

Germany 1918-45



Profile on

Kaiser Wilhelm II

Born in 1859 with a badly withered left arm. His mother was an English princess and Queen Victoria was his grandmother. He was intelligent but unable to concentrate for long periods. Wilhelm did not like people to disagree with him. He came to the throne in 1888 but soon quarrelled with his Chancellor, Bismarck, who resigned in 1890. From then on he appointed ministers who did as he wanted. He was ambitious for Germany and keen to build up a strong army and navy. This led to rivalry with other countries such as France, Britain and Russia.

GERMANY 1918-19

In 1918 Germany suffered defeat in the First World War. A revolution in November led to the abdication of the German emperor and the setting up of a new republic. This republic was immediately opposed by a party known as the Spartacists.

Germany before the revolution

Germany was not a democracy. It had an elected parliament but this could be overruled by the Kaiser or Emperor. He had enormous power. He could choose and sack ministers. In 1888 the 29-year-old Wilhelm II became Kaiser.

War broke out in 1914. Germany fought on the side of Austria-Hungary against France, Britain and Russia. The German armies failed to break through the Western Front against Britain and France and by October 1918 were close to defeat.

The revolution of 1918

This was caused mainly by war weariness. The German people had suffered hardship and starvation as a result of the blockade of their ports by the British navy. Many Germans were short of everyday necessities. In Source A, a British secret agent reported on these shortages in September 1918:

SOURCE A

In addition to other hardships, the German public is threatened this winter with an almost complete lack of lights of every description: electric light, gas, lamp oil and candles. The lack of soap and washing powder makes personal cleanliness impossible and helps the spread of disease. Medicines are difficult to obtain.

The revolution began on 30 October in the North Sea port of Kiel when the German navy refused to attack the British navy. Workers and soldiers took over Kiel and nearby ports. Cities throughout Germany joined the revolt.

Focus on

The 1918 revolution

Many Germans who supported the revolution demanded:

- peace as quickly as possible
- better food supplies
- improved working conditions
- a free press and the right to express their opinion openly
- the right for all adults to vote
- a parliament with the power to control the Government



Profile on

Rosa Luxemburg

Rosa Luxemburg was a revolutionary who had fled from Poland. She came to Germany in 1898 and married a German socialist colleague so she could remain in the country. She was a brilliant speaker and writer and, by 1914, was known as 'Red Rosa'. She disagreed with the war and was put in prison in 1915 for spreading anti-war propaganda. In November 1918 she was released from prison and returned to Berlin to lead the Spartacists.

SOURCE B

This cartoon was drawn in 1918 by the German artist Raemaeker. It shows Kaiser Wilhelm (centre) hand in hand with war (on the left) and starvation (on the right).



On 9 November 1918 the Kaiser abdicated – this means he gave up the throne. On the following day a German republic was set up under Friedrich Ebert, leader of the Social Democratic Party. On 11 November an armistice or ceasefire was signed in a railway carriage at Compiègne, to the north of Paris.

The Spartacists

The Spartacus League (or Spartacists) were a Communist group who wanted Germany to be governed in the same way as Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 with workers' and soldiers' councils in each town. Their leaders, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, opposed the new German republic and everything that Ebert did.

On the last day of 1918 they renamed themselves the German Communist Party, and made plans to seize power. This alarmed many middle- and upper-class people who feared that a Communist government would take away all banks, factories and land and put them under government control.

SOURCE D

Rosa Luxemburg in late 1918

The rule of the working class means real democracy. It means the use of power to get rid of middle- and upper-class people. It means the smashing of the ruling classes with all the brutality that the working class can develop.

SOURCE E

From an article in a government newspaper, early January 1919

The terrible actions of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg spoil the revolution and threaten all its achievements. The masses must not sit quiet for one minute longer and allow these brutal beasts to force the people into civil war.

SOURCE C

Spartacist poster



The Spartacists tried to seize power on 5 January 1919. They occupied public buildings, organised a general strike and formed a revolutionary committee. The day before the rising, Ebert had created a volunteer force of 4000 soldiers. Known as the Freikorps, they were hard men who hated Communists and liked a fight. After two weeks the revolution was defeated. Many Communists, including Liebknecht and Luxemburg, were shot after they were captured.

Questions on Sources D and E:

- 1 Explain in your own words the differences between Sources D and E in their views of the Spartacists.
- 2 Why do you think they are different?

Importance of the Spartacists

The Spartacist revolution was important for several reasons:

- It showed how unstable the new republic was when a mainly socialist government was attacked by an even more left-wing group.
- It forced the new republic to seek the support of the army in defeating the Communists. In return Ebert promised not to change the army.
- The army remained as it had been under the Kaiser and gave little support to the new republic.

Focus on

German political parties

Party	Supporters	Attitude to Republic
KPD (Communists)	working class	Against
SPD (Social Democrat)	industrial working class and some lower middle class	Supported
DDP (German Democratic)	mostly middle class	Supported
Centre Party	Roman Catholics	Supported
DVP (German People's)	Wealthy middle class	Reluctant supporters
Nationalist Party	Middle and upper class	Against
NSDAP (Nazi Party)	Nationalists, conservatives and lower middle class	Against

EARLY PROBLEMS 1919-22

The new republic faced early problems mainly as a result of signing the Treaty of Versailles and weaknesses in the new constitution.

The Weimar Constitution

The new German government was determined to set up a democracy or a system of government where the leaders are voted into office by the people. This was partly because President Wilson of America refused to offer peace to the Germans until it had a government that wanted democracy. However, this meant that some Germans thought that democracy was being forced on Germany by her enemies.

The Spartacist revolt made it impossible for the government to meet in Berlin. Instead it chose the peaceful town of Weimar and drew up a new constitution or set of rules and laws which control how a country is governed. Elections were held and the Socialist, Ebert, became the first ever President of Germany. The chart on p. 336 shows you the new constitution.

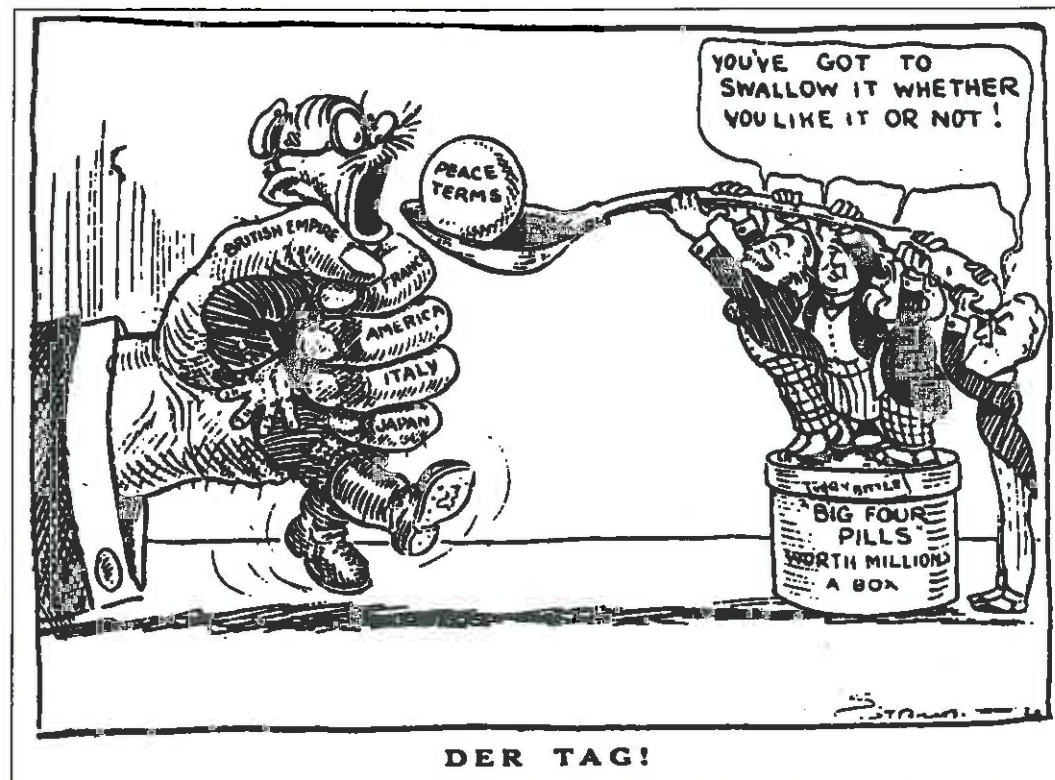
SOURCE C

A British historian writing in 1966

The greatest weakness of the Treaty was that it did not end the German 'menace' by means of the punishment clauses. The German empire was left basically intact. Although Germany did lose some territories, by far the major part of her strength (land, population and resources) was untouched.

SOURCE D

A British cartoon published in 1919



Questions

- 1 Do Sources B and C believe the Treaty was fair on Germany?
- 2 Do you think it was fair? Give reasons for your answer.
- 3 What is the cartoonist trying to say in Source D? How does the cartoonist try to get the point across?

Activity

Produce the front page for a German newspaper reacting to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Your front page should include a headline, a brief explanation of the terms and why you think they are unfair on Germany and perhaps the reactions of a few German people you have spoken to. Why not give your newspaper a name?

Results of the Treaty

The German government had no choice but to sign the Treaty. This had several unfortunate results:

- The new Republic got off to a bad start and was immediately associated with the humiliating Treaty.
- Opponents of the Republic, especially the army, blamed the government for signing the armistice that led to the Treaty. They referred to the government as the 'November Criminals', a reference to the signing of the armistice on 11 November. The government was accused of having stabbed the German army in the back. In other words the German army would have won the war if the armistice had not been signed. This, of course, was far from the truth.
- Germany could not afford to pay the reparations. The country had been run down by the war and had lost areas of land that could make money, such as the coalfields of the Saar.

The Kapp Putsch

The Freikorps not only hated Communism. They also hated the Treaty of Versailles and the new government that had signed it. They were also angry because the government had ordered all Freikorps units to disband. They were led by an extreme nationalist, Dr Kapp, who explained what was wrong with Germany in 1919:

SOURCE E

Prices are rising. Hardship is growing. Starvation threatens. The government lacks the authority and is not capable of overcoming the danger. From the east we are threatened with destruction by communism.

In March 1920 a group of Freikorps, led by Dr Kapp, attempted to take power in Berlin. The government fled from the city. Kapp set himself up as head of a new government. His aim was to recover the land taken from Germany by the Versailles Treaty.

The army refused to stop Kapp and his 5000 followers. The putsch – or uprising – was defeated by the people of Berlin. Workers in the city organised a general strike. As a result, Berlin ground to a halt. Kapp thus had to abandon his plans and fled to Sweden. The government returned to Berlin.

The Kapp Putsch showed that the republic had gained much support from the workers of Berlin. It also revealed the lack of support from the army. Army leaders had blamed the republic for the armistice of 1918 and the humiliating peace terms of the following year. Many wanted a return to the Germany of the Kaiser.

1923: YEAR OF CRISIS

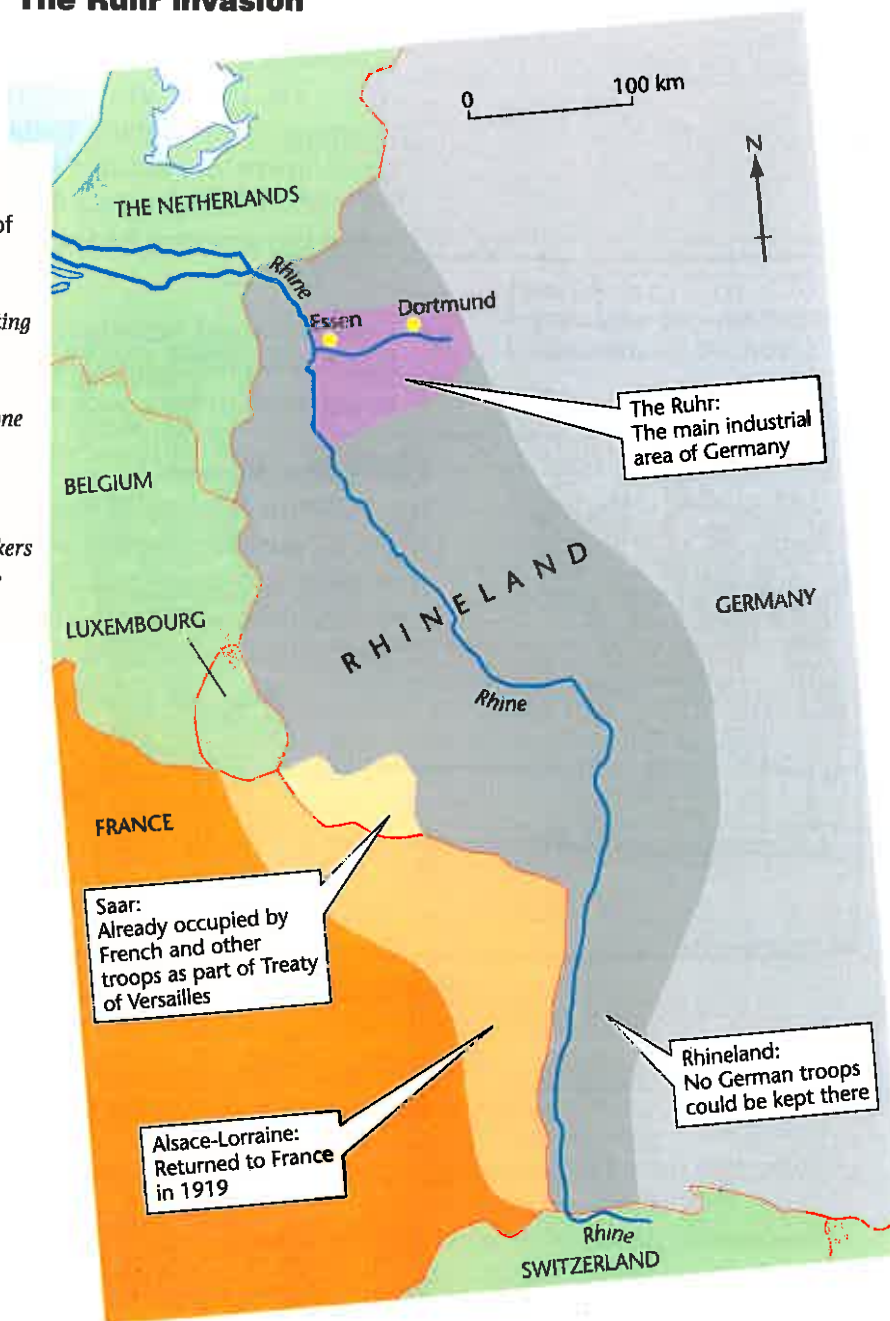
The early problems faced by the Weimar Republic came to a head in 1923 with a combined French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr and massive inflation.

The Ruhr invasion

SOURCE A

An official French army account of the occupation

Passive resistance meant not co-operating at all with the French and Belgians. It meant refusing all their demands and orders. The post, telegraph and telephone workers refused to make any communication with the French and Belgians, to send their letters, to sell them stamps, and so on. Railway workers refused to run the trains needed for the troops.



By January 1923 Germany had fallen behind in its reparations payments to Belgium and France. The French were angry because they needed the money to help pay their war debts to the USA. French and Belgian troops marched into the Ruhr, the industrial centre of Germany, to take the goods they needed, rather than waiting for the Germans to send them.

The German government could not use force to oppose the French and Belgians. Instead they chose passive resistance.

German workers in the Ruhr went on strike. Some strikers took more direct action. They sabotaged the pumps in some mines so that they flooded and could not be worked. A number of strikers were shot by the French troops. A German newspaper, *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, described one incident (Source B).

SOURCE B

The children were playing in a field which the invaders had declared out of bounds. When the children wouldn't leave the field, the soldier fired at a seven-year-old boy who was standing laughing six metres away from him. He was shot through the temples. The brave soldier then threw himself upon the corpse and, according to one witness, ate the boy's brains.

Questions

- 1 Why do you think the German newspaper printed this story?
- 2 Can you trust the account given in Source B? Give reasons for your answer.

Results of the invasion

The invasion had mixed effects:

- It united the German people against the French and Belgians.
- The strikers were seen as heroes to the German people.
- The German government became popular because it backed the strikers and organised passive resistance.
- It had disastrous effects on the German economy. The German government had to print money in order to pay the strikers' wages. This increased inflation.

Hyperinflation

In 1923 the German mark lost all value as a result of hyperinflation. When there is a lot of something, it is worth less. This was the case with the German mark at this time. The government printed so much that it became worthless. Germans continually needed more of this worthless paper to buy even the most basic items.

This situation had come about because from 1921 Germany had to send large quantities of goods to France and Belgium as part of their reparations payments. As a result there were not enough goods in Germany and the prices rose. The German government also printed more money to pay reparations and the workers of the Ruhr. This made inflation worse.

The effects of hyperinflation

Hyperinflation was a disaster for most Germans. Some, however, benefited.

SOURCE C

Children playing with worthless banknotes



SOURCE D

The memories of a German writer

Two women were carrying a laundry basket filled to the top with banknotes. Seeing a crowd standing round a shop window, they put down the basket for a moment to see if there was anything they could buy. When they turned round a few moments later, they found the money there untouched. But the basket was gone?

Focus on

The effects of hyperinflation

THOSE WHO SUFFERED

- Old people living on fixed pensions which became worthless.
- People who lived on savings which became worthless.
- Many of the middle classes who saw their businesses and savings destroyed.

THOSE WHO BENEFITED

- Those who had debts or had taken out loans. They could pay the money back at a fraction of the cost.
- Many rich businessmen were able to take advantage of the situation by taking over smaller companies which were going bankrupt.
- The rise in prices benefited farmers.
- Foreigners who were in Germany suddenly found that they had a huge advantage. They could afford things that ordinary Germans could not.

Activity

Study this list of four different people living in Germany in 1923. Explain how you think each of these would have reacted to hyperinflation and its effects:

- an ex-soldier now living on an army pension.
- a wealthy businessman who has borrowed heavily to start up his business and owes a lot of money to the bank.
- an elderly shopkeeper who has saved throughout his working life for his retirement.
- a factory worker living on wages paid daily.

Questions

- 1 What do Sources C and D show about the value of the mark in 1923?
- 2 The Republic faced several problems between 1918–23 including:
 - the Spartacist revolt
 - the Kapp Putsch
 - the French occupation of the Ruhr
 - hyperinflation
 - the Treaty of Versailles
 - the new constitution.
 - a How far do you think each of these problems weakened the republic?
 - b Which do you think was the most serious problem? Give reasons for your answer.
- 3 Why was the Weimar Republic able to survive the problems of 1923?

THE RECOVERY OF THE REPUBLIC 1924–29

During this period the Weimar Republic seemed to recover from the problems of its early years. This is often referred to as the 'golden age' of the Weimar Republic.

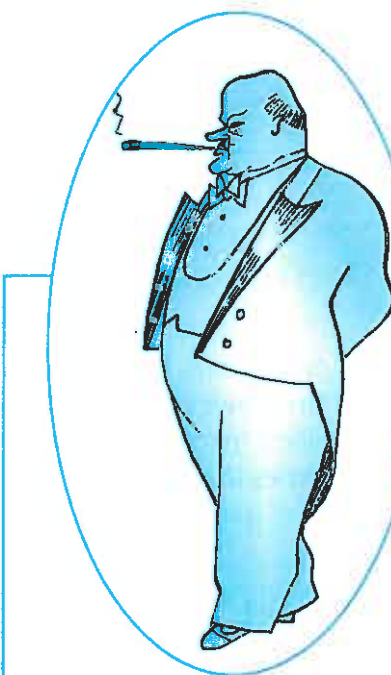
Why did the Republic recover and prosper?

There were several reasons for the recovery:

The role of Gustav Stresemann

He became the new Chancellor in August 1923. He introduced a new currency, the Rentenmark, to replace the old worthless mark. He ordered the striking workers of the Ruhr back to work and agreed to start to pay reparations. This, at first, made him unpopular with many Germans.

Stresemann became foreign secretary in 1924 and was mainly responsible for negotiating the Dawes Plan and German success abroad. He died in October 1929, on the eve of the Wall Street Crash. He was one of the few Weimar politicians strong enough to appeal to the German people.

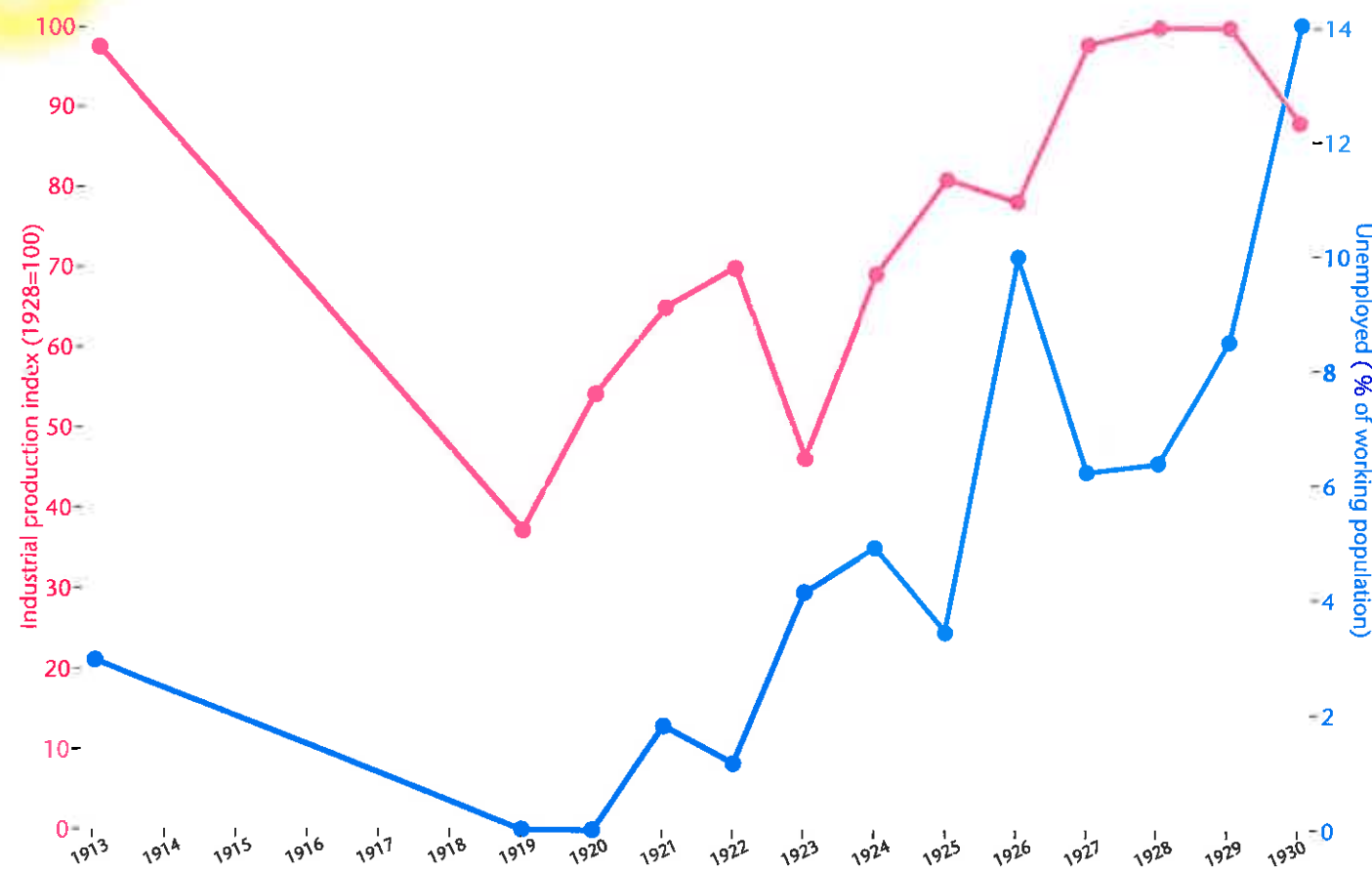


Profile on

Gustav Stresemann

Stresemann was born in 1878 and became leader of the National Liberal Party before 1914. This was replaced, after the First World War, by the German People's Party. Stresemann was also its leader. He became Chancellor briefly in 1923 and foreign secretary from 1924–29. As Foreign Secretary he worked closely with his counterparts in France and Britain, Aristide Briand and Austen Chamberlain. He died in October 1929. Many Germans believe he could have saved Germany from the worst effects of the Depression.

Economic recovery



Question

What does the graph show about:

- Industrial production in the period 1923–29?
- Unemployment in the period 1923–29?

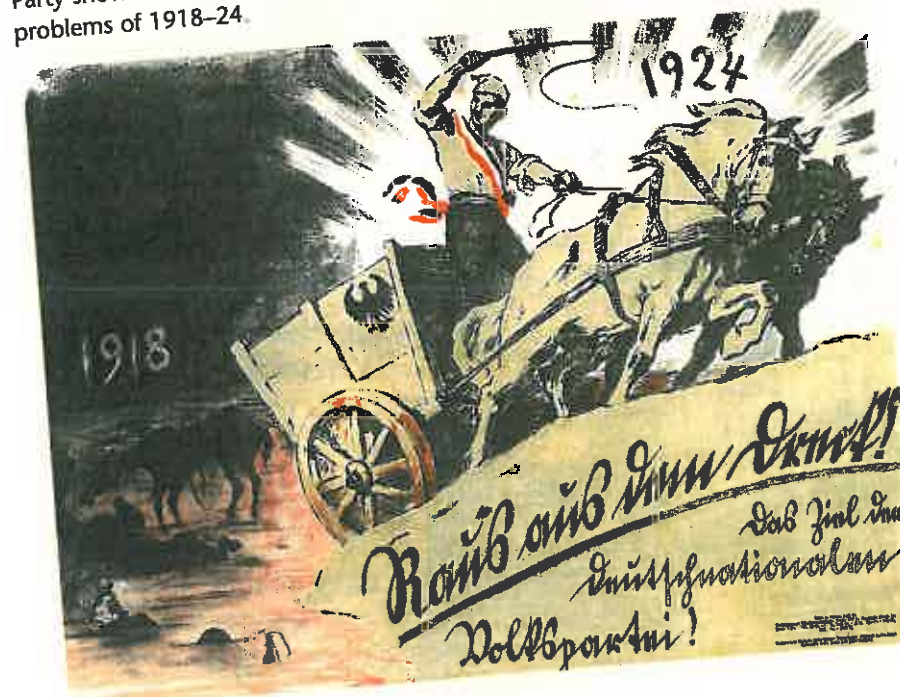
The recovery was encouraged by:

- The introduction of the Rentenmark which replaced the old worthless mark.
- In return for starting to pay reparations once more, the Germans were rewarded with the introduction of the Dawes Plan in 1924. America agreed to lend Germany 800 million marks. The Germans could use this to build new factories that could produce jobs and goods and could raise the standard of living of the German people.
- In 1925 the French and Belgian troops left the Ruhr.
- In 1929 the Young Plan was introduced. This reduced reparations by over 67%.
- In 1928 industrial production finally improved on pre-First World War levels. By 1930 Germany was one of the leading exporters of manufactured goods.

- In nearly every town new factories and public facilities sprang up. New roads and railways were built and nearly three million new homes.

SOURCE A

'Risen from the Mire.' A 1924 election poster for the German National People's Party shows Germany heading for a better future after being pulled clear of the problems of 1918–24.



Political stability

The period 1924–29 saw more stable governments. After the 1928 election the Social Democrats, for the first time since 1923, joined a government coalition with the other parties who supported the Republic. This showed that the middle-class parties were no longer so suspicious of the socialists. There was less support for extreme parties such as the National Socialist German Workers' Party (the Nazis) who only won 12 seats in the Reichstag in the elections of 1928. The Communists also did less well in 1924 and 1928.

Foreign policy

The foreign secretary, Stresemann, was responsible for several successes in foreign policy.

- In 1925 Germany signed the Locarno Treaties with Britain, France and Italy. These guaranteed Germany's frontiers with France and Belgium.
- In 1926 Stresemann took Germany into the League of Nations. Germany was recognised as a great power and given a permanent seat on the League's council alongside France and Britain.
- In 1928 Germany signed the Kellogg–Briand Pact along with 64 other nations. It was agreed that they would keep their armies for self-defence but 'the solution of all disputes shall only be sought by peaceful means'.

SOURCE B*Grey Day* by George Grosz**Culture**

The 1920s saw a huge cultural revival in Germany. Some believe this was the greatest period in German history for writers and artists to try out new ideas. The key painters of the time, such as George Grosz, used art to criticise society. His painting, *Grey Day* (Source B), was a comment on the boredom experienced by most people in their everyday lives.

Germany also became the centre for new plays and operas. The most famous playwright of the time was Bertolt Brecht whose *Threepenny Opera* was a great success. There was also great progress in the cinema with its best-known director, Fritz Lang, producing epic films such as *Metropolis*, which was the most technically advanced film of the decade.

Literature was dominated by Erich Remarque who wrote the famous anti-war novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front*. This novel described the horrors of the Western Front. Within three months of its publication in 1929, it had sold 500,000 copies. It was later made into a very successful film.

Was this a 'Golden Age'?

Although there was progress in this period, there were also several fundamental problems:

Economic problems

There were still serious problems in the economy:

- It depended on American loans which could be withdrawn at any time.
- Unemployment remained a serious problem. The economy was not growing fast enough for Germany's rising population.
- Farming suffered from depression throughout the 1920s due to a fall in food prices. Income from agriculture went down from 1925 to 1929.
- Growth in industry began to slow down in 1927.

Political instability

The basic problems of the Constitution remained:

- No one party could secure a majority in the Reichstag. There were frequent, short-lived coalition governments.
- Many nationalists opposed Stresemann's policies, especially when he called off passive resistance in the Ruhr in 1923.
- Extremist parties, such as the Nazis and Communists, were determined to overthrow the Weimar Republic.
- In 1925 Hindenburg was elected President. He had been one of Germany's war leaders under the Kaiser and disliked the new Republic.

Question

Using Sources C and D and page 346, do you think that 1925–29 was a 'Golden Age' for the Weimar Republic? Give reasons for your answer.

Activity

Look again at the list of people on p. 343. How do you think they would react to the republic four years after hyperinflation, in 1928?

SOURCE A

My entire schooling consisted of five years at Primary School and four years of Middle School. I was orphaned, at the age of 17 years and was forced to earn my living as a simple worker. I became a labourer on a building site and during the next two years did every type of casual job. With great effort I was able to teach myself to paint in my spare time. I earned a small living by this work. By the age of 21 I had become an architectural draughtsman and painter and was completely independent.

SOURCE D

R. Geary, *Hitler and Nazism*, 1991

Germany's recovery was too dependent on foreign loans. Agricultural prices which had been steady after the early 1920s were already falling by 1927. The result was a debt crisis for farmers. Heavy industry (coal, iron and steel) were already experiencing problems making profits even as early as 1927. German steel mills worked at no more than 70% of their capacity.

SOURCE C

W. Carr, *A History of Germany, 1815–1945*, 1979

By 1930, Germany was once again one of the world's greatest industrial nations. By 1929 iron and steel, coal, chemicals and electrical products had all matched or beaten the 1913 production figures. Up-to-date management techniques and better methods of production brought about a tremendous increase in productivity: blast-furnaces, for example, trebled their output.

THE EARLY YEARS OF THE NAZI PARTY 1919–29

The Nazi Party emerged in the years after the First World War and was led by Adolf Hitler.

Adolf Hitler

Hitler was born in the village of Braunau, in Austria, in 1889. In a letter to an admirer, Hitler gave an account of his early life (Source A).

SOURCE B

Adolf Hitler (centre) while serving in the German army in 1916

**Questions**

- 1 What does the letter (Source A) tell you about Hitler?
- 2 Can you trust what Hitler has written?

Hitler moved to Munich, in Germany, and joined the German army in 1914. He fought in the First World War and was awarded the Iron Cross, Germany's highest award for bravery. The end of the war saw Hitler in hospital in Munich recovering from gas poisoning. He was devastated when he heard of the armistice and threw himself, sobbing, on to his hospital bed. He immediately blamed the new Republic for Germany's defeat and for signing the humiliating Treaty of Versailles.

SOURCE C

Extract from Hitler's autobiography, *Mein Kampf*

It became impossible for me to sit still one minute more. I tottered and groped my way back to the dormitory, threw myself on my bunk, and dug my burning head into my blanket and pillow.

SOURCE D

Hitler in a crowd attending a protest meeting against the Treaty of Versailles in 1919



The Nazi Party 1920-23

In September 1919 Hitler joined the German Workers' Party. It had been set up in Munich, earlier in the year by Anton Drexler. Hitler showed a talent for public speaking and propaganda and rose quickly up the ranks of the party. In February 1920 he was put in charge of propaganda. He bought a newspaper, *The Munich Observer*, and changed the name of the party to the National Socialist German Workers' Party or Nazis.

In 1921 Hitler was strong enough to challenge Drexler and take over the leadership of the Party himself. He now intended to turn the party into a mass movement which would overthrow the Weimar Republic. It had its own emblem, the swastika.

The swastika and colours were deliberately chosen by Hitler. The red represented the socialist part of the party, the white the nationalist and the swastika itself Hitler's racial views. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler wrote that the swastika represented 'the mission of the struggle for the victory of the Aryan man'.

SOURCE E

The swastika. Some flags also have the words 'Germany awake'.



The Party aims

Hitler drew up a 25-point programme which showed the aims of the Nazi Party.



NATIONALISM

- ▶ All Germans in a single country
- ▶ Destroy Treaty of Versailles
- ▶ Rearmament

SOCIALISM

- ▶ Workers to share in company profits
- ▶ Big companies to be nationalised or taken over by the state
- ▶ Land shared out for the benefit of everyone

ANTI-SEMITISM

This meant hatred of the Jews.

- ▶ Jews were regarded as the lowest of races
- ▶ Hitler blamed Jews for all Germany's problems
- ▶ Remove Jews from all positions of leadership in Germany

OTHER AIMS

- ▶ Destroy Communism
- ▶ Strong central government
- ▶ Increase old age pensions
- ▶ Educate gifted children at the state's expense

Activity

Make a two-column chart. On the left-hand side list the following:

- an ex-member of the Freikorps
- a factory worker
- a German nationalist who wanted Germany to be great again
- a farmworker
- a pensioner.

On the right-hand side write in the parts of the Nazi programme that would appeal to each of these.

SOURCE F

A pro-Nazi newspaper, the *Kreuzzeitung*, explained Hitler's aims in 1922

Hitler opposes the parliamentary system of the Weimar Republic. Hitler's party wants first of all to set up a dictatorship which will last until Germany's present troubles are ended. The dictator in question is evidently Hitler.

The SA

In August 1921 Hitler set about converting the Nazi Party into a mass movement. He organised a series of armed groups under the title 'Gymnastic and Sports Sections'. In October he changed the name to Sturm Abteilung (SA) or Stormtroopers. The SA attracted many ex-soldiers, especially from the Freikorps, which had been disbanded in 1920. These were men who felt betrayed by the Treaty of Versailles. The SA offered them a new uniform in which to fight for Germany. They would disrupt the meetings of Hitler's opponents, especially the Communists, and often beat up opposition supporters. Their uniform was brown and so they were known as the 'Brownshirts'.

There is no doubt that the SA gave Hitler the confidence to try to seize power in 1923.

SOURCE G

A Nazi poster of 1934. The SA man is shown as a heroic figure, worshipped by children and hated by Jews.



The first leader of the SA was Ernst Röhm.



Profile on

Ernst Röhm

From childhood Röhm had wanted to be a soldier. He was a captain in the German army during the First World War. He was a tough, brutal but very efficient leader. He had a very violent temper. After the war he joined the Freikorps and helped crush the Spartacist uprising. He was a founder member of the German Workers' Party in 1919. He supported Hitler when he took over as Nazi leader in 1921 and he set up and ran the SA for Hitler in 1921. He was a homosexual which was bad publicity for the Nazi Party.

Nazi growth

The Nazi Party was based in Munich but it soon began to spread to other parts of Germany. The Nazis published their own newspaper to spread their ideas. They received support from extreme nationalists and anti-Communists. By 1922 the Nazi Party had 3000 members.

The Munich Putsch 1923

In 1923 Hitler attempted to seize power for the first time. This attempt failed but had important long-term consequences for the Nazi Party.

Why did Hitler attempt the putsch?

Hitler had several reasons for attempting the putsch:

- He wanted to destroy the Weimar Republic.
- Hitler had developed an increasingly close relationship with the former army leader, General Ludendorff, and he believed that if it came to a crisis Ludendorff would be willing and able to persuade the German army to desert the government and side with the Nazis.
- The Bavarian government was right-wing. Its leaders, Gustav von Kahr and General von Lossow, had been plotting against the republic. Hitler felt sure they would support a putsch.
- The Italian leader, Benito Mussolini, had successfully marched on Rome the previous year and taken over the Italian government. Hitler hoped to secure Bavaria and then march on Berlin.
- There was much discontent in Germany in 1923 due to the effects of hyperinflation. Many nationalists were furious when, in September, Stresemann's government called off passive resistance in Ruhr and resumed paying reparations to the French.

The events of the putsch

On 8 November 1923 a meeting being addressed by Gustav von Kahr, the head of the Bavarian government, was suddenly interrupted by a Nazi demonstration. SA men surrounded the hall, and Hitler burst in holding a revolver. He announced that he was taking over the government of Bavaria. He tried to persuade Kahr to support him but the latter said nothing. Kahr was locked in a room, from which he managed to escape sometime during the night.

Hitler tried again the following day, 9 November, with about 3000 supporters, some of whom were SA men. This time he was met by armed police called out by Kahr to break up the march. Sixteen of the marchers were killed when the police opened fire but Hitler stayed in the background and fled the scene. Later he was arrested and put on trial for treason.

Question

What is the significance of the date, 9 November?

SOURCE A

A painting made later by one of Hitler's followers who took part in the putsch. In the foreground the police are opening fire on the Nazis. Hitler stands with his arm raised with Ludendorff on his right.



SOURCE B

Part of Hitler's evidence to the trial

I alone bear responsibility for the putsch but I am not a criminal because of that. There is no such thing as high treason against the traitors of 1918. I only wanted what's best for the German people.

Questions

- 1 What impression does the painter give of the putsch (Source A)?
- 2 Is this a reliable source of evidence? Give reasons for your answer.

Results of the putsch

The putsch does appear to have been a total failure:

- Hitler failed to win the support of Kahr, the Bavarian army or the police.
- In February 1924 he was put on trial and Kahr appeared as one of the prosecution witnesses.
- Hitler was sentenced to five years in prison.

In many ways, however, it proved a success for Hitler and the Nazis.

Hitler turned his trial into a propaganda success. He used the occasion to attack the Republic.

The trial provided Hitler with nationwide publicity. The court was sympathetic to Hitler. Instead of sentencing him to death as it might have done, it gave him the minimum sentence for the offence – five years. The judge also made it clear he could expect an early release.

SOURCE C

A cartoon drawn at the end of Hitler's trial. It shows Ludendorff and Hitler shouting from Munich beer mugs that they are Germany's saviours. The judge below says 'Rubbish. The worst charge we can bring is breaking public entertainment by-laws.'



Activity

Using the information on these pages make out a balance sheet of successes and failures.

Successes Failures

SOURCE A

The Nazi Party's performance in Reichstag elections 1924–28

Date	Nazi seats
1924 (May)	32
1924 (Dec.)	14
1928	12

SOURCE D

Hitler speaking in the mid-1920s

Instead of working to achieve power by armed coup (putsch), we shall have to hold our noses and enter the Reichstag against the opposition deputies. If outvoting them takes longer than outshooting them, at least the results will be guaranteed by their own constitution. Sooner or later we shall have a majority, and after that – Germany.

In fact, Hitler served just nine months of his sentence. He was confined to Landsberg

Prison but in special conditions. He was allowed as many visitors as he wished and he spent much of the time dictating the first part of his book, *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle).

Most important of all the failure of the putsch made Hitler change his tactics.

This new legal approach was to be important in the years 1929–33.

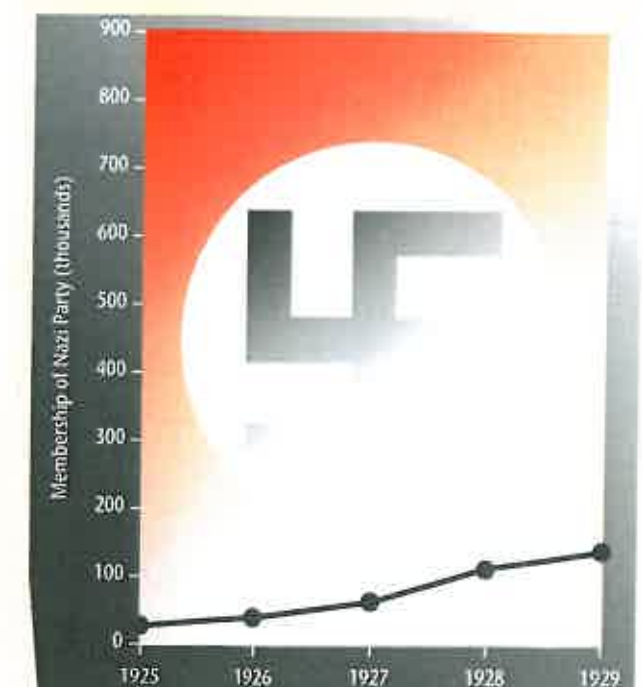
Questions

- 1 What point is the cartoonist making in Source C?
- 2 Was the Munich Putsch a failure? Give reasons for your answer.

The fortunes of the Nazi Party, 1924–29

SOURCE B

Nazi Party membership, 1925–29



SOURCE D

A Nazi election poster. It says that the sacrifices made by Germany in the First World War were in vain.



SOURCE C

From the Nazi newspaper the *Munich Observer*, 31 May 1928 after the Reichstag election

The election results from the rural areas in particular have proved that with a little more money and time better results can be achieved in the big cities.

SOURCE E

Hitler refounding the Nazi Party in February 1925, following his release from prison three months earlier



SOURCE F

William Shirer, an American journalist living in Germany, gave this verdict on the Nazis after the elections of 1928

Nazism appears to be a dying cause. It got support because of the country's problems such as hyper-inflation and the French invasion of the Ruhr. Now that the country's outlook is bright it is dying away. One scarcely hears of Hitler except as the butt of jokes.

Focus on

Developments in the Nazi Party, 1924–29

- 1924 Hitler served prison sentence for Munich Putsch, Nazi Party banned.
- 1925 In February, the ban on the Nazis was lifted. Hitler relaunched the party.
- 1926 Nazi organisations were established to try to appeal to certain interest groups:
 - The Nazi Student's League
 - The Teacher's League
 - the Women's League.

A Nazi Party rally was held at Weimar. This began the pattern of military-style parades.

In February Hitler defeated Gregor Strasser in a party leadership contest.

- 1927 Hitler reorganised the party to make it more efficient:
 - He created a national headquarters in Munich and insisted on the central control of finance and membership.
 - Branches of the party were set up all over Germany and each regional organisation, or *Gau*, was put under the control of a Party official known as a *Gauleiter*.

This is normally seen as a period of failure for the Nazi Party.

Question

Were the Nazis a failure in this period?

Activity

You are a British journalist in Munich in 1928. You are asked to write an article about the Nazi Party. In your article explain:

- Who the Nazis are
- What they stand for
- Who supports them and why
- Their organisation, especially the SA
- Hitler himself.