

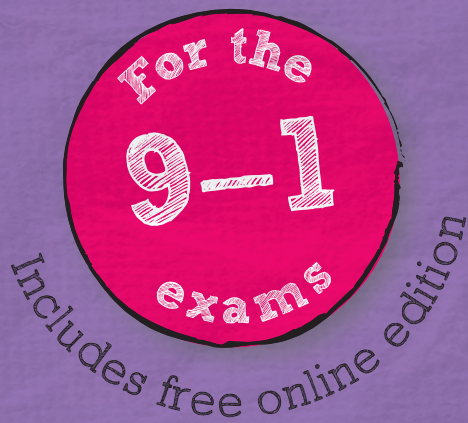
**REVISE AQA GCSE (9–1)**

# **History**

**GERMANY, 1890–1945:**

**DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIP**

# **REVISION GUIDE AND WORKBOOK**



**Pearson**



**REVISE AQA GCSE (9–1)**

# History

**GERMANY, 1890–1945:****DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIP**

## REVISION GUIDE AND WORKBOOK

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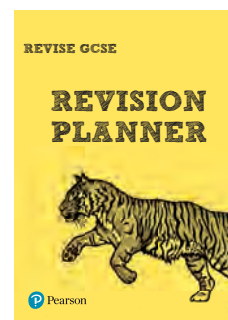
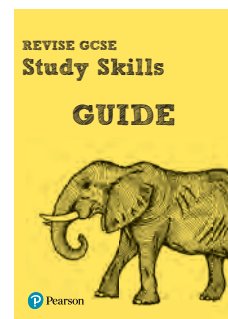
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### A small bit of small print

AQA publishes Sample Assessment Material and the Specification on its website. This is the official content and this book should be used in conjunction with it. The questions and revision tasks in this book have been written to help you revise the skills you may need for your assessment. Remember: the real assessment may not look like this.

# Ruling Germany

In 1871, the German-speaking states in Europe united to become a new country: Germany. The king of the largest and most powerful state, Prussia, became the **Kaiser** (Emperor) of Germany. Many of Prussia's ideas were very influential in the government of the new country.

## The constitution of the German Empire, 1890

### Kaiser

A **hereditary** monarch (also King of Prussia) as Head of State.

- Appointed the Chancellor.
- Could dismiss the Chancellor and/or the Chancellor's ministers.
- Power to dissolve the Reichstag.
- Commander of the armed forces.
- In charge of foreign policy.

**Hereditary** means passed from parent to child.

### The army

- Swore an oath of allegiance to the Kaiser.
- Highest ranks advised the Kaiser and therefore could play a political role.
- Officers were from upper classes, usually right wing and politically conservative.
- Depended on the Reichstag for funding but only every five years.

### Chancellor (Chief minister)

- Responsible only to the Kaiser.
- Appointed his own ministers to help him make government policies.
- Led the Bundesrat, and proposed topics and laws to be debated.
- Could choose to ignore the decisions of the Reichstag.

### Bundesrat (Federal Council)

- Made up of representatives from the 25 state governments of Germany but dominated by Prussia.
- Consulted with the Kaiser and Chancellor over government policies.
- Proposed laws that were then sent to the Reichstag. It then had to approve the laws passed by the Reichstag.

### Reichstag (Parliament)

- Made up of members elected by universal male suffrage (all men over 25 years of age) in a secret ballot every three years, or sooner if dismissed by the Kaiser.
- Passed, amended or rejected laws proposed by the Bundesrat/Chancellor.
- Could pass or reject a grant to fund the military every five years.

## Prussian militarism

Prussia had often been threatened by other countries so believed strongly in **militarism** (the idea that a country should have strong armed forces). This meant:

- a large army in proportion to its population size
- high government spending on maintaining the army at all times
- a strong culture of service and absolute loyalty to the king from the army
- the army was respected and admired by Prussian society.

## Influence of Prussian militarism

As Prussia was the dominant state within Germany, its militarism became very influential. Also, as the Prussian army was experienced, well equipped and well led, it was used as the basis for the German army. The army Generals had great influence in Germany's government, just as before, when Prussia was an independent state and they were advisers to the Kaiser. They had strong views on foreign policy, and would play an increasingly important role in government under Kaiser Wilhelm II, until they were in complete control of Germany in the final years of the First World War.

## Now try this

Define the following terms: Kaiser; Reichstag; Chancellor; Prussia; militarism.



# Kaiser Wilhelm II

Kaiser Wilhelm II had a lot of power, so his character, aims and beliefs were very important. However, he could not do whatever he wanted. The Chancellor and other ministers could shape policy. Also, his reign saw a growth in parliamentary democracy, which meant it could be difficult to get the Reichstag to pass legislation.

## Kaiser Wilhelm II

Became Kaiser in 1888, aged 29.

Grandson of Queen Victoria and related to many other European monarchs.

Passionate and energetic, but could be unstable; had a violent temper.

Very determined to get his own way.

Before becoming Kaiser, spent much of his time in the army and was very interested in all things military.



## Believed it was his destiny to rule.

Unlike previous Kaisers, he wanted a very active, hands-on role in ruling Germany, and had little regard for the Reichstag.

## Wilhelm's aims and beliefs

### A strong believer in militarism.

He held the army in very high regard. He frequently consulted his army generals and valued their advice. Indeed, they often directed policy, especially foreign policy, far more than his ministers, Reichstag or Bundesrat.

Wanted Germany to rival Britain as the most powerful country in the world. He wanted to build an overseas empire to add to Germany's wealth and power – pushed for **Weltpolitik** (world policy).

## Chancellors under Kaiser Wilhelm

- In theory, the Kaiser had a great deal of power as he could remove the Chancellor, ministers and the Reichstag when he wanted. However, Kaisers before Wilhelm II had not done so. They were happy for Chancellor Bismarck (who had held the office since 1871) to rule for them, which he did effectively.
- One of Wilhelm II's first actions as Kaiser was to dismiss Bismarck. He did not want anyone to be more powerful than himself and disagreed with Bismarck's **Realpolitik** (policies based on realism rather than idealism). He appointed Caprivi as Chancellor, but after Caprivi proposed some social reforms he too was dismissed in 1894.
- After this, Wilhelm II chose Chancellors and other ministers who had the same aims and beliefs as he did.

For more about social reforms, see page 3.

## The growth of parliamentary government

- Wilhelm II did not have complete power as Germany had an elected Reichstag, which was needed to pass legislation.
- Wilhelm II could dismiss the Reichstag (which he often did), but the elections were freely held so he could not directly influence the vote.
- Before 1890 political parties had started to develop and this continued under Wilhelm II's rule. This meant Reichstag members were loyal to other members of their party and not always totally loyal to the Kaiser.
- In reality, these political parties had little direct power to change things, but they acted as pressure groups on the government and influenced public opinion.

The growth of socialism and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) was particularly concerning to Kaiser Wilhelm II. The SPD frequently voted against the legislation the Kaiser wanted.

## Kaiser Wilhelm II's chancellors

- Caprivi 1890–94
- Hohenlohe 1894–1900
- Budlow 1900–09
- Bethmann Hollweg 1909–17

## Now try this

For each of the following, write a sentence explaining what, if any, influence they had on Kaiser Wilhelm II:

(a) army generals; (b) the Reichstag; (c) his Chancellors.

# Industrialisation and socialism

Under Kaiser Wilhelm II, Germany rapidly industrialised. This created wealth but only for a few. A growing number of industrial workers were becoming dissatisfied, leading to the growth of socialism. Industrialisation, therefore, brought great benefits to Germany but also created difficulties for the Kaiser.

## Industrialisation

**Industrialisation** in Germany began before 1890 but between 1890 and 1913 the speed of industrial growth was astonishing. This was partly due to rapid population growth, which provided workers as well as consumers.

- 👍 Traditional industries grew rapidly. Coal production rivalled Britain's by 1914. Iron and steel production was better.
- 👍 More coal, iron and steel helped to build and fuel railways, trains and ships, aiding communications and trade.
- 👍 By 1914, Germany was also out-producing the rest of Europe in 'newer' industries such as electrical goods and chemicals.
- 👍 Generally, people became wealthier and standards of living improved.

Industrialisation is the process of moving from a largely agricultural economy to one based on manufacturing industrial goods.

- 👎 Industrialisation was accompanied by rapid urbanisation as people moved to towns and cities for work. Living conditions were poor; outbreaks of diseases such as cholera were common.
- 👎 Although most people shared in increased prosperity and unemployment was very low, the gaps between rich and poor grew wider.
- 👎 Agricultural production did not increase at the same rate so more food was imported. Food was expensive.
- 👎 High rates of immigration, mostly from Eastern Europe, provided more workers but fuelled social problems as hatred of 'foreigners' (and especially **anti-Semitism** – prejudice against Jewish people) grew.

## The growth of socialism

In Germany, **socialism** (the idea that the profits from industry should be shared equally between everyone in society) had been growing alongside industrialisation since unification in 1871 and continued to grow in popularity after 1890. Socialism was greatly feared by the ruling and middle classes. It became an increasing problem for the Kaiser because he needed the Reichstag to pass new laws.

### The Social Democratic Party (SPD)

The **SPD** (a political party that wanted more socialist policies and rights for workers in Germany) attracted increasing support from voters. In every election from 1890, the SPD won the most votes but it was not until 1912 that it held the most seats in the Reichstag. SPD members of the Reichstag consistently voted against some of the Kaiser's desired laws. He could dismiss the Reichstag, which he did on several occasions, but the same or new members of the SPD were voted back in again.

## Social reform

There were some efforts to meet the worker's concerns:

- In 1891, employing children under 13 years old, women working over 11 hours a day and businesses operating on a Sunday were all banned.
- Throughout the period, old age pensions and welfare provisions for those too ill or injured to work (introduced in 1890) were improved.
- After 1900, industrial courts to settle disputes between workers and their employers were made compulsory in towns of over 20,000 people.

Many of these reforms were put forward by Chancellor Caprivi, who believed that they would ease the pressure from socialism. However, Kaiser Wilhelm II thought Caprivi was too socialist and dismissed him in 1894.

## Now try this

Give an example of how industrialisation caused difficulties for Kaiser Wilhelm II.



# The Navy Laws

Increasing the German armed forces was a central part of Weltpolitik. Wilhelm II was convinced that building a powerful navy was vitally important. From 1898 to 1912 a series of Navy Laws were passed that extended the size and power of the German navy. As well as worrying some other countries, the laws had a profound impact within Germany, and caused further difficulties for Wilhelm II.

## Timeline

**1898** German Navy League established First Naval Law – approval to increase the size of the navy by seven battleships, taking the total to 19

**1897** Kaiser appointed Admiral von Tirpitz Navy Secretary

**1900** Second Naval Law – approval to double the size of the navy to 38 battleships

**1904** Entente Cordiale agreement between Britain and France

**1906** Third Naval Law – another six battleships  
• Britain launches the first dreadnought  
• Amendments to the Naval Laws; some of the battleships are changed to dreadnoughts

**1907** Triple Entente between Britain, France and Russia

**1908** Further amendments to Naval Laws approving 21 dreadnoughts

**1912** Further amendments to Naval Laws further increasing the size of the fleet

## Reasons for the Navy Laws

Partly due to the influence of his new Navy Secretary, Alfred von Tirpitz, Wilhelm pushed his government to increase the size and power of the navy. Wilhelm was convinced that it would:

- lead to further industrial growth
- protect and potentially increase Germany's empire
- be a great symbol of Germany's power in the world
- rival the Royal Navy of Britain.

## The Navy League

A patriotic group which aimed to popularise the navy and naval expansion and represented the navy as a symbol of German greatness. It was supported by many industrialists and soon had over 200,000 members. Tirpitz helped set it up and it certainly helped him get the First and Second Naval Laws passed by the Reichstag with substantial majorities.

## The domestic importance of the Navy Laws

Britain's response to the Navy Laws helped create a greater fear within Germany which generated support for the Kaiser's other policies.

The huge cost was born by raising taxes (mostly indirect taxes which hit the lower classes more) and borrowing money.

Helped industries and businesses by creating more work and employing more people.

Created conflict between the Kaiser and army leaders who argued that the army should have the money allocated to the navy (though spending on the army increased as well).

**Domestic** is something within that country, as opposed to foreign or international.

The SPD was very opposed to the Navy Laws (mostly due to the expense). This won them some support but also helped the Kaiser present the SPD as the unpatriotic 'enemy' within.

The Navy Laws encouraged patriotism and nationalism and therefore helped win support for the policy of Weltpolitik.



SMS Westfalen, a German battleship built due to Navy Laws

## Now try this

Give **two** reasons why many Germans approved of the Navy Laws and **two** reasons why some (including some government ministers) were opposed to them.

# The difficulties of ruling Germany

Unlike his predecessors, Kaiser Wilhelm II played a central and very active role in ruling Germany for most of his reign. He had very strong ideas about what he wanted to achieve but, despite his huge power, he faced difficulties in ruling Germany and realising the policies he wanted.

## Growth of parliamentary government

Although the Kaiser could dismiss the Reichstag whenever he wanted, he did need it to pass legislation and could not directly influence elections. During his reign, political parties continued to develop and some held widely different views from the Kaiser, especially the SPD. Although the Kaiser generally got what he wanted, the growth of parliamentary government did see legislation delayed and sometimes amended, as well as influencing public opinion, which the Kaiser had to pay some attention to.



For a reminder about the growth of parliamentary government, look at page 2.

## Prussian militarism

The Kaiser was a keen supporter of militarism and this played a part in leading him into conflict with other major European powers. It also caused him problems domestically in two main areas:



- Leaders in the armed forces, especially army generals, played a role in government as advisers to the king. Wilhelm II listened to their advice, which sometimes caused him problems. His dependence on army leaders for advice increased during the First World War, so they were effectively ruling Germany by 1918.
- Maintaining and growing the size of the army were very expensive and the Kaiser needed the Reichstag's approval for military spending.

For a reminder about Prussian militarism, look at page 1.

## Kaiser Wilhelm II and the difficulties of ruling Germany

For a reminder about the Navy Laws, look at page 4.

## The Navy Laws

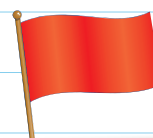
The Kaiser pushed for the navy to be greatly expanded and was therefore an enthusiastic supporter of the Navy Laws, but they still caused him some difficulties:



- Some members of the Reichstag and others in society were very opposed to the Navy Laws mostly because of the huge sums of money needed to enact them.
- Army leaders disapproved of the Navy Laws because they believed the navy was growing at the expense of the army, which brought them into conflict with the Kaiser.

## Socialism

The Kaiser, along with most of the ruling and middle classes, greatly feared socialism and the potential rise of workers to overthrow the existing social, economic and political system. Its growth led to a major difficulty for the Kaiser as socialists formed their own political party – the Social Democratic Party – which attracted increasing popular support throughout his reign, gaining more and more seats in the Reichstag. The SPD frequently made it difficult for the Kaiser to get the legislation he wanted.

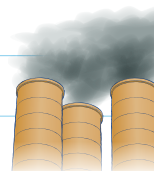


For a reminder about socialism, look at page 3.

## Industrialisation

As well as bringing wealth to Germany, which increased its power in Europe, industrialisation brought the Kaiser some problems:

- Industrialisation created many social problems, especially poor living and working conditions and conflict between workers due to immigration which the Kaiser and his government were expected to solve.
- Industrialisation led to the working classes taking a greater interest in politics which led to a growth in socialism.



For a reminder about industrialisation, look at page 3.

## Now try this

Which of the Kaiser's difficulties in ruling Germany would have worried him the most? Explain why.



# War weariness and economic problems

When the First World War broke out in August 1914, Germany was a wealthy nation and most Germans enjoyed a good standard of living. Many Germans were proud of their country and confident of a quick victory. By 1918, the situation was very different.

## War weariness in Germany

There had been a small number of protests against the war in Germany since 1915 but by the middle of 1918, many German civilians had had enough of the war.

- Thousands of men had been killed and many thousands more injured.
- There were serious food shortages in Germany, as well as other economic problems.
- They were exhausted with working the long hours demanded for the war effort.

The Battle of the Somme (July–November 1916) was one of the bloodiest of the war. At least 150,000 Germans were killed.

## War weariness in the military

As the war went on, more soldiers became disheartened with the war, although most remained confident of victory. However, in the summer of 1918 disillusionment became worse and desertions from the army dramatically increased as allied forces, reinforced by US troops, won battle after battle. Sailors in the navy were also becoming increasingly unhappy. This led to **mutiny** (rebellion) in October 1918, which in turn led to the Kaiser's abdication and Germany's defeat.

To learn more about Germany's defeat in the First World War, look at page 7.

## Economic problems in Germany, 1918

The British Royal Navy was preventing food supplies reaching Germany by sea. By 1918, there were serious food shortages. Many people were malnourished and surviving on turnips and bread.

As the Royal Navy prevented ships from reaching Germany, there were non-food shortages, such as raw materials needed by some industries and medicines.

Many working-class Germans had their wages restricted during the war, so were worse off in 1918 than they had been before the war. In contrast, a few businesses had made vast amounts of money for their owners, which made many workers angry.

Germany had printed more money to finance the war. However, it didn't have the gold to support it, so the value of the German mark was much lower in 1918 than it had been in 1914.



Many middle- and upper-class Germans had helped to pay for the war through buying war bonds from the government. The government would need to repay this money to keep their support.

Germany had lent money to its allies to help their war effort. However, these countries had serious economic problems themselves, so could not repay their debts.

The Allied blockade of Germany (which prevented goods entering or leaving) caused great suffering, with people reduced to scavenging. According to German statistics at the time nearly 763,000 Germans died of starvation during and immediately after the war. Another 150,000 died in the flu pandemic of autumn 1918.

As more soldiers died and others were too injured to work, the state had to support an increasing number of families through war pensions.

Germany had bought food and other goods from other countries on credit. These debts would have to be repaid.

As well as the reduction in manufactured goods to sell, trade had been severely disrupted by the war, and national income was two-thirds less than it had been before the war.

With the loss of workers and a focus on producing equipment for the war effort, industrial production in 1918 was about one-third less than before the war.

## Now try this

Which **three** aspects of Germany's economic problems in 1918 do you think would have worried ordinary Germans the most? Explain your answer.

# Germany's defeat

As the war continued, the power of Germany's military leaders grew. They made all the major decisions, sometimes without consulting the Kaiser. By 1918, Wilhelm II was little more than a figurehead.

## What led to Germany's defeat and the end of the monarchy?

On 29 September 1918, Field Marshal **Hindenburg** and General **Ludendorff** informed Kaiser Wilhelm II and members of the Bundesrat and Reichstag that Germany would never be able to win the war. They advised negotiating with the allies for an **armistice** (formal agreement to end the war) based on US President Wilson's conditions for peace, which demanded greater democracy in Germany.

On 3 October 1918, Kaiser Wilhelm II appointed a liberal man, Prince Max of Baden, as Chancellor and reluctantly transferred some of his powers to the Reichstag. A new government was formed, which took back control of Germany from the army leaders. This wasn't enough. President Wilson demanded Kaiser Wilhelm II should **abdicate** (give up his throne). In Germany popular demonstrations against the war increased.

On 28 October, sailors in the navy stationed at Kiel in Northern Germany refused to follow orders to attack the British Royal Navy. The mutiny quickly spread to other ports where more sailors refused to follow their orders.

The naval mutinies triggered other uprisings across Germany. Some workers went on strike and held large protests in the streets. Some soldiers refused to restore order. Within days, some local authorities had been overthrown; councils of workers and soldiers were running many towns and cities. Meanwhile, at the front, soldiers were deserting.

Kaiser Wilhelm II fled to the army headquarters in Spa, Belgium, on 9 November. Ministers tried to persuade him to abdicate. He refused. Army leaders then withdrew their support and on 10 November he fled to the Netherlands.

Germany was then declared a republic by Philipp Scheidemann, a leading member of the SPD, the largest party in the Reichstag. The November Revolution had begun. SPD leader **Friedrich Ebert** was made temporary leader of the country.

On 10 November, Ebert formed the **Council of People's Representatives** with leading socialists, to run the country until elections could be held. The army leaders agreed to work with the new government.

On 11 November, the new government signed the armistice. The First World War was over and Germany had been defeated.

## The 'stab in the back' legend

Throughout the war, many Germans believed it when they were told that Germany was winning. Although many were relieved the war was over, defeat was an unexpected shock. This led to the idea that the German army had been 'stabbed in the back' by politicians. Many historians believe that army leaders were largely responsible for this idea as, despite being in charge in 1918, they forced politicians to seek peace and left negotiations to them. They also never admitted defeat. As Germany had never been invaded, some found defeat difficult to accept.

## The Treaty of Versailles

Many Germans found the peace terms totally unacceptable. The new government had little choice but to sign the **Treaty of Versailles** (the official agreement that ended the war) but this made it unpopular. Terms included:

- accepting that Germany started the war (the War Guilt clause)
- paying **reparations** (financial amends)
- loss of land in Europe and all overseas colonies
- placing severe limits on the German military
- preventing Germany joining with Austria.

## Now try this

Give **three** reasons for the Kaiser's abdication in November 1918.



# Post-war problems

The post-war problems grew, resulting in the **hyperinflation** crisis of 1923.

## Reparations

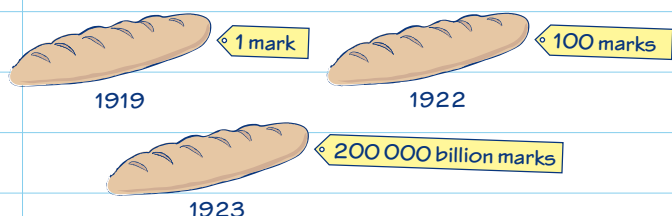
- By signing the Treaty of Versailles, the German government had agreed to pay reparations to the countries who had won the war.
- In 1921, the amount was decided: £6.6 billion marks over 66 years. This was a massive amount, especially considering Germany's huge economic problems. It increased German hatred of the Treaty and the government that had signed it.

For a reminder about Germany's economic problems, look at page 6.

- Moreover, Germany's inability to make the payments led to two huge crises in 1923: the invasion of the Ruhr and hyperinflation.

## Hyperinflation

When the price of goods increases it is called inflation; when it increases spectacularly, it is called hyperinflation.



## The invasion of the Ruhr and hyperinflation

- 1 In 1921 Germany managed to pay the first reparations instalment but in December 1922 Germany announced it could not afford to pay the second instalment.
- 2 In January 1923, French and Belgian troops invaded the Ruhr (part of Germany near France) taking control of all factories and mines. They took raw materials, machinery and manufactured goods back to France and Belgium in place of reparation payments due.
- 3 The German government urged **passive resistance** (non-violent opposition), so workers in the Ruhr went on strike. Some of them damaged goods and machinery.
- 4 French and Belgian soldiers arrested, expelled and even killed some striking workers. French and Belgian workers were brought in to replace the strikers.
- 5 The German economy was badly hit. It didn't have the produce from the Ruhr to sell (80% of its coal, iron and steel was in the region). It also had to pay the striking workers. The government decided to print more money, which led to hyperinflation. By November 1923, the German mark was worthless.

## The effects of hyperinflation

### Negative effects

- 👎 Some people could not afford essentials like bread.
- 👎 Wages rose, but not as quickly as prices.
- 👎 Some businesses went bankrupt. (Those that made money took over the struggling ones.)
- 👎 People with fixed or monthly incomes, such as pensioners, suffered most.
- 👎 Savings became worthless. This affected the middle classes most.
- 👎 People blamed the Weimar government, which made it even more unpopular.

### Positive effects

- 👍 Farmers benefited, as they were paid more for food.
- 👍 Some people and businesses could pay off loans and mortgages.
- 👍 Fixed rents for rooms or shops became very cheap.
- 👍 Foreign visitors could buy more for their money.

## Now try this

Make a list of all the ways in which Germany was affected by hyperinflation. Include the groups or types of person most affected.

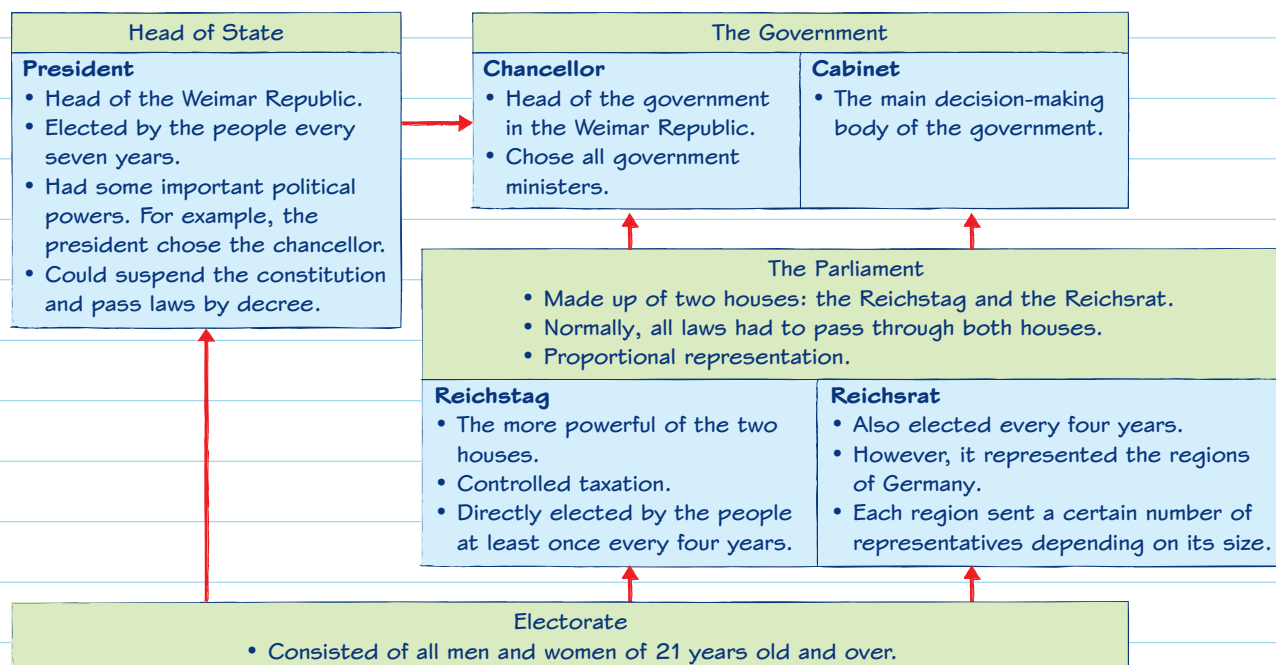
The effects of hyperinflation on Germany are important for understanding various topics, so make sure you revise them.

- Remember that middle-class people were worst affected.
- Include positive and negative effects of hyperinflation in your list.

# The Weimar government

Ebert and the Council of People's Representatives tried to establish order in the weeks and months after the armistice. Elections were held in January 1919 and the new National Assembly set to work on a new constitution for Germany. On 31 July 1919, the Weimar Republic officially began.

## The Weimar Constitution



## Elections in January 1919

Despite the chaos in Germany, there was a very high turnout in the elections for the new National Assembly on 19 January 1919. Moderate parties won the most votes:

- The SPD won 40%
- The Centre Party won 20%.

Ebert became the first President of Weimar Germany. Scheidemann became the Chancellor.

## Strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar constitution

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proportional representation made sure small parties had a fair share of seats.</li> <li>• Women able to vote as well as men.</li> <li>• Voting age reduced from 25 to 21.</li> <li>• No one group or person could have too much power.</li> <li>• There was an election for president every seven years.</li> <li>• Central government was more powerful than before, but local government still retained power in the regions.</li> <li>• The Reichsrat could regulate the power of the Reichstag by delaying new laws.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proportional representation led to coalition governments that were unstable, or found it difficult to have strong policies and often fell apart.</li> <li>• Lack of strong government led to weakness in a crisis that ended up with the president passing laws without the prior consent of the Reichstag. Article 48 of the constitution enabled the president to do this.</li> <li>• It was not the choice of the people so was not that popular.</li> </ul>

## Now try this

Describe **three** differences between the constitution of the German Empire in 1890 and the Weimar Constitution of 1919.



# Change and unrest, 1919–23

The new government faced challenges from extreme political parties that did not agree with the democratic approach being established in the Weimar Republic.

The Spartacists	The Freikorps	The National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazis)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Left-wing</li> <li>• Came from the Independent Socialist Party</li> <li>• Had Soviet backing</li> <li>• Led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht</li> <li>• Based in Berlin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right-wing</li> <li>• Made up of ex-soldiers who had kept their weapons</li> <li>• Had 250 000 men in March 1919</li> <li>• Organised by regular army</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right-wing</li> <li>• Hated democracy and communism</li> <li>• Wanted strong government with a strong military</li> <li>• Led by Adolf Hitler</li> <li>• Had a paramilitary force – the SA</li> </ul>

## The Spartacist Revolt

In January 1919, the Spartacists took over the government's newspaper and telegraph bureau, and tried to organise a general strike in Berlin. The Weimar government sent Freikorps units to put down the revolt.



There was street fighting in Berlin for several days before the revolt ended and Spartacist leaders were shot.

## The Kapp Putsch

In March 1920, Freikorps troops, fearing unemployment, decided to march on Berlin. Ebert asked the head of the army to resist the Freikorps but he refused. A nationalist politician, Dr Wolfgang Kapp, was put in charge by the rebels and the Weimar government fled Berlin. In order to stop the rebels, or Kapp Putsch as it became known, the government organised a national strike of trade unions. This caused such chaos that Kapp could not rule Germany and was forced to flee. The Weimar ministers returned.

## The Munich Putsch

The economic crisis of 1923 plus the success of Mussolini's Fascist Party in Italy in 1922, led to – **Hitler's Nazi Party** trying to seize power in Germany.

The Putsch failed because of lack of support. Hitler was imprisoned and the Nazi Party was banned. However, in the long term there were some positive consequences for Hitler and the Nazi Party:

- Hitler used his trial to publicise his views. He was given only a short prison term and released after nine months.
- While in prison he wrote *Mein Kampf* ('My Struggle'), a book outlining his political and racial ideas that became a bestseller.
- The failure of the Putsch made Hitler rethink the party's tactics. He realised he would have to win support through elections. The ban on the party was lifted by 1925.

For a reminder about the economic crisis of 1923, look at page 8.

## The events of the Putsch

### Timeline

#### 8 November 1923

- Hitler, with 600 SA, entered a beer hall in Munich where the Bavarian government was meeting. At gunpoint, Hitler forced government leaders to support him. Röhm took over local police and army headquarters.
- Ludendorff, behind Hitler's back, let the government leaders go.

#### 11 November 1923

- Hitler was found hiding at a friend's house and was arrested.

#### 9 November 1923

Hitler, 1000 SA and 2000 volunteer supporters marched on Munich town centre to declare Hitler President of Germany. They were met by state police. Someone opened fire and there was chaos. Ludendorff, Röhm and Streicher were arrested.

## Now try this

Describe the role of the Freikorps in the Kapp Putsch and the Spartacist Revolt.

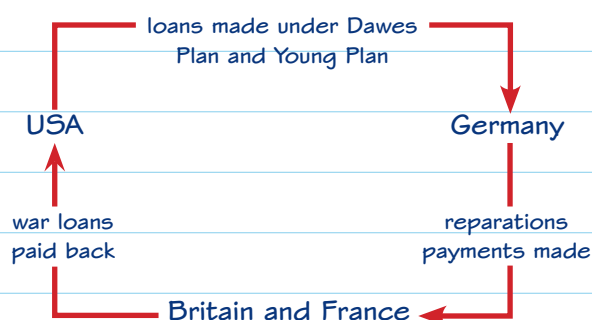
# Economic developments, 1924–29

Between 1924 and 1929, Germany recovered from the crisis of 1923 but there were still significant weaknesses in its economy. This period is known as the Stresemann era, due to the role in the recovery played by Gustav Stresemann, who was Chancellor August–November 1923, then Foreign Minister until 1929.

## Rentenmark

- ✓ In November 1923, Stresemann set up the Rentenbank and issued a new currency called the Rentenmark.
- ✓ Supply of these notes was tightly controlled. Their value was tied to the price of gold so it had real value. This encouraged more public confidence.
- ✓ In August 1924 the Reichsbank was given control of this new currency. It was renamed the Reichsmark. Hyperinflation was over.

## International loans after the First World War



The Reichsmark provided a much stronger basis for the recovery of jobs and businesses, but it could not bring back the losses experienced in the hyperinflation crisis.

## The Dawes Plan, 1924

In 1924, Charles Dawes, an American banker, designed a plan so Germany could pay its reparations.

- Instalments were temporarily reduced to £50 million a year.
- US banks agreed to make loans to German industry. The Allies felt more confident that they would get their reparations payments.



Gustav Stresemann (far left) at the London conference in 1924, where the Dawes Plan was agreed.

## Young Plan, 1929

In August 1929, a committee, set up by the Allies and led by an American banker called Owen Young, proposed a plan.

- 👍 The Young Plan reduced the total reparations debt from £6.6 billion to £2 billion.
- 👍 The payments could be made over a longer time, up until 1988.
- 👍 Lower reparations meant lower taxes for German people.
- 👍 There was a lot of opposition, especially from the extreme political parties, like the Nazis, who felt it was extending the burden for future generations.

## Improvements in the economy

The Weimar Republic's economy improved because:

- 👍 industrial output doubled by 1928 and finally passed pre-First World War levels
- 👍 employment and trade increased.

However, there were still problems:

- 👎 The extreme political parties were completely against Germany paying the reparations at all.
- 👎 The economic recovery depended on American loans, so remained fragile.

## Now try this

Write a paragraph to explain how the German economy was still vulnerable, despite improvements.



# International agreements

As well as the Dawes and Young Plans, Stresemann negotiated several more international agreements between 1925 and 1929 which were to have a positive impact on recovery in Germany.

## Impact of international agreements

The international agreements had a significant impact and helped Germany recover from post-war problems. The agreements:

- strengthened the confidence of the German people in the Weimar Republic
- improved Germany's relationship with other countries, therefore gaining their support and help – for example, economically
- helped economic recovery and reduced the hardships of the German people
- increased support for the moderate political parties who had made the agreements and reduced support for extremist parties such as the Nazis and Communists, therefore improving political stability.

However, problems remained and not everyone was pleased with the agreements.

## Locarno Pact 1925

This was an agreement between Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Belgium. In it:

- Germany agreed to its new border with France, improving relations with the French
- the Allies and Germany agreed to the permanent demilitarisation of the Rhineland
- German membership of the League of Nations was up for discussion.

### Why was it a success for Germany?

- It improved relations with France with the border agreement.
- It was not imposed on Germany, unlike the Treaty of Versailles.
- It increased the status and popularity of the Weimar Republic.
- It helped boost confidence in more moderate political parties.

## League of Nations

This was a new international body that hoped to discuss world problems in order to avoid resorting to war. It was set up in 1920 but Germany was initially excluded. In 1926, they were invited to join and become a member of the council.

### Why was it a success for Germany?

- It showed that Germany's views counted.
- It boosted the confidence held by most Germans in the Weimar government.

## Kellogg-Briand Pact 1928

This was an agreement between 62 nations. It committed countries to avoiding the use of war to achieve foreign policy objectives.

### Why was it a success for Germany?

- It showed that Germany was once again a major power.
- It showed that moderate political parties could build Germany's strength internationally.
- It increased public confidence in how Germany was being led.

## Limits to recovery

The German recovery was not total and there were still some problematic areas.

- ✓ Some sectors of the economy (such as agriculture) saw little recovery.
- ✓ The economy was dependent on loans.
- ✓ Some Germans didn't like the agreements.
- ✓ The hated terms of the Treaty of Versailles were still in place.
- ✓ Extremist parties had not disappeared.

## Now try this

Give **three** ways in which international agreements helped Germany. Then give **three** ways in which they did not help or were unpopular.

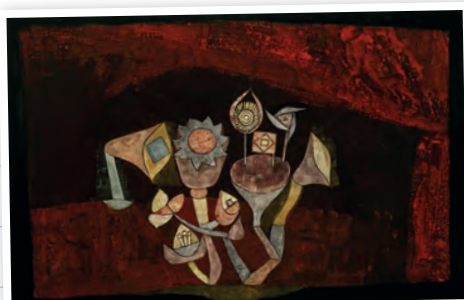
Remember to include the Dawes Plan and Young Plan when considering international agreements. For a reminder of these, look at page 11.

# Weimar culture

The extent of recovery in Germany can be seen by the flourishing of culture between 1924 and 1929. The main driving force in art and cinema was the movement called **Expressionism**. This was radically different from before, when the emphasis was on recreating beautiful things from nature and traditional stories.

## Art

Weimar artists painted everyday life so that everyone could have access to their art. They wanted to make art that commented on problems in German society, or to make people think. Their style of work was called Expressionism, which was concerned with raw emotion, the seedier side of everyday life and confronting the disaster of the First World War. Artists like Otto Dix and George Grosz were influential to the movement, as was Paul Klee.



'Cave Flowers' by Paul Klee, 1926. Klee taught at the Bauhaus school.

## Cinema

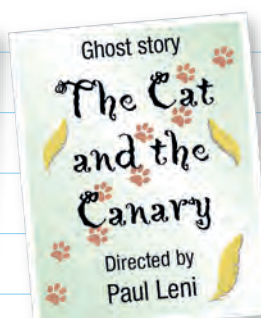
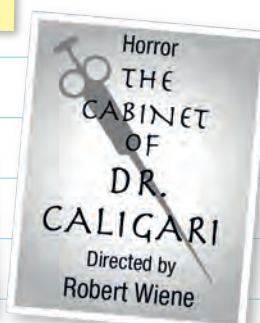
Films became popular all over the world in the 1920s. Expressionism flourished in film-making, particularly in Weimar Germany due to fewer restrictions. Some German films were very new and exciting in how they challenged traditional cinema.

**Expressionism** is an abstract style of art where feelings and emotions are more important than showing physical reality.



A famous and very popular German actress of the time was Marlene Dietrich. Here she is in the film *The Woman One Longs For*, directed by Curtis Bernhardt in 1929.

The films below were marked by dark shadows, dramatic lighting and grotesque characters.



## Architecture

New designers and architects challenged traditional ideas and practices in building and interiors.

The Bauhaus school was set up in Weimar, in 1919, by the architect Walter Gropius.

Gropius wanted to bring together all the disciplines (art, architecture, design, typography, sculpture, and so on.).



The Bauhaus School in Dessau designed by Gropius, 1925–26.

The school attracted many talented artists and designers.

Their ideas challenged traditional styles that had been popular before the war.

Their approaches looked radical compared to what had come before.

## Now try this

What did Weimar art, cinema and architecture have in common?



# Growth of extremism, 1928–32

By 1929 Germany had made great progress in recovering from the economic and social problems caused by the First World War. However, the Wall Street Crash in October 1929 led to the Great Depression, which caused huge economic problems. Extremist parties grew in popularity again.

## The impact of the Depression

Bank panic, Germany 1931



### Wall Street Crash, USA, October 1929

US companies lost billions of dollars in value overnight. Many banks and businesses were ruined, and worldwide depression resulted.

US stopped lending money to Germany and demanded all loans be repaid.



Food distribution, Berlin 1931

### German businesses:

- had to pay back loans
- received no more investment from the US
- had to pay increased taxes to government.

### German government:

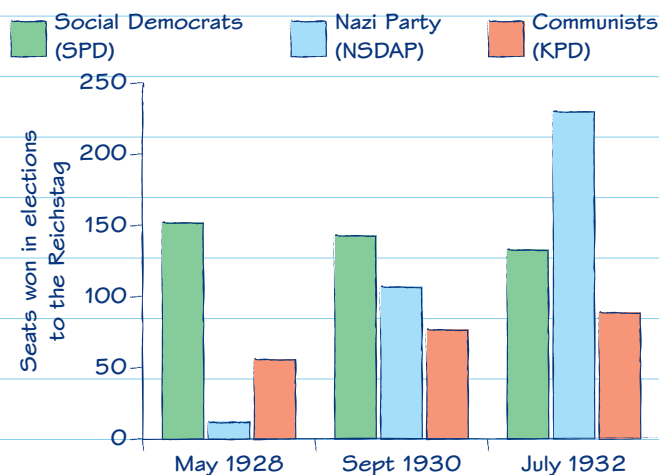
- couldn't borrow money from the US
- refused to print more money
- increased taxes
- made cuts in unemployment benefit
- government workers had wages cut and some lost their jobs.

### German people

- Millions of workers and farm labourers lost their jobs.
- Young people were badly affected by job losses.
- With no work, and benefits slashed, families suffered terrible poverty.

## Why the Depression increased support for extremist parties

- Democracy seemed to be failing as the moderate parties in the Reichstag failed to work together to solve the problems. The Weimar government was so weak, the Chancellor had to ask the president to pass emergency laws.
- Many working-class people turned to the extreme left-wing party, the Communists (KPD), who seemed to offer solutions to unemployment and falling wages.
- Many middle- and upper-class people turned to the extreme right-wing party, the Nazis, because they were afraid of the Communists gaining power and taking over their businesses.
- Germans from all sectors of society turned to the Nazis because they wanted a strong government who promised to restore law and order and workable economic policies.



The two most extreme parties in the Reichstag, the Nazis and the Communists, won support during the Depression at the expense of moderate parties such as the SPD.

To consider the appeal of Hitler and other reasons why support for the Nazis increased so spectacularly in this period, look at page 15.

## Now try this

Explain **one** of the most important impacts of the Depression.

# Hitler's appeal

Hitler was a major reason why the Nazi Party won far more votes in the 1930 and 1932 elections than in 1928. He took full advantage of the desperation people felt during the Depression. The SA also played an important role.

## Reasons for Hitler's popularity

After the Munich Putsch and writing *Mein Kampf*, Hitler was fairly well known. His fame increased when he ran in the 1932 presidential election. He lost to Hindenburg but won many votes and many people were impressed by him.

For a reminder about the Munich Putsch and *Mein Kampf*, look at page 10.

Hitler was portrayed as 'one of the people'  
– a worker and soldier  
– who therefore understood ordinary people's problems and what they wanted.



Hitler was a major feature of most Nazi election posters and pamphlets as he was seen as the main asset of the party. This poster from 1932 says 'Long live Germany!', linking Hitler with the nation.

Hitler was an effective and rousing speaker; he travelled all over the country giving speeches in person or on the radio.

Hitler's speeches and propaganda were carefully designed to promise different things to different groups (wealthy and poor, rural and urban, young people and women). He therefore managed to gain wide support across society.

Hitler came across as forceful and decisive, giving the impression he would be a strong leader for Germany. In the chaos caused by the Depression this was important to people.

Support from wealthy businessmen enabled the Nazis to pay for propaganda and for Hitler's travel, and to use new technologies such as the cinema and aeroplanes.

## Factors that explain Hitler's appeal

- He kept his ideas vague and changed the message for different audiences, thereby appealing to a wide range of people.
- He constantly emphasised the failures of Weimar and his forceful style came across as the polar opposite of indecisive Weimar politicians.
- Gaining the support of some business leaders added to his appeal as well as helping finance his campaign.
- Propaganda was used very effectively.
- The SA played a major role, using fear and violence to stand up to Communists and sabotage opposition parties.

## The role of the SA

The **Sturmabteilung** (Stormtroopers), or SA, were a paramilitary force. Formed in 1921 by Hitler, they were led by Ernst Röhm and wore brown uniforms. In 1930 they numbered about 400 000, and grew to around 3 million by 1934. Many members of the SA were unemployed former soldiers. They played a major role in increasing support for the Nazis during the elections of 1930 and 1932 as they seemed to be able to control unrest on the streets by standing up to the Communists' paramilitary force. Their use of fear and violence to disrupt meetings and rallies, destroy publicity material, and beat up and intimidate opposition candidates effectively sabotaged opposition parties.

## Now try this

Use this page, and page 14, to answer this question.

Give **five** reasons why Hitler was able to gain so much support from the German people in the years 1928–32.

# Hitler becomes Chancellor

Weimar parties lost electoral support in the elections between 1928 to 1932. This failure of Weimar democracy, together with the plotting of key figures – including President Hindenburg, Schleicher and Papen – led to Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in 1933.

## Timeline

**June 1928** Hindenburg appoints Hermann Müller, leader of the SDP, as Chancellor

**March 1930** Grand Coalition government collapses as parties disagree on ways to tackle the Depression; Hindenburg appoints Heinrich Brüning, leader of the Centre Party, as Chancellor

**1931/1932** The government does not have a Reichstag majority so cannot pass many laws – increasingly Brüning asks Hindenburg to pass laws by decree; between February and September, Reichstag doesn't meet

**April 1932** Presidential election – Hindenburg is re-elected with 53% of the vote, but Adolf Hitler wins 36% and Ernst Thalmann (leader of KPD) wins 11%; Brüning bans the SA; he announces a plan to buy up land from landowners and use this to house the unemployed (both plans are unpopular with the Reichstag and Hindenburg)

**June 1932** Hindenburg appoints Franz von Papen as Chancellor on the suggestion of Kurt von Schleicher; Papen is not a member of the Reichstag and heads a 'Cabinet of Barons', which features only two Reichstag members to govern Germany

**September 1932** Reichstag passes a vote of no confidence in Papen's government; Papen calls another election

**December 1932** Hindenburg appoints Schleicher Chancellor

**May 1928** Reichstag elections – the moderate parties win the most votes

**October 1929** Wall Street Crash

**September 1930** Reichstag elections – major gains made by extreme parties

**March 1932** Presidential election – no candidate wins 50% of the vote

**May 1932** Brüning resigns

**July 1932** Reichstag elections – the Nazis become the largest party but don't have a majority; Hindenburg refuses to make Hitler Chancellor; Papen continues as Chancellor, ruling through presidential decree rather than with the support of the Reichstag

**November 1932** Reichstag elections – Nazis lose votes but is still the largest party; Hindenburg refuses to make Hitler Chancellor but sacks Papen on Schleicher's advice

**January 1933** Schleicher has little support either inside or outside the Reichstag; Papen persuades Hindenburg to appoint Hitler as Chancellor and himself vice-Chancellor

## The role of Papen

- Undermined the Weimar Republic through ruling with Cabinet of Barons who, except for two, were not members of the Reichstag.
- Although he disliked Hitler, he agreed with many of his ideas and thought he would be able to control Hitler with Hindenburg's help.



General Franz von Papen

## The role of Hindenburg

- Undermined the Weimar Republic by appointing chancellors who were not in the Reichstag, and was happy to rule by decree as never fully supported the Weimar Republic.
- Underestimated Hitler and thought he would be able to control him with the help of Papen.



Paul von Hindenburg

## Now try this

Give two examples of how Weimar democracy failed in the period 1930–32.



# Removing opposition

Now the Nazis and Hitler were in power, they used the opportunity caused by the Reichstag fire to pass the Enabling Act (1933) and then removed the remaining political opposition to secure a dictatorship.

## The Reichstag Fire

- 1 A lone Dutch communist was executed for starting the fire but Hitler seized the opportunity to accuse the Communist Party of a conspiracy against the government. Four thousand communists were arrested.
- 2 It gave Hitler an excuse to issue the emergency Decree for the Protection of People and the State, giving him powers to imprison political opponents and ban opposition newspapers.
- 3 He persuaded Hindenburg to call an election in March 1933 to secure more Nazi seats.
- 4 The Nazi Party managed to secure two-thirds of the seats by using the emergency powers to prevent the communists from taking up their 81 seats.
- 5 Hitler was now able to change the constitution.



The Reichstag fire of 27 February 1933. Marinus van der Lubbe was arrested and executed for starting the fire – some people believed the Nazis had started the fire deliberately.

## The Enabling Act, 1933

Hitler proposed the Enabling Act in order to destroy the power of the Reichstag and give himself total power to make laws. It stated that:

- ✓ the Reich Cabinet could pass new laws
- ✓ the laws could overrule the constitution
- ✓ Hitler would propose the laws.

Result: Germany would no longer be a democracy.

Hitler expected resistance to the act and so used the SA to intimidate the opposition. The vote was won by the Nazis 444 to 94.

## The elimination of political opposition and trade unions

### Timeline

**31 March 1933** Regional parliaments were closed down and reorganised with Nazi majorities (they were banned in January 1944)

**May 1933** Offices and finance of other political parties were confiscated by the Nazis

**22 June 1933** The SPD was banned as 'hostile to the nation and the state'; then the Centre Party and German Nationalist Party dissolved themselves before they too could be banned

**February/March 1933** The Communist Party was finished after the Reichstag fire; most communists who had not been arrested and put into concentration camps left the country

**April 1933** Nazi opponents were rooted out from the civil service and the law

**May 1933** Trade union offices were broken into, and officials were arrested and sent to concentration camps; then trade unions were banned – all workers belonged to the new German Labour Front

**14 July 1933** The Law against the Formation of New Parties banned any political party except the Nazis

## Now try this

Write a paragraph to explain how the Reichstag fire enabled the Nazis to increase their power in Germany.

# Hitler becomes Führer

Having removed the threat of other political parties and trade unions, Hitler turned his attention to the SA. After this, President Hindenburg was the only person standing between him and total power.

## The Night of the Long Knives

- Hitler decided he wanted to rid himself of the threat of Röhm and the SA. He did this by inviting Röhm and 100 SA leaders to a meeting in the town of Bad Wiessee on 30 June 1934. It was a ruse – when the leaders arrived they were arrested by the SS, taken to Munich and shot.
- After the arrests, Papen's staff were arrested and he was put under house arrest. Papen was no longer able to watch what Hitler was up to.
- Further killings occurred, including that of Schleicher.

It was thought that not many people fully realised how many people were being killed – many were relieved that the power of the SA had been reduced.

The SS was set up by Hitler in 1925 to act as his bodyguards. They were a select group run firstly by Schreck and then by Himmler. They appeared menacing in their black uniforms.



SS troops guarding Hitler as he makes a speech, May 1934

## Why Röhm and the SA were removed

- Röhm led at least 3 million SA, which potentially made him a very serious rival, especially as he disagreed with some of Hitler's policies.
- Many important people in Germany, including Hindenburg, disapproved of the SA. Some of them were violent thugs who lacked any discipline.
- The German army only numbered about 100 000. Officers believed Röhm wanted to make the SA the new army. Hitler needed the army's allegiance.
- The other Nazi paramilitary force, the SS, was more disciplined. Its leader, Himmler, was closer to Hitler than Röhm; he wanted to reduce the size and influence of the SA to increase the power of the SS. Hitler agreed, partly because he was worried about the SA's reputation.

For a reminder about the SA, look at page 15.



The Sturmabteilung (SA)

## Hitler becomes Führer

On 2 August 1934, just a few weeks after the Night of the Long Knives, President Hindenburg died. By this time, he was the only person preventing Hitler from having total power in Germany. Within hours of his death, a law concerning the Head of State merged the offices of Chancellor and President to create a new office of Führer. Hitler also announced that from now on the army would swear an oath of allegiance to him, not to Germany.

Führer means 'leader' and Hitler used propaganda to ensure that he looked all powerful. The 'Heil Hitler!' Nazi salute made people swear loyalty to him personally, and he was portrayed as having superhuman, heroic qualities.

After 2 August 1934, Hitler had complete control. Other political parties and opponents had gone, there was no longer a president and the armed forces were now under his command.

## Now try this

Construct a flow chart to explain the steps Hitler took to establish his dictatorship in 1933 and 1934.



# Employment

In 1933 Germany was still suffering badly from the Depression, so the first priorities for the Nazis were to improve the economy and reduce unemployment.

## Economic policies, 1933–36

Although the German economy had already started to grow before Hitler came to power, the Nazis did revive the economy. They:

- invested huge sums of money in public works programmes
- gave loans, subsidies and tax relief to businesses to increase production and take on more workers
- put controls on wages and prices to avoid hyperinflation
- controlled imports and made new trade agreements which increased trade and production in the New Plan of 1934.

To learn more about Nazi economic policies and rearmament, look at page 20.

## National Labour Service (RAD)

- This was started by the Weimar government and continued under the Nazis.
- From July 1935, it was compulsory for all men aged 18–25 to serve for six months on this scheme.
- They worked on public works programmes or on farms.
- Many hated RAD. The pay was low, the hours long and the work boring.

## Hjalmar Schacht

President of the Reichsbank (1923–39), Schacht is recognised as a financial genius, credited with reviving the German economy. Hitler made him Minister for the Economy in 1934. He lost his job after a disagreement about rearmament in 1937.

## Employment

Nazi economic policies and **rearmament** reduced unemployment. However, many people were taken out of the jobs market, which distorted the employment figures:

- many Jews were forced out of jobs



- many women were dismissed from or left their jobs



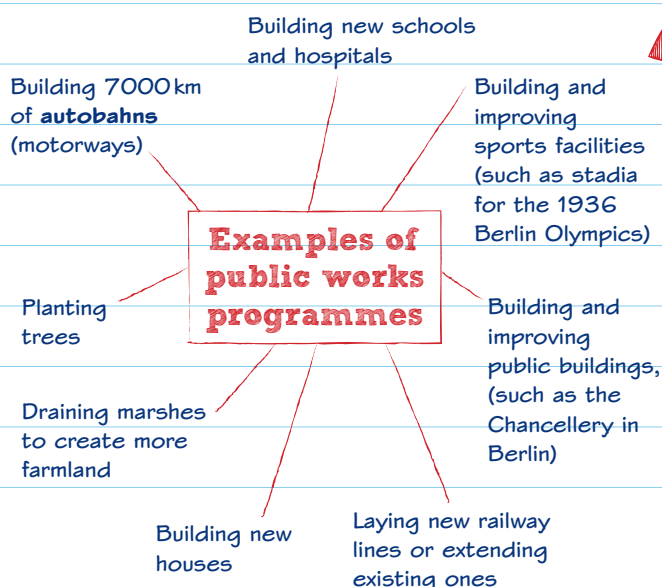
- unmarried men under 25 had to do National Labour Service for six months



- after 1935 more and more men over 18 were **conscripted** into the armed forces (they were required by law to join)



- opponents of the regime were sent to **concentration camps** (forced labour camps).



Several large projects were financed by the government to improve infrastructure, give private companies work and reduce unemployment.

Hitler making a start on the first autobahn in 1933



## Now try this

Give **at least three** ways in which the Nazis reduced unemployment.



# Nazi economic policies

From 1936, Nazi economic policies were geared towards preparing for war. **Rearmament** and **self-sufficiency** were the main aims. The economic policies had benefits and drawbacks for the people.

## The Four-Year Plan, 1936–40

Hitler played a major role in devising this policy. Hermann Goering was made Minister for the Economy in 1937, so he was responsible for carrying out the plan. Its main aims were:

- rearmament to provide the weapons, vehicles and equipment for the rapidly expanding army, navy and airforce
- to make Germany self-sufficient in raw materials and food to try to avoid the problems of the First World War.

For more on the problems, see pages 6 and 8.

The plan was hugely expensive and only partially successful.

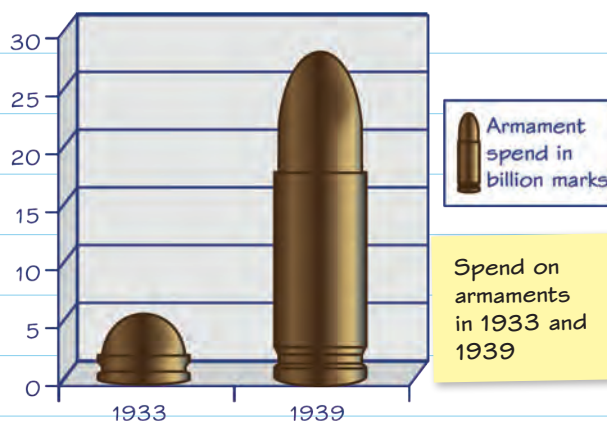
## Self-sufficiency

- The policy of **autarky** (self-sufficiency) was a failure. In 1939 Germany was still dependent on imports for one-third of its raw materials.
- Farmers were given subsidies and cheap labour from RAD but food production grew only slightly.
- Campaigns to make Germans buy German goods met with partial success.
- Controls were put on imports but luxury imported goods actually increased.
- Scientists were funded to find substitutes for resources Germany did not have such as oil, rubber and cotton, but had little success.

## Rearmament

German rearmament began in 1933 but was kept secret until 1935. It increased dramatically from 1936. By 1940 Germany had rearmed to an extent but hadn't met the Four-Year Plan targets.

- Some businesses benefitted from designing, providing materials and manufacturing arms.
- More jobs were created, and prisoners in labour and concentration camps were also used. However, by 1939 there were labour shortages.



## Nazi economic policies: pros

- 👍 Unemployment was reduced and most men were in work.
- 👍 Average weekly wages rose from 86 marks (1932) to 109 marks (1939) despite wage restrictions.
- 👍 Some businesses benefitted from increased investment and opportunities.
- 👍 Large businesses especially benefitted from the wage restrictions and loss of the trade unions.
- 👍 The Public Works Programmes provided better transport, services and homes.
- 👍 Some farmers benefitted from rising food prices, increased subsidies and cheaper labour.

## Nazi economic policies: cons

- 👎 The cost of food rose – cancelling out wage increases.
- 👎 Working hours increased, especially after 1936.
- 👎 Some businesses resented the restrictions put upon them.
- 👎 The emphasis on using German goods meant that, in some cases, that available products were inferior.
- 👎 The Four-Year Plan put pressure on the economy and led to food and other shortages in the late 1930s.
- 👎 Some groups suffered; for example, Jewish businesses were boycotted and closed.

## Now try this

Give **three** ways in which the Four-Year Plan can be seen as a) a success and b) a failure.