'Law against the Formation of New Parties', 14 July 1933, formally established a one-party state. The sole function of the Reichstag was now just to approve the decisions of the Nazi government.

Activity 4



In pairs, discuss the extent to which you agree with historian Klaus Fischer's verdict that, '*it is both amazing and appalling how meekly the German parties surrendered to Hitler's tyranny*' (1995. *Nazi Germany*. Constable, p. 280).

The trade unions

Hitler's policy of *Gleichschaltung* also meant that powerful rival organizations had to be eliminated. On 1 May, which socialists had already designated as International Workers' Day, the Nazis declared a national holiday, thus giving the impression to workers that they were prepared to accept and cooperate with the trade unions. However, the Nazis used the holiday to occupy trade union premises, confiscate funds and arrest leaders, destroying almost overnight the previously powerful German trade union movement. In the place of independent trade unions, the German Labour Front (DAF) was set up under Robert Ley, claiming to represent the interests of all Germany's workers (see page 49). However, this was more of an instrument of control, and rights such as negotiating wages and conditions of work were removed.

The civil service

As discussed in the previous chapter, the civil service had remained a conservative force within the Weimar government and it had opposed the more liberal, democratic ideas of the Republic. Many thus welcomed the arrival of the Nazis, seeing this as a return to the authoritarian rule of the Kaiser. However, the Nazis had no intention of being constrained by civil service officials. Many local officials were replaced by Nazi officials, and Nazi Party officials were placed in government offices to ensure that the others followed Nazi orders. The success of *Gleichschaltung* within the legal system can be seen by the oath taken at a mass meeting held in front of the Supreme Court building in Leipzig in October 1933; 10,000 lawyers gave the Nazi salute and publicly swore to '*strive as German jurists to follow the course of our Führer to the end of our days*'.

The Church

Nazi ideology posed fundamental challenges to the beliefs of Christianity. However, initially Hitler attempted to win over the support of the Protestant and Catholic Churches by indicating that they could be accommodated within the Nazi state. Key in this process was the Concordat that was signed between the papacy and the regime and which was an attempt to safeguard the position of the Catholic Church under the Nazis. In this agreement the Nazis guaranteed the Catholic Church religious freedom and full control over its own education and its property and legal rights. The papacy in return said that it would not interfere in politics and would give diplomatic recognition to the Nazi government.

The Nazi government had no intention of keeping to this agreement; however, it served the purpose of reassuring the Church while the dictatorship was being established.

Activity 5

ATL Thinking skills

1. Read the views of the historians in the two sources below and make a list of the factors that each one identifies for explaining Hitler's success by the end of 1933.
2. What other factors could you add to this list?

Source A

“By mid 1933, the ‘organisational space’ which any effective political opposition needs had been removed. Despite Nazi myths of a ‘legal’ revolution this had been done with a level of force, repression and brutality which had far exceeded the measures undertaken in consolidating Mussolini’s rule in fascist Italy. The violence had destroyed the Left, and had impressed the ruthlessness of the new regime on the rest of society.

Ian Kershaw (2000). *Hitler*. Routledge, p. 71.

Source B

“Why did the opposition give up? The most obvious reason is that it had no choice. The parties of the left were smashed by the government’s emergency powers. The Communists, for example, were prevented from taking their seats in the Reichstag, and the SPD were banned outright in June. The Centre Party gave up any pretence of political opposition in return for a guarantee of religious freedom, and actually liquidated itself voluntarily. Even the DNVP was unable to keep itself afloat as its leaders found it increasingly obvious that they no longer had any hold on the political monster they had helped create. President Hindenburg, no admirer of the party system, made no attempt to interfere with Hitler’s assault on the opposition, for fear of provoking a more violent and radical constitutional upheaval. But the middle of 1933 the only remaining obstacle between Hitler and total power was the German army.

Stephen Lee (2008). *The European Dictatorships*. Routledge, p. 160.

The SA and the Night of the Long Knives

Activity 6

ATL Thinking skills

What is the message of this poster?



Photomontage by John Heartfield, published in Prague, 19 July 1934.

Hitler was increasingly concerned with the activities of the SA, who were determined to continue the process of *Gleichschaltung* from below. Hitler had supported and encouraged the actions of the SA during the process of gaining power and during the first half of 1933, when they played a key role in eliminating opposition. However, by July 1933 he was concerned that he could no longer control the activities of the SA, which had become a rather large, unruly organization. Maintaining control was essential if he was to keep the support of the conservative forces whose backing he still needed. He thus declared that the Nazi revolution was over and that the process of *Gleichschaltung* had been completed. For Ernst Röhm, the leader of the SA, however, this was most certainly not the case. He believed that it was time for a 'Second Revolution'. Why was this?

The SA represented the more radical wing of the party. Its membership was drawn largely from the working class. It put more emphasis on the socialist elements of the Nazi Party programme and, unlike Hitler, was not concerned with upsetting the powerful conservative elites in German society, such as the industrialists. Having played such a key role in the Nazi rise to power, they had an expectation that they would gain more directly from the Nazi rule. Röhm also wanted to create a 'people's army', merging the SA with the German army. This last point meant that the SA was a threat to the army whose support Hitler needed if he was to attain his ultimate objective of military expansion and conquest.

Activity 7



Thinking and communication skills

Read this extract – which is Ernst Röhm's viewpoint, taken from a conversation that he had with friends – and then answer the questions below:

“Adolf is rotten. He's betraying all of us. He only goes around with reactionaries. His old comrades aren't good enough for him. So he brings in these East Prussian generals. They're the ones he pals around with now. ... Adolf knows perfectly well what I want. I've told him often enough. Not a second pot of the Kaiser's army, made with the same old grounds. Are we a revolution or aren't we? ... Something new has to be brought in, understand? A new discipline. A new principle of organisation. ... [we have] the chance to do something really new and great, something that will turn the world upside down – it's a chance in a lifetime, but Hitler keeps putting me off.

Quoted in Klaus Fischer (1995). *Nazi Germany*. Constable, p. 286.

Work in pairs. Refer back to the 25-point programme of the Nazi Party on page 29, in the previous chapter.

1. Which of these points would Röhm have wanted to see implemented?
2. Why did Hitler no longer want to follow through with such aims?

When Röhm's opponents fabricated evidence of an SA plot against the government, Hitler instigated the Night of the Long Knives. On 30 June 1934, Röhm and other key members of the SA were murdered by the loyal SS. It was also the chance to settle old scores; Schleicher and Strasser, who had both plotted against Hitler in 1932, were killed; Papen was put under house arrest. The results of this coup are summarized below by the historians Ian Kershaw and Laurence Rees.

Activity 8



Thinking skills

Source A

“The bloody repression of part of his own Movement was a critical moment in the consolidation of Hitler's power. In the first instance it removed the one force within the regime potentially capable of offering serious opposition from within or, more likely, of prompting opposition from other sources (especially the army) which could have toppled Hitler. After 30 June 1934, the SA amounted to no more than a useful but wholly loyal activist agency which... expended its violent energies in attacks on helpless minorities rather than tackling the wielders of state power. From the SA's loss of power, the main profit went to the SS – Hitler's pretorian guard, and unlike his mass army, an utterly loyal force. The power shift within the regime had, in other words, notably enhanced Hitler's own position.

This was further consolidated in that the elimination of the detested and troublesome SA leadership bound the conservative power-groups more tightly to Hitler, and to the concept of the 'Führer state'. The mutual dependence of the traditional elites and the Nazi leader was reinforced.

Ian Kershaw (2000), *Hitler*. Routledge, p. 73.

Source B

“The Night of the Long Knives was a breathtaking example of the total breakdown of the rule of law in Germany. None of those who suffered was tried in court. None of the alleged evidence against them was tested. None of them was given a chance to speak in their own defence. And yet Hitler's decision to order the murder of so many of his old comrades was widely welcomed. General Blomberg, in a statement on 1 July, said, 'The Führer with military decision and outstanding courage has himself attacked and destroyed the traitors and murderers'. ... It was the most telling example yet of a paradox at the heart of Hitler's rule. Many people were frightened of the violence that abounded in German society – perpetrated both by the Communists and the SA. The majority longed for peace and stability. Now Hitler appeared to be about to deliver that peace and stability – but only by the use of more violence. Thus many who decried violence came to support it – even welcome it.

Because of his control of the media, Hitler was able to spin the events of 30 June 1934 in a way that was extremely advantageous for him. The fact that he had acted against elements of the Nazi Party enabled him to position himself as the protector of all Germany, rather than the protector of just his own narrow self-interests.

Laurence Rees (2012). *The Dark Charisma of Adolf Hitler*. Ebury Press, pp. 126–27.

1. How, according to Sources A and B, did the Night of the Long Knives help to consolidate Hitler's power?
2. What factors allowed him to come out so completely unscathed from this act of violence?

When Hindenburg died on 2 August, there was no opposition when Hitler merged the offices of Chancellor and President, taking the title of *Führer* (leader). The army aligned themselves behind Hitler and agreed to take a personal oath of loyalty: 'I swear before God to give my unconditional obedience to Adolf Hitler, *Führer* of the Reich and of the German People, Supreme Commander and will be ready as a brave soldier to risk my life at any time for this oath.' As Fischer writes, this secured 'the unlimited nature of Hitler's dictatorship'.

Activity 9



Thinking and communication skills

In pairs, go back over pages 38 to 42 and discuss how each of the following factors contributed to Hitler's consolidation of power. Find evidence to support each factor and consider which one/s were the most important:

- terror and intimidation
- use of the law
- propaganda
- support from conservative forces
- weakness of opposition.

Essay planning

To what extent was Hitler's consolidation of power between 1933 and 1939 the result of legal methods?

Command term: To what extent

Topic: Hitler's consolidation of power

Concept: Causation

There is a temptation in this essay to write a chronological narrative of the key events that led to Hitler's consolidation of power. However, as you know, this approach will keep in you Levels 1 and 2 of the mark scheme! Make sure you base your paragraphs around the themes identified in the activity above.

Intro: Show your understanding of the relevance of the dates given in the question.

Identify the key themes around which you will structure your essay, and set out your key argument, i.e. which of these factors, other than legal methods, you think are the most important in allowing Hitler to consolidate his power.

Here are some possible paragraph headings. Decide what evidence you could give to support each point. Look back also at the views of the different historians included so far in this chapter; could you incorporate any of these views into your paragraphs?

Paragraph 1: Start with the theme identified in the question.

There is no doubt that Hitler was able to consolidate power by using legal methods. One of his first actions was to pass the Enabling Law...

Paragraph 2: *However, the Nazis combined legality with the use of violence, intimidation and terror...*

Paragraph 3: *Hitler was helped in his consolidation of power by the continued support of the traditional elites...*

Paragraph 4: *Hitler's success in getting rid of opposition was also key...*

The opposition groups also failed to take action because...

Paragraph 5: Are there any other factors that you consider important for explaining Hitler's consolidation of power?

Conclusion: Based on the weight of your evidence in the main body of your essay, answer the question directly. Were legal methods the most important or has your essay proved that other factors were equally or more important?



For top markbands for Paper 3 essays:

Introduction and main body paragraphs

Responses are clearly focused.

The question is fully addressed and implications are considered.

The essay is well structured and the material effectively organized.

Supporting knowledge is detailed, accurate, relevant to the question and used to support arguments.

Arguments are clear, well developed and consistently supported with evidence.

There is evaluation of different perspectives.

Conclusion

The conclusion is clearly stated and it is consistent with the evidence presented.

The domestic policies of Nazi Germany

Timeline of events - 1933–39

1933	30 Jan	Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany
	1 April	National boycott of Jewish shops and businesses
	7 April	Civil service law permits removal of Jews and other opponents
	June	Marriage Loan scheme is introduced
	July	Law for Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring
		The SA are ordered to attend church services
		The Catholic Church and the government sign a concordat
1934		A protest Confessional Church breaks away from the state-supported Reich Church
	Sept	New Plan to control imports
	Oct	German Labour Front (DAF) replaces trade unions
1935	Sept	Nuremberg Laws
1936	April	Professional activities of Jews banned or restricted
	July–Aug	Olympic Games held in Berlin; anti-Jewish campaign temporarily halted
	Oct	Announcement of Four Year Plan
1938	Mar	Jews have to register their possessions
	July	Jews have to carry identity cards; Jewish doctors, dentists, lawyers forbidden to treat Aryans
	Aug	Jewish men have to take 'Israel' as a middle name and women have to take 'Sarah'
	Oct	Jews have 'J' stamped in passport
	Nov	Kristallnacht
		Jews excluded from schools and universities
1939		Start of plan to kill physically and mentally handicapped patients
	Jan	Reich Office for Jewish Emigration established
	April	Jews forced into ghettos

Nazi social policies: did the Nazis bring about a social revolution in Germany?

Key concepts: *Change and consequence*

“Our age is once more acquiring creative momentum, it is gaining depth, direction and future. The creative dynamic, the basic quality of the Germanic-Western cultural soul is awakening in the dawn of its fourth day of creation in a new type of human being.”

A Nazi supporter.

One of Hitler's key aims was to create a **Volksgemeinschaft** or people's community. This was partly based on an idealized past in which individuals were self-disciplined and put community before themselves. In the new Nazi community, Germans would be reunited through their blood, race and ideology and their loyalty to the German nation and its leader. In order to achieve this goal, the Nazis used blatant propaganda and indoctrination; however, they also attempted to reorganize society and the everyday experience of German people.

How far did German youth conform to Nazi ideals?

“The Jews are aliens in Germany. In 1933 there were 66,060,000 inhabitants of the German Reich of whom 499,862 were Jews. What is the percentage of Jews in Germany?

A mathematics problem from a school textbook.

The starting point for inculcating German people with the skills and values needed for the *Volksgemeinschaft* was Germany's youth, who could be indoctrinated via education in schools and through the Hitler Youth movement

Within education, teachers were brought under the control of the Nazis. Anyone considered to be unreliable on political or racial grounds was dismissed and teachers were pressured into joining the National Socialist Teachers' League (NSLB). Meanwhile, the curriculum was controlled by the Ministry of Education to ensure that all aspects of a child's education were focused on the Nazi aim of producing '*politically-conscious people who sacrifice and serve with every thought and deed, who are rooted in the nation, and who are totally and indivisibly anchored to the history and destiny of its state*' (Wilhelm Frick, minister of the interior). This involved the following:

- the introduction of new areas of study such as racial sciences. This included studying the differences between races and the concept of evolution and the 'survival of the fittest';
- teaching traditional subjects to emphasize German superiority. For example, geography was used to develop the concept of *Lebensraum* (see page 30 in Chapter 1) and German racial superiority. In mathematics, students were given problems that promoted Nazi views on issues such as the inferiority of Jews (see quote at the start of this section) or the wastefulness of resources being spent on those with mental problems. In history, the emphasis was on war and the heroic actions of German soldiers as well as the betrayal of Germany at the end of the First World War and the evils of the Treaty of Versailles;
- devoting a large part of the curriculum to physical education to ensure that boys developed both fitness and aggression for future military service. For girls there was also an emphasis on physical education to ensure that they could fulfil their roles as healthy wives and mothers of workers and soldiers;
- putting emphasis on community service through various work schemes. This helped to encourage a sense of community as well as providing a source of cheap labour.

The Hitler Youth

The propaganda in schools was reinforced during activities in the Hitler Youth. By 1936, all youth organizations had been banned or taken over by the *Hitler Jugend* (Hitler Youth) for boys and the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (League of German Girls). The aim of the Hitler Youth movement was to educate children '*physically, intellectually and morally in the spirit of National Socialism to serve the nation and the community*'. All members had to take an oath of loyalty to Hitler and activities included military drills for boys as well as sports and camping trips away from home.

Such opportunities provided new freedoms for many children as well as genuine feelings of comradeship and community, and were thus greeted with enthusiasm. By the late 1930s, however, there were signs that the Hitler Youth movement was losing its popularity; indeed, it seems that many young people conformed to avoid sanctions, while others developed their own youth subcultures; these consisted of local 'pirate' groups in the cities, and 'swing' groups who enjoyed dancing and music – in particular US swing music.



A Nazi poster. The caption at the bottom reads, 'A nation helps itself!'

Aryan

The Nazis believed in a hierarchy of races. Hitler used the term 'Aryan' to describe what he considered to be the most superior and most 'pure' race on earth. The ideal Aryan was strong and lean and had pale skin, blond hair and blue eyes.

Activity 10



Research and communication skills

Work in pairs or groups to investigate more about the young people in Nazi Germany and the impact of Nazi policies.

Task One

Find examples of activities for both the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls. Also, find first-hand accounts from German children about the youth movements. Try to find both negative and positive accounts.

Task Two

Research the youth movements that challenged the Nazi drive for youth conformity. The most famous of these include:

- the Edelweiss Pirates
- the Swing movement
- the White Rose movement.

For each group, research its membership, its aims and its activities, and the reaction of the Nazi regime.

Task Three

What are your conclusions as to the success of the Nazi regime in indoctrinating the youth of Germany?

How did Nazis change the position of women in society?

... her world is her husband, her family, her children and her home. ... We do not consider it correct for the woman to interfere in the world of the man...

Hitler, 1934.

Activity 11



Thinking skills

1. What is the message of the poster in the left-hand margin regarding the roles of men and women in Nazi Germany?
2. What other messages does this poster convey about Nazi beliefs concerning the ideal German society that needed to be created/restored?

Under Weimar, women had enjoyed considerable political emancipation, education and employment opportunities. By 1933, women made up one-tenth of the members of the Reichstag; there were also 100,000 women working as teachers and 3,000 working as doctors. However, while Hitler stressed that women were very important to society, this importance lay in their roles as mothers and wives. Women were to be devoted to the three K's: *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* (children, kitchen, Church). This meant reversing any trends towards emancipation made during the Weimar era. Opportunities in education were reduced and they were barred from key professions.

A key priority for the Nazi regime was to raise the birth rate, which had dropped during the 1920s. This was essential if it was to expand German territory and populate these new lands with pure Germans. Thus various incentives were set up to encourage women to give up work and to have more children. Marriage loans were made to couples (with suitably **Aryan** characteristics) if wives stopped working after marriage; for each child born, the amount of the loan that had to be repaid was reduced by a quarter. Family allowances were increased dramatically and women who had four or more children received medals. In addition, birth control was discouraged and abortions were prohibited.

Activity 12

ATL Thinking skills

Research Nazi expectations for women with regard to fashion, lifestyle and their role in society. What methods were used by the regime to try to get women to follow these expectations?

How successful were Nazi policies towards women?

Germany's birth rate did increase in the 1930s; however, it still remained lower than it had been in the early 1920s. Meanwhile, the impact of economic recovery and rapid rearmament meant that there was a labour shortage. This had the effect of bringing more women into industrial employment; indeed, there were more women working in 1939 than there had been in 1933. However, highly qualified women never regained their former status and jobs.

How successful were Nazi policies towards workers?

The working class was the largest social group in German society. Given their previously strong attachment to trade unions (which had been abolished in 1933) and left-wing parties, it was an important challenge for the Nazi regime to get them to accept the *Volksgemeinschaft*.

The aim of the German Labour Front (*Deutsche Arbeitsfront* DAF), which was established in place of the trade unions, was not to fight for workers' rights or pay; its aim was to control workers and increase production, and also to win workers over to Nazism. Key to this last aim was the establishment by the DAF in November 1933 of two organizations. The first of these, the Beauty of Work (*Schönheit der Arbeit* or SdA) focused on providing good meals and new bathrooms, and making work areas more pleasant. Such changes allowed the DAF to show that workers were fit, happy and healthy and thus satisfied with the government and their work.

The second organization, '**Strength through Joy**' (*Kraft durch Freude* or KdF) improved workers' leisure activities by providing subsidized activities such as holidays, theatre and cinema visits with the aim that workers would 'gain strength for their work by experiencing joy in their leisure'. However, by ensuring that workers would have both work and leisure time organized, Strength through Joy also ensured that workers had no time to involve themselves in anti-State activities. The belief was that if they were fully involved in community activities, they would increasingly come to see themselves as part of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Nevertheless, Mary Fulbrook writes, 'Although many workers were prepared somewhat cynically to enjoy any holidays or outings offered to them by organizations such as Strength through Joy, few really swallowed much of the propaganda about the "harmonious factory community" and the like'.

The reality of Strength through Joy.

One of the programmes set up by Strength through Joy was a scheme for workers to purchase a Volkswagen (or 'People's Car'). Workers made payments towards buying the car; however, none of them ever received one as the factories that were supposed to produce the Volkswagen were turned over to war work in the late 1930s. Only the military staff received the Volkswagens that had been built; workers' payments went towards the cost of the war.



How far did the Nazis integrate the Churches into the *Volksgemeinschaft*?

Activity 13

ATL Thinking skills



John Heartfield, 'On the founding of the State Church' (June 1933). The caption reads: 'The cross was not heavy enough.'

What is the message of this poster?

This issue provided a serious challenge for the Nazis since the Germans were divided by faith. As mentioned on page 42, the Nazis had initially taken measures to reassure the Protestants, who represented the majority of the Germans, and they had guaranteed the independence of the Catholic Church by signing the Concordat in 1933. However, even by mid-1933, it was clear that the Nazis were going to interfere in religion.

The Nazi regime gave support to a growing movement among Protestants that was known as the German Christians (*Deutsch Christen*). This movement believed that it was possible to reconcile Protestant and Nazi beliefs and it established a new Reich Church with the aim of combining all Protestants within one structure. Ludwig Müller was the first Reich Bishop; he abolished all elected bodies within the Church and reorganized it on the 'leadership principle'. However, the actions of the German Christians created much opposition. In September 1933, over 100 pastors created the Confessional Church, which upheld orthodox Protestantism and rejected any attempt to link it to Nazi beliefs. This Church was led by Pastor Niemöller and it had the support of about 7,000 pastors out of 17,000.