

# Timeline

## Germany 1890–1945

This book covers over 50 years of Germany's history. It is an extraordinary time in which Germany went through revolution, humiliation, economic chaos, and, of course, two world wars. This period also saw the emergence and rule of one of history's most infamous dictators – Adolf Hitler. This book aims to examine why these events happened and how the lives of ordinary Germans were affected. The timeline on these pages highlights some of the key events of the period.



Pre-history



Ancient times



Medieval



Early modern



Modern

1888

Kaiser Wilhelm II becomes Emperor of Germany



1923

January - French and Belgian troops invade German industrial area of the Ruhr  
Hyperinflation makes money worthless



November - Munich Putsch



1918

November - Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates; the First World War ends

1910

1900

1890

1898

Naval race: Germany begins to expand its navy to compete with Britain's navy

1919

January - Spartacus League revolt  
June - Treaty of Versailles is signed  
August - Weimar Constitution is established

1920

January - American jazz music comes to Germany  
February - Founding of Nazi Party  
March - Kapp Putsch

1920

1922

March - Foundation of Hitler Youth



1924

August - Dawes Plan: US loans money to Germany

1925

February - Hindenburg becomes President

1926

January - Germany joins League of Nations



1929

February - Young Plan is proposed  
October - Wall Street Crash, leading to the Great Depression

1936

August - Summer Olympics held in Berlin  
Membership of the League of German Girls becomes compulsory



1942

January - Wannsee Conference: plan created for extermination of Europe's Jews  
Death camps are set up in German-occupied areas



1945

April - Hitler commits suicide  
May - Surrender of Germany to Allies in the Second World War

1938

November - Kristallnacht: Jewish homes, businesses and synagogues attacked

1939

September - Germany invades Poland: the Second World War begins

1945

1930

1930

The Depression takes hold in Germany



1934

June - Night of the Long Knives; Rohm (below, behind Hitler) is arrested and later shot



1937

Volkswagen car company is formed



# What was Germany like before the First World War?

This book focuses on Germany between 1890 and 1945, but to understand this period properly, you will need to go back a little further and examine what was happening in the years before this. Before 1870, there was no such country as Germany. Instead, there was a collection of small states that were loosely linked together by a similar culture and language. The king of the biggest state, Prussia, wanted to unite all the other German-speaking states together to become more powerful. Nearby, France, Austria and Denmark felt threatened by this, and Prussia had to fight a series of wars against them. By 1871, the new nation of Germany was formed. The King of Prussia became the new German Emperor (or **Kaiser**).

## How was Germany ruled?

Prior to the unification of Germany in 1871, Prussia was the most powerful Germanic state. **Militarism** – the belief that a country should have strong armed forces – was important to Prussia, and it had a mighty army equipped with the most advanced weaponry. When Germany was unified, Prussian generals, army officers and tactics formed the basis of the new united German army – and the German Kaiser was its supreme commander.

The Kaiser ruled over all the states in Germany. Each state sent representatives (known collectively as the **Bundesrat**) to consult with the Kaiser over new laws.

▼ **A** The new country of Germany, created in 1871, was known as the *Second Reich*. *Reich* is the German word for 'empire'. Hundreds of years before, there had been a large German empire in the centre of Europe, called the *Holy Roman Empire*, which was regarded as the *First Reich*. Hitler's Germany was referred to as the *'Third Reich'*.

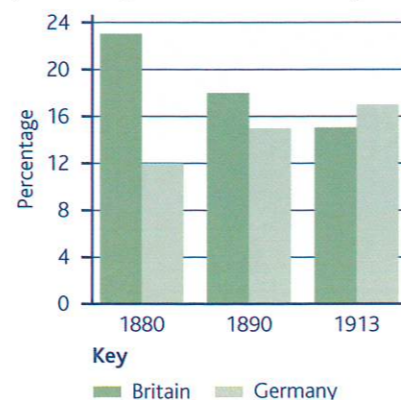


## Objectives

- ▶ **Examine** the growth of parliamentary government and the influence of Prussian militarism during Kaiser Wilhelm II's rule.
- ▶ **Explore** how Germans felt in relation to the impact of industrialisation, socialism and the Naval Laws.

The Kaiser was supported by advisers or ministers, and the chief minister was called **Chancellor** – rather like a Prime Minister. Also, there was a parliament (**Reichstag**), which was elected by all men over age 25. The Reichstag discussed and voted on the laws that the Kaiser and his ministers drew up. The Bundesrat discussed these laws too. However, one of the problems faced by the Kaiser's governments was that he could choose to ignore their advice and make all the decisions he wanted to on his own. The Kaiser also made all decisions that related to the army, navy and other foreign countries.

▼ **B** The success of German industry. This bar chart shows the changing percentage share of world industrial production for Britain and Germany.



## Kaiser Wilhelm II

In 1888, the 29-year-old **Wilhelm** became Kaiser. He was the grandson of Britain's Queen Victoria and the cousin of Britain's future king, George V. When he became Kaiser, Britain was the world's most powerful country; it had the largest empire, and dominated world trade. Britain also had a navy that was twice the size of its two closest rivals added together. Wilhelm dreamed of making Germany as great as Britain, and began by building up Germany's industry. This process is called **industrialisation**. Supported by rich, powerful German businessmen, Wilhelm's desires came true and, by 1913, Germany was producing more iron and steel and as much coal as Britain. In industries such as electrical goods and chemicals, German companies dominated Europe.

## Parliamentary government and the growth of socialism

The success of German industry had made many landowners, business and factory owners very rich. These people, along with noble army officers, were a powerful force in Germany at this time and had much influence with the Kaiser. They were keen to preserve their positions of influence, but things were changing. Many workers in the new factories, mines and workshops were unhappy because their wages were low, working conditions were poor, and food was expensive. More and more working class people joined **trade unions** and organised strikes in the hope that this might force the Kaiser, his advisers and the politicians in the Reichstag to try to improve their conditions.

Many ordinary workers voted for a new political party called the Social Democratic Party (**SPD**). They believed in **socialism** – the idea that power and wealth should be shared equally among the people. The Social Democrats hoped that the Kaiser might share some of his power, and allow the Reichstag to make more social reforms or laws to improve workers' rights and conditions. Around one in three Germans voted for this political party at this time. There were some socialists who took a more extreme view: they wanted to rebel against the Kaiser's rule, start a revolution, take over the country, and allow cities and towns to be governed by councils of workers. The rise in popularity of socialism is one of the major events in Germany at this time – and was potentially a major problem for the government.

## Key Words

Kaiser militarism Bundesrat Chancellor Reichstag industrialisation trade union SPD socialism

## Key Biography

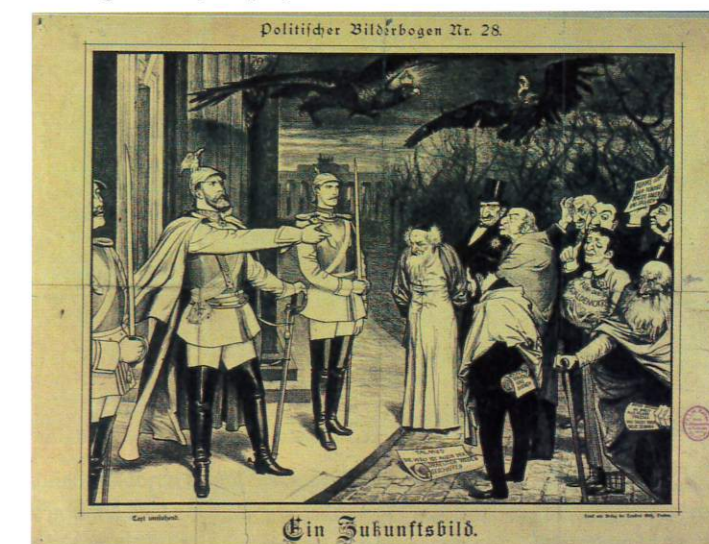
### Kaiser Wilhelm II (reigned 1888–1918)

**Character:** very energetic with a strong, outgoing personality. Could be charming and kind – but also impatient and rude. As Kaiser, if ministers didn't do what he wanted, he would sack them.



**Career:** spent most of his youth in the army. Replaced his father when he unexpectedly died of cancer after just three months as the second Kaiser. He was keen to maintain a powerful army and build up a large navy. He also took great pride in leading the army and took a great interest in military tactics.

▼ **SOURCE C** An anti-socialist poster from 1898, showing the Kaiser addressing a crowd of people; the poster caption reads, 'It is a matter of urgency that we displace any visions of a future social democracy from the imagination of the people.'



## Work

- 1 Study bar chart **B**. What can we learn from this about the success of German industry before the First World War?
- 2 Look at **Source C**.
  - a What is a 'socialist'?
  - b Why do you think the Kaiser would be so keen to banish socialism from Germany?

# What was Germany like before the First World War?

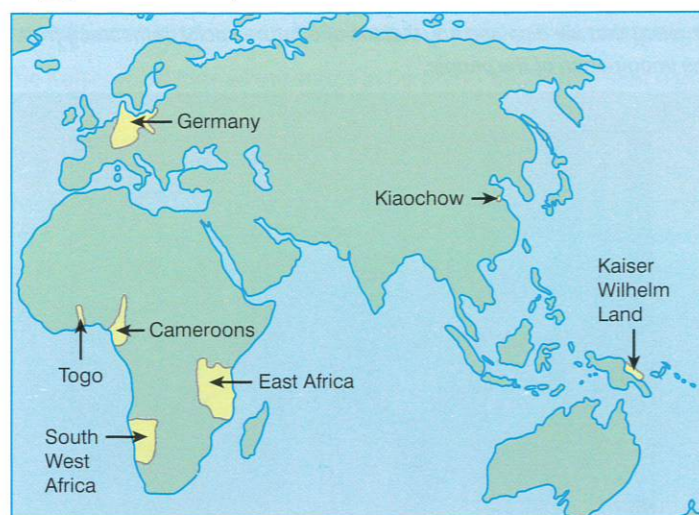
## 'A place in the sun'

Around this time, many of the larger European countries (such as France, Britain and Portugal) had extensive overseas empires. The Kaiser decided that Germany should have an empire abroad too. He wanted to transform Germany into a global power with control over countries in different parts of the world. This idea was known as *Weltpolitik*, meaning 'world policy'. In the late 1800s, Germany began to do what many other European countries were doing – they took over other nations, most notably in Africa.

▼ **SOURCE D** In a debate in the Reichstag in 1897, Prince Bernhard von Bulow, a German politician responsible for foreign affairs, said:

In one word: we wish to throw no-one into the shade, but we demand our place in the sun.

## ▼ E The German Empire in 1913



▼ **INTERPRETATION F** Adapted from Kaiser Wilhelm's autobiography, written in 1926. This extract helps to explain the reasons for Germany's culture of militarism:

I had a peculiar passion for the navy. It sprang to no small extent from my English blood. When I was a little boy I admired the proud British ships. There awoke in me the will to build ships of my own like those someday, and when I was grown up to possess as fine a navy as the English.

▼ **SOURCE G** Africa was not the only place that the big European powers were interested in at this time. This political cartoon from 1898 shows Britain (represented by Queen Victoria), Germany (represented by Kaiser Wilhelm II), along with France and Italy discussing how they might divide up China.



## Protecting the new empire

The Kaiser wanted a large navy of powerful battleships for several reasons. He thought it would help Germany take over more countries and protect the countries already in the German Empire. He was a very militaristic man who wanted the German navy to rival Britain's vast navy. A series of Naval Laws, introduced between 1898 and 1912, saw the German navy rapidly increase in size, and huge sums of money were spent to achieve this. The Kaiser expanded the size of the German army too. Taxes were raised and money was borrowed to pay for this – and Germany would remain in debt for a very long time.

▼ **SOURCE H** This 1908 poster was issued by the SPD, who were against spending too much on battleships. The people on the left ask, 'Are these paid for?' and the woman (representing Germany's new military power) responds, 'No, all on borrowed money'.



## Practice Question

Describe two problems faced by Kaiser Wilhelm II's governments in ruling Germany up to 1914. **4 marks**

## Study Tip

You will need to show that you can describe events or issues that German governments faced during this period, and explain why or in what ways these issues would be viewed differently by different groups of people.

## Key Words

*Weltpolitik*

## Work

- Test your understanding of this chapter by explaining the following key words and terms: industrialisation; Second Reich; Kaiser; Chancellor; Reichstag; Bundesrat.
- Summarise how Germany had become a more powerful nation before the First World War by writing a sentence or two under the following headings: A new nation; The rule of Kaiser Wilhelm II; Germany's industrial strength; *Weltpolitik* and 'a place in the sun'. List any other reasons why you think Germany had become powerful.
- Historians often study texts or images, created at the time something was happening, to help them understand how people at the time felt about it. These texts or images are known as sources.
  - Look at **Source D**. What do you think Bulow meant by 'a place in the sun'? You might want to use the map of the German Empire in 1913 to help you.
  - Look at **Source H**.
    - What are the people on the cliff looking at?
    - Who were the Social Democrats?
    - What concerns do the Social Democrats have about the increase in size of Germany's navy?

## Extension

Create a list of six different types of source (for example, a speech or a newspaper article) that might help you to learn about Germany before the First World War. How would each type of source be useful to historians? (There are three on this spread.)

# Germany and the First World War

In August 1914, the First World War began when Germans and Austrians went to war against the French, British, Russians, Belgians and Serbs. Over the next four years, other countries joined in. When war first broke out, it had been very popular in Germany. Young, patriotic Germans thought the war would end quickly. Instead, soldiers were worn down by bombs, poisonous gas and machine gun fire; ordinary Germans suffered too. What were conditions like in Germany during the war, and how did these problems lead to revolution?

## Objectives

- ▶ Outline the German economic and political events leading up to the end of the First World War.
- ▶ Assess the impact of war on Germany.

## Germany at war

People in Germany soon started to suffer during the war, when the British used their large navy to stop supply ships getting to Germany. As a result, there were terrible shortages of food, medicines and clothing. As the war continued, people grew weary and tired of it. In 1915, 500 women gathered in front of the German parliament buildings and said that they wanted their men back from the trenches. A year later, 10,000 workers assembled in Berlin to shout, 'Down with war, down with the government!' The police quickly moved in to make arrests and calm the situation.

## Impact of war

By 1918, Germany was close to collapse. The German people were so short of food that they were surviving on turnips and bread, and a deadly flu epidemic was sweeping the country, killing thousands already weak from a poor diet. On the battlefields, too, Germany was close to defeat. In October, General Ludendorff, a leading German army general and war hero, told German politicians that they could never win the war. He advised the Kaiser that the British, French and Americans might treat Germany more fairly if the country became more democratic – in other words, the Kaiser must share more of his power with the German parliament. The Kaiser reluctantly did exactly that. He allowed the main political parties to form a new government, and transferred some of his powers to the Reichstag. However, the changes came too late to satisfy the German people. More demonstrations were held against the war and some said the Kaiser should give up his throne. Others talked of overthrowing him in a revolution.

## Mutiny and revolution

On 28 October 1918, the German navy was ordered out to sea from Kiel in northern Germany to attack British ships. Sailors on the ships refused to follow orders because they no longer wanted to fight. News of their **mutiny** began to spread. In ports nearby, other sailors refused to follow orders. Workers in the towns supported

▼ **INTERPRETATION A** *The words of a Berlin resident, adapted from Germany by Robert Gibson and Jon Nicol (1985):*

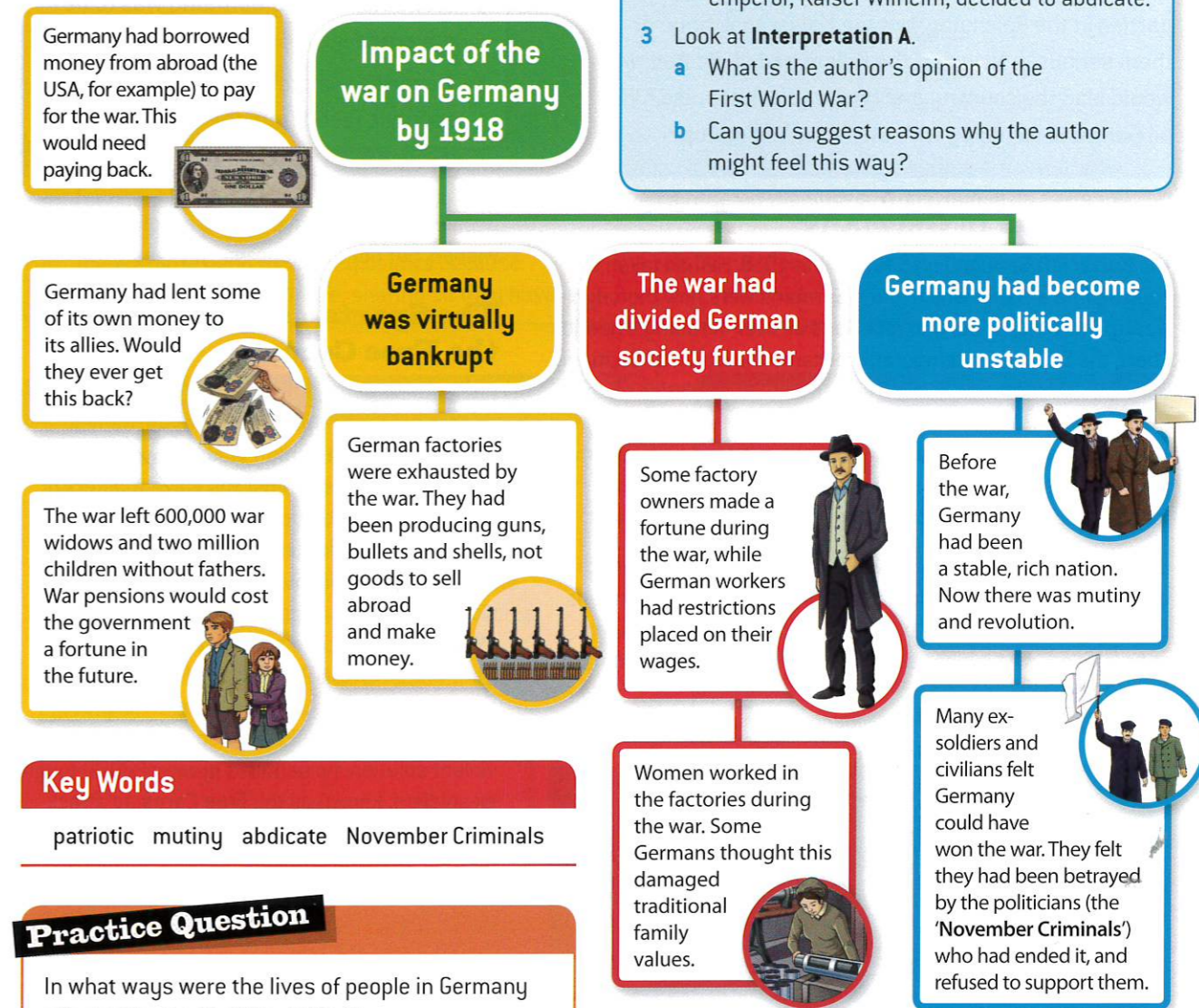
A general war weariness became apparent. The queues at the food shops grew longer every day. In the queues were thin faces, weak bodies and hungry eyes. What had once been a popular movement now seemed to be destroyed. Nobody read the posters and the reports from the front anymore. Grumbling spread. Demonstrations for food turned into ones for peace. Victory or defeat, heroism, battles, the Kaiser's speeches, it suddenly became unimportant. Hunger was a ghost, invisible but to be felt everywhere.

them. Soldiers, sent to deal with the protests, joined the sailors and workers. They took over towns there and set up special councils to run them. In just six days, workers' and soldiers' councils were governing cities all over Germany, such as Hamburg and Munich. The country was in chaos and there was little the Kaiser could do. He had lost control and his army generals refused to support him. On 9 November 1918, he **abdicated** and secretly left Germany, never to return.

## The end of the war

Friedrich Ebert, the leader of Germany's largest political party (the SPD), took the Kaiser's place as leader of Germany, on a temporary basis.

He promised to hold elections soon. If ordinary German people wanted him as their leader, they would get the chance to vote for him if they wished. Meanwhile, he gave the people what they really wanted – an end to the war. On 11 November 1918, Germany surrendered: the First World War was over.



## Key Words

patriotic mutiny abdicate November Criminals

## Practice Question

In what ways were the lives of people in Germany affected by the First World War? Explain your answer. 8 marks

## Study Tip

Before beginning a question like this, you could make a short list and brainstorm all the different ways in which the war made an impact on ordinary Germans. Can you put these effects into categories, such as effects on health, work, family life and so on? These rough notes could be used to create a plan to help you structure your answer properly.

## Work

- 1 How did the First World War affect ordinary Germans?
- 2 a Explain what is meant by the word 'abdicate'.  
b In your own words, explain why Germany's emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm, decided to abdicate.
- 3 Look at **Interpretation A**.  
a What is the author's opinion of the First World War?  
b Can you suggest reasons why the author might feel this way?

## Extension

An interpretation is a person's view of an event or an experience that has happened in the past. Remember that every person's view depends on their background and circumstances, so two different people, each witnessing the same thing, may have different opinions about it. Can you think of times when a person's interpretation of an event might be different from another person's – even though they may have witnessed the same event?

## 2.2A What was the Weimar Republic?

Despite having help from the Reichstag, it was the Kaiser who had made the major laws and decisions in Germany. He only allowed his Reichstag to change laws occasionally. There were a number of different political parties in the Reichstag, but the Kaiser took none of them seriously. Now that the Kaiser had abdicated, who would lead the country, and how would it be ruled? Would all Germans be happy with their new leadership?

### Revolution in Germany

The Kaiser left Germany on 9 November 1918. He had taken the country into a war of which many Germans were now thoroughly weary. There were riots and rebellions all over Germany. Friedrich Ebert, the SPD leader, temporarily became the leader of Germany. One of the first actions he took was to sign an **armistice** to end the First World War. Next, Ebert ordered improvements to working conditions, help for the unemployed, improved housing, and more food supplies. He guaranteed freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and arranged elections for a new German parliament.

Ebert declared that Germany would be a **democratic republic** from now on – there would be no Kaisers. Instead, ordinary Germans could choose their leaders by voting for them. Ebert appeared to be a leader who supported equality, and would allow ordinary

▼ **SOURCE A** Friedrich Ebert, leader of the Social Democratic Party



### Objectives

- **Identify** how the Weimar Republic was established.
- **Examine** the way Germany was to be governed.
- **Describe** the problems that the new republic faced from the beginning.

people to vote and have a voice in politics if they wished, but not everyone was pleased.

### The Spartacists and the Free Corps

One of the many political groups in Germany at this time was the **Spartacus League**, named after Spartacus, a Roman gladiator who led a rebellion of slaves against the slave-masters of ancient Rome. They believed in a new political idea called **communism**, and wanted Germany to be run by small councils of soldiers and workers, not by a large parliament. On 6 January 1919, the Spartacists tried to take over Berlin, Germany's capital. Thousands of them roamed the streets, firing guns and trying to take over important buildings. Ebert responded with a violent solution: he sent in a group of 2000 tough ex-soldiers, known as the **Free Corps**, to attack the Spartacists. After three days of brutal street fighting, the Free Corps recaptured buildings and arrested Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, the Spartacist leaders. After beating them savagely, the Free Corps murdered them; the Spartacus League's revolt was over.

### The Weimar Republic is born

In late January 1919, Ebert held the election that he had promised. His own party, the SPD, won the most votes and Ebert became the new German President. Because of all the recent violence in Berlin, the newly elected politicians, with Ebert as President, met up on 11 February 1919 in another German town called Weimar. They met to discuss how to run Germany. This was the start of the **Weimar Republic**.

### Fact

#### Communism

The Spartacus League was a **left-wing**, communist political party in Germany. They believed in communism, which is a political idea about how best to run a country. Communists believe that:

- Everyone is equal (men and women); there are no different classes and no great differences in wealth. As you might expect, this belief attracts poorer workers.
- There is no private property and the government (or council) runs farms and businesses for the benefit of all people.
- There is little need for money or laws because everyone lives a simple life, sharing all they have

with others. Eventually there will be no need for governments or councils at all because people will live in harmony, only taking what they need and working as hard as they can.

There was much fear of communism in many European countries. In 1917, Russia became the world's first communist country; communists took away land from landlords and gave it to peasants, put banks and factories under government control, and even murdered the Russian royal family. In Germany, many richer Germans feared that this would happen if the communists took over.

### Fact

#### Free Corps

The Free Corps was a group of ex-soldiers who had recently come home from the First World War. They hated the Spartacists (and communists in general) because they blamed them for stirring up trouble in Germany near the end of the war. The Free Corps argued that this trouble was a major reason for Germany's defeat. There were other communist uprisings in Germany (in Bavaria in May 1919 and in the Ruhr in March 1920), which the Free Corps ended with savage brutality.

▼ **SOURCE B** A Free Corps soldier standing next to dead workers, following street fights in Berlin, January 1919



### Work

- 1 How did the 'Weimar Republic' get its name?
- 2 **a** To help you revise, define the following terms: communism, Spartacus League, Free Corps.  
**b** In your own words, explain why the Spartacists and the Free Corps fought against each other.
- 3 Can you suggest reasons why Ebert won the election and became Germany's first President?
- 4 In your own opinion, do you think that Ebert would have had an easy or difficult job in governing Germany? Suggest reasons for your answer. Try to include details about the sort of people or groups who might or might not support him.

### Key Words

armistice democratic republic  
Spartacus League communism  
Free Corps Weimar Republic left-wing

# 2.2B What was the Weimar Republic?

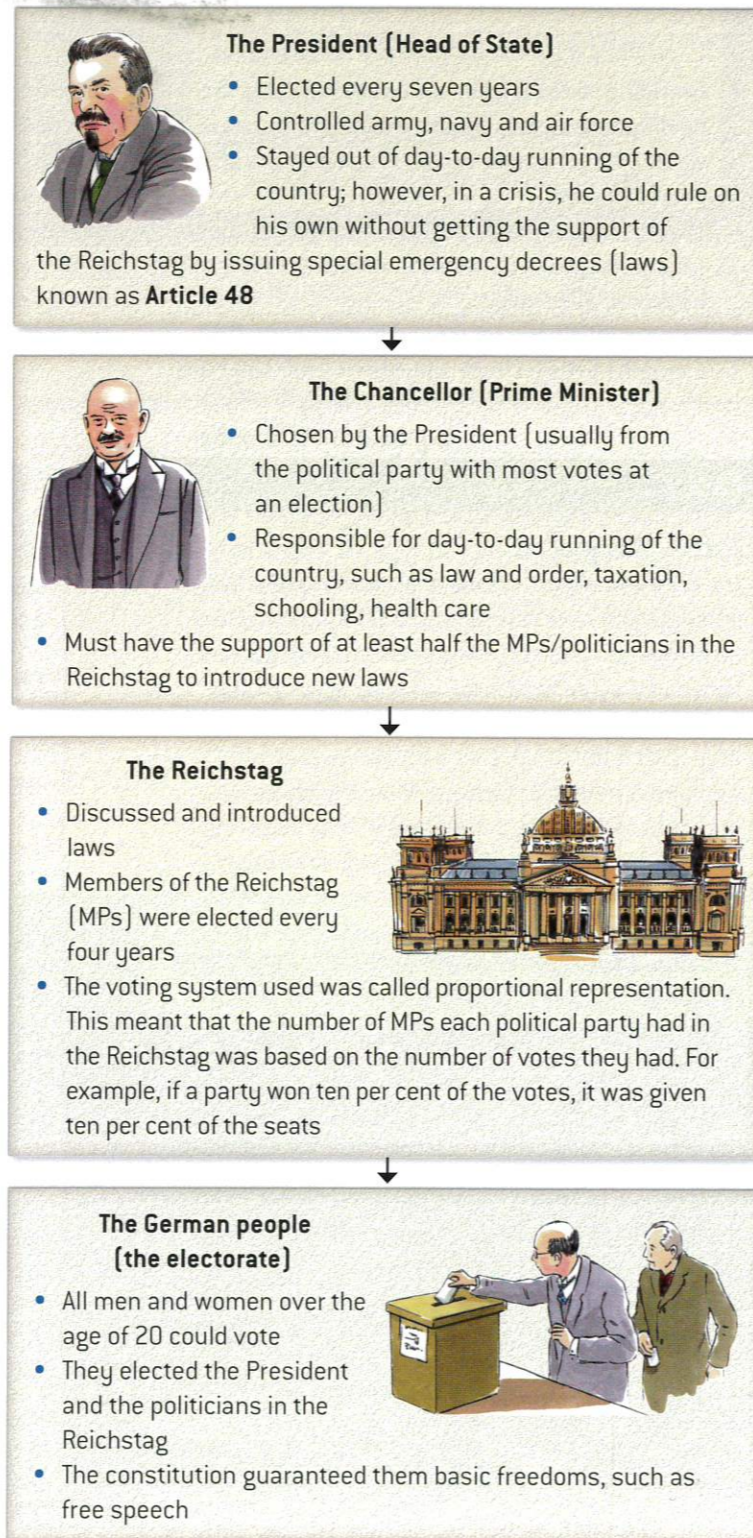
In 1919, Germany's politicians drew up the Weimar **Constitution**, which was a formal set of rules for how Germany would be governed. It was a far more democratic system than when the Kaiser ruled Germany. In fact, the Weimar Republic was one of the most democratic countries anywhere in the world.

## The structure of the Weimar Constitution

The new constitution was very fair. All Germans had equal rights, including the right to vote. The fact that all women over the age of 20 could vote shows that Germany was more forward-thinking than many other countries [in Britain, for example, only women over the age of 28 could vote]. However, the new system of government had several weaknesses:

- **Proportional representation** meant that lots of different political parties were able to win seats in the Reichstag. Sometimes there were over 20 different political parties all arguing over a single issue! This made it difficult to make decisions and introduce laws. In fact, between 1919 and 1933, no political party ever won more than half the votes in any election. As a result, they didn't get more than half the seats. With no **majority**, the leading party had to do deals with smaller groups in order to get anything done. Again, this made law-making a very slow process.
- Many groups didn't like this new democratic system of governing at all. Some of the older army generals, judges, upper-class families, rich factory owners and university professors longed for the 'good old days' when the Kaiser ruled Germany. The new system of government was linked to the surrender at the end of the First World War. The politicians who had lost the war in 1918 (the 'November Criminals') were changing the way the country was ruled.

▼ C The Constitution of the Weimar Republic



▼ D The main German political parties in Weimar Germany. Their names are in English but they have been given their German initials.

Political party:	Communist Party (KPD)	Social Democratic Party (SPD)	German Democratic Party (DDP)	Centre Party (Zentrum)	People's Party (DVP)	National People's Party (DNVP)	National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP or Nazis)
<b>Supporters:</b>	Working class	Mostly working class	Middle class, for example lawyers, writers	Catholics from all classes [Southern Germany was mainly Catholic]	Middle class, mainly businessmen	Middle and upper classes, some ex-soldiers	Unemployed, mainly ex-soldiers; some support from middle and upper classes who feared communists
<b>Attitude to Weimar Republic (anti = against, pro = for):</b>	Anti-republic	Pro-republic; Ebert was a Social Democrat	Pro-republic	Pro-republic	Pro-republic, but would like a return to having a Kaiser in future	Anti-republic	Anti-republic
<b>Policies:</b>	Thought Germany should be a communist country and run by workers' councils, not by parliament	Believed everyone was equal; wanted democracy and reforms to help ordinary workers	Believed in individual freedom, for example rights to hold peaceful meetings, freedom of speech	Supported the interests and beliefs of the Catholic Church	Supported any policy that promoted trade and industry [to make money]	Wanted strong government, perhaps led by one strong politician or a Kaiser again	Wanted Germany to be a great nation with great military power again; hated democracy and wanted a strong government ruled by one man. Hated communism because it states that all people are equal; Nazis believed that some races and nations were better than others

### Fact

#### Weimar Republic

Historians like to give names to different periods of time in a country's history, for example Victorian Britain or Nazi Germany. Between 1919 and 1933, Germany was known as the Weimar Republic or Weimar Germany, because this was a period when the country was run from Weimar as a republic [by a parliament with no emperor or Kaiser].

### Work

- 1 Look at table D.
  - a Which three major political parties did not support the new, democratic way Germany was governed?
  - b Why did each of these parties dislike the Weimar Republic?
- 2
  - a In your own words, explain what is meant by the term 'proportional representation'.
  - b What are the advantages and disadvantages of this system?

### Key Words

constitution proportional representation majority Article 48

### Extension

Look at diagram C. What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of the constitution? Who benefited in the new structure? Do you think it would have worked? Remember to include and justify your own opinion here.

# Why did Germans hate the Treaty of Versailles?

After the First World War ended, the winning countries met at the Palace of Versailles, near Paris, France, to decide what to do with the losing countries. In March 1919, the winning Allies (France, Great Britain and the USA) announced what was going to happen to Germany for their part in the fighting. The Germans were horrified by the very tough terms. What could their politicians do about the punishments, and how did ordinary people react to the news?

## Objectives

- ▶ Consider the ways in which Germany was punished by the Treaty of Versailles.
- ▶ Assess the impact of the treaty on post-war Germany.

## How was Germany treated?

The Treaty of Versailles was a list of punishments, instructions and orders that Germany had to follow. The treaty stated:

- The war was Germany's fault, so Germany must pay for the cost of the war (which was later set at £6.6 billion).
- The money (known as **reparations**) is to be paid to the winners in installments, lasting until 1988.
- Germany should only have a small army (100,000 soldiers), a small navy (six battleships), and no submarines, tanks or airforce.
- Germany must hand over its colonies abroad to the winning countries.
- Large areas of German land is to be used to create new countries for people who had been previously ruled by others (such as Poland and Czechoslovakia).
- Germany must never unite with Austria again.
- No German soldiers should enter the Rhineland, an area of Germany next to France.

The new German government was not invited to the discussions. Instead, after the terms were decided, the Germans were told they had to accept them – or else the country would face invasion from Britain, France and the USA. The new German government decided to sign the treaty on 28 June 1919, rather than put the country through another war. The following day, a German newspaper summed up the feelings of many.

## German reactions to the Treaty of Versailles

Germans hated the treaty for three main reasons. Firstly, the Germans felt it was too harsh. The treaty took away large areas of land which meant losing people, factories, farms and mines. They had to pay a large amount of money to the winners too.

▼ **SOURCE A** From the front page of one of Germany's leading newspapers, *Deutsche Zeitung* (the Hall of Mirrors is a huge mirrored room inside the Palace of Versailles):

Vengeance German nation!  
Today in the Hall of Mirrors a disgraceful treaty was signed. Never forget it. There will be vengeance for the shame of 1919.

They felt humiliated and angry with the way their country had been treated.

Secondly, Germans hated the fact that the treaty had been forced on them. They were ordered to sign it, without discussion. They called it a '*diktat*' – a dictated peace.

Finally, many Germans felt that they had not really lost the war at all! Instead, Germany's new politicians had betrayed the country by asking for a ceasefire as soon as the Kaiser had left Germany in November 1918. Some Germans, including soldiers, thought Germany could have carried on fighting, but was betrayed by the politicians who ended the war (nicknamed the 'November Criminals'). Field Marshall Hindenburg, a great German war hero even said at the time, 'The German army was stabbed in the back. No blame is to be attached to the army. It is perfectly clear on whom the blame rests.'

▼ **INTERPRETATION B** From Adolf Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*, published 1925–26, where he recorded his thoughts on the Treaty of Versailles:

Each point of that treaty could have been engraved on the minds and hearts of the German people and burned into them until sixty million men and women would find their souls aflame with a feeling of rage and shame.

▼ **INTERPRETATION C** Adapted from a book by historian Sally Marks called *The Illusion of Peace: International Relations in Europe 1918–1933*, written in 1976:

The Treaty of Versailles is severe, but it is amazing it is not more so. Thanks to Wilson's insistence, Germany lost remarkably little territory, considering how thoroughly it had lost the war. True, the colonies were gone, but the European losses were relatively few. The real difficulty was not that the treaty was exceptionally severe, but that the Germans thought it was, and in time persuaded others it was.

▼ **SOURCE D** The caption for this 1924 poster asks, 'Who in the war stabbed the German army in the back?' It accuses German politicians of doing this.



## Key Words

reparations *diktat*

## Work

- 1 What was the Treaty of Versailles?
- 2 Look at **Source A**. What does this show about the German newspaper's attitude towards the treaty?
- 3 Look at the list of treaty terms. Why do you think Germans hated losing so much land?
- 4 Study **Interpretation B**.
  - a What is this writer's opinion of the Treaty of Versailles?
  - b Can you suggest reasons why the writer might feel this way?

## Practice Question

How does **Interpretation C** differ from **Interpretation B** about the terms of the Treaty of Versailles? **4 marks**

Why might the authors of **Interpretations B** and **C** have a different interpretation about the treaty? **4 marks**

Which interpretation do you find more convincing about the impact of the Treaty of Versailles? **8 marks**

## Study Tip

These are questions to do with interpretations. Remember to explain your answers using **Interpretations B** and **C** and your contextual knowledge. You could look at pages 34–35 for advice on how to respond to these types of questions.

# 1923: The Weimar Republic in trouble

In December 1921, a loaf of bread in Berlin cost about four marks. By September 1923, it cost about 1.5 million marks. Unbelievably, by November 1923, to buy a loaf would cost 201 billion marks! Why did such drastic price increases occur in Germany, and how did hyperinflation, as these price rises were known, affect different groups in German society? How did ordinary Germans feel about their government during this period?

## Objectives

- Explain the link between the invasion of the Ruhr and hyperinflation.
- Assess the impact of hyperinflation on ordinary Germans.

## Reparations

In the Treaty of Versailles, Germany was ordered to pay reparations to the winning countries. In 1921, it was specified that they had to pay 132 billion gold marks – or £6.6 billion – in yearly installments for the next 66 years. Later that year, the German government scraped together their first installment of two billion gold marks and handed it over to France and Belgium. These were the two countries that had been most damaged by the fighting. Some of the payment was in gold, but most of it was in goods like coal, iron and wood.

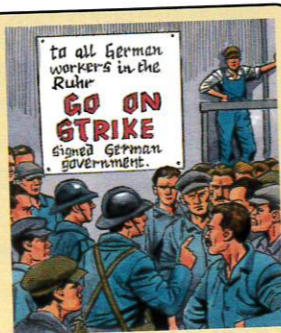
## Germany fails to pay

In 1922, when the next payment was due, the Germans announced that they could not afford to pay. The French and Belgians didn't believe them and decided to take what they were owed by force. In January 1923, 60,000 French and Belgian soldiers marched into the Ruhr, a rich, industrial area of Germany. They took control of every factory, mine and railway in the region. They also took food and goods from shops and arrested any Germans who stood up to them. The consequences of this invasion were remarkable. They led to the hyperinflation of 1923 and the amazing 201 billion-mark loaf of bread! How did this happen?

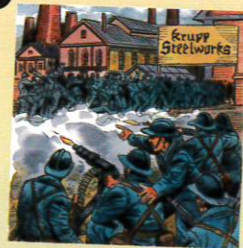
1 French and Belgian soldiers began to take what was owed to them from Germany back to France.



2 The German government ordered its workers in the Ruhr to not fight back, but instead to go on strike and not help the soldiers remove goods from the country. This was known as passive resistance.



3 French and Belgian soldiers were tough with the strikers. Over 100 of them were killed and 15,000 people were thrown out of their homes as a punishment.



4 The German government met to discuss the crisis. They promised to continue paying the workers on strike, because they were only doing what the government told them to. To make matters worse, Germany was running short of money because the Ruhr wasn't producing coal, iron and steel to sell to other nations.

We must help workers in the Ruhr.

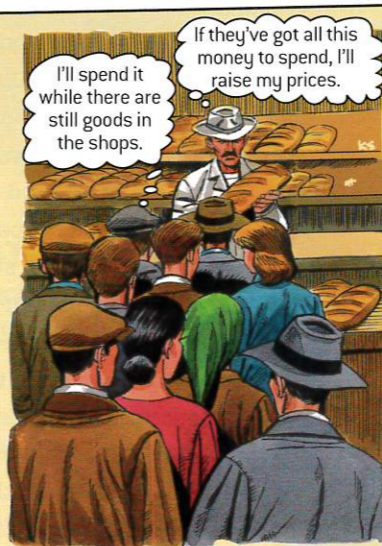


They are on strike and earning no money because we asked them to.

5 To pay their striking workers, the government printed large amounts of money – but this caused lots of problems.



6 The striking workers were being paid for not working, and began to spend their money quickly. In response, shopkeepers began to put up their prices.



I'll spend it while there are still goods in the shops.

If they've got all this money to spend, I'll raise my prices.

7 As shops raised their prices all over Germany, the government responded by printing even more money to help people buy things. But the more money the government printed, the faster prices went up.



Prices are rising.

We must print more money to help people buy things.

## Key Words

hyperinflation passive resistance

8 The faster prices went up, the faster people spent their wages. Soon workers were being paid twice a day. They carried their wages around in wheelbarrows, which wasn't even enough to buy a decent meal. The price of goods even rose between joining the back of a queue and reaching the front.

This isn't even enough to buy me a decent meal.



9 I've worked hard all my life and saved money in the bank – now it won't buy me anything because prices are so high.



As expected, the German government and the Weimar politicians lost a lot of support in 1923, since people looked for someone to blame. Their savings had become worthless.

## Work

- Rearrange the following statements into the correct chronological order to reveal a basic account of the hyperinflation crisis of 1923:
  - The German government printed even more money, so shops raised their prices again.
  - German workers were ordered to go on strike in the Ruhr, but continued to get paid.
  - French and Belgian troops invaded the Ruhr in response to the German government's failure to pay them reparations.
  - Soon prices were inflating so fast that it became known as hyperinflation.
  - The German government printed lots of money to pay striking workers and to pay the money they owed France and Belgium.
  - As workers spent money in the shops, shopkeepers began to put up their prices.
- In your own words, write a paragraph to describe how the French invasion of the Ruhr caused the hyperinflation crisis in Germany.

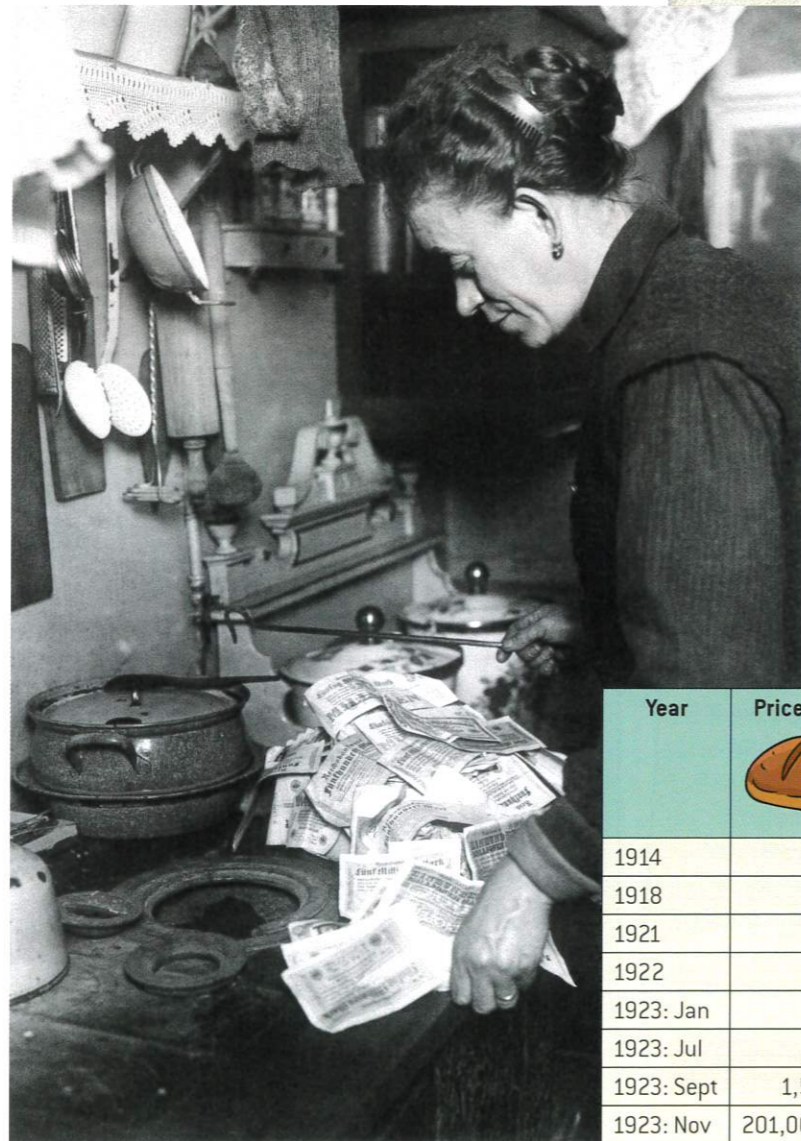


# 1923: The Weimar Republic in trouble

## The impact of hyperinflation

By 1923, German money was worthless. The government had printed so much that it lost all its value. People started to use money to light fires, or to make paper planes or kites to fly. Not surprisingly, many Germans blamed their government for the mess, because it was their decision to call a strike in the Ruhr and then to print so much money. For most Germans, 1923 was the worst year since the end of the First World War.

▼ **SOURCE A** A woman using worthless German banknotes to light her fire in 1923





▼ **INTERPRETATION B** Adapted from a 1976 memoir, *Weimar Eyewitness*, in which a German tells of the problems he witnessed in Germany as a result of hyperinflation:

As soon as the factory gates opened and the workers streamed out, pay packets (often in old cigar boxes) in their hands, a kind of relay race began: the wives grabbed the money, rushed to the nearest shops, and bought food before prices went up again. Salaries always lagged behind, and the employees on monthly pay were worse off than workers on weekly pay.

People living on fixed incomes sank into deeper and deeper poverty. A familiar sight in the streets were handcarts and laundry baskets full of paper money, being pushed or carried to or from the banks. It sometimes happened that thieves stole the baskets but tipped out the money and left it on the spot. There was dry joke that spread through Germany: papering one's toilets with banknotes. Some people made kites for their kids out of them.

▼ **C** Price for a loaf of bread and one egg in Germany, 1914–23

Year	Price of a loaf of bread	Price of one egg
1914		
1918	0.6 marks	0.9 marks
1921	4 marks	0.6 marks
1922	163 marks	7 marks
1923: Jan	250 marks	
1923: Jul	3456 marks	5000 marks
1923: Sept	1,512,000 marks	4,000,000 marks
1923: Nov	201,000,000,000 marks	320,000,000,000 marks

▼ **SOURCE D** A German banknote issued in 1923. Can you see how much it is worth? (Hint: zehn means 10 in German.)



## Practice Question

Which of the following had the greater impact on the German people:

- the Treaty of Versailles
- the hyperinflation crisis of 1923

Explain your answer with reference to both events. **12 marks**

## Impact of hyperinflation on Germans

Hyperinflation affected different people in different ways – but there were far more losers than winners:

- People with savings in the bank were the biggest losers. Some people had saved all their lives to get 1000 marks in the bank. By 1923, this wouldn't even buy them a loaf of bread.
- Elderly people who lived on fixed pensions found their income wouldn't buy them what they needed any more.
- Many small businesses collapsed as normal trade became impossible because of the daily price changes.
- People who had borrowed money found it very easy to pay off their debts. They were the real winners. If a person had borrowed 10,000 marks in 1920 (a lot of money then), they could now pay off their debt with one banknote!

## Study Tip

You will need to look at other pages from this chapter to help you answer the question. See pages 18–19 for the impact of the Treaty of Versailles. For advice on how to answer this style of question see pages 74–75.

## Extension

In what ways were Germans affected by hyperinflation? Explain your answer.

## Work

- Look at **Source D**. This German banknote was issued at the end of August 1923. It was worth 10 million marks.
  - Using the table of bread and egg prices to help you, work out how many eggs you could have bought with this banknote in July 1923. (Hint: divide 10 million by 5000.)
  - How many eggs could you have bought in November 1923?
- Explain how the following people would have been affected by hyperinflation:
  - a school leaver looking for their first job
  - a farmer who had borrowed money in 1919 and owed 5000 marks
  - an elderly woman, living alone on her fixed pension
  - a married couple who had saved all their lives for retirement and had 20,000 marks in the bank.
- Read **Interpretation B**. In what ways does it show that money had lost its value?
- Why do you think hyperinflation turned many ordinary Germans against their government?

### 3.1

# Murders and uprisings

Source A shows a German politician (standing up in the black coat), Matthias Erzberger, about to sign the piece of paper which officially ended the First World War. The armistice, as the ceasefire was known, said that the fighting would stop and all German soldiers would return to Germany. Three years later, Erzberger, one of the so-called 'November Criminals', was assassinated by a right-wing group, for being a traitor to his own country for signing the armistice. His assassination was one of many murders, rebellions and uprisings against the Weimar government in the years after the war. Why was there so much violence and protest at this time?

## Objectives

- ▶ **Examine** the key differences between left-wing and right-wing groups.
- ▶ **Explain** attempts by these groups to take over the country by force and the reasons for their actions.

▼ **SOURCE A** *Erzberger, the head of the German government representatives, about to sign the documents that ended the First World War; the uniformed men behind the table are from Britain and France*



## The Kapp Putsch

One of the first right-wing groups that tried to take over Germany was led by a man called Wolfgang Kapp. In March 1920, he gathered around 5000 men (the Free Corps), mainly police and ex-soldiers, and took over the capital city, Berlin. This rebellion was known as the Kapp Putsch ('putsch' means 'rebellion'). He aimed to eventually take

▼ **SOURCE B** *Kapp's Free Corps soldiers entering Berlin during the Kapp Putsch in March 1920*



## Different views

Different individuals and political parties in Germany at this time had many different views. However, the people who tended to rebel against the government can be categorised as 'left-wing' or 'right wing'. These are political words used to describe the types of things they believed. See the table below.

Left-wing beliefs	Right-wing beliefs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workers should have power and rule the country as a collection of workers' councils.</li> <li>• There should be equality, with no different classes and no huge differences in the wealth of people in a country.</li> <li>• Change is welcome.</li> <li>• Left-wing views should be spread throughout the world.</li> <li>• Anti-right-wing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong leaders should rule over the people.</li> <li>• There are, and should be, major differences between people, classes and races.</li> <li>• Own country should be strong and powerful, with a large empire.</li> <li>• Change is not welcome.</li> <li>• Anti-left-wing.</li> </ul>
There were several political parties who had 'left-wing beliefs', for example the Communist Party.	There were several political parties who had 'right-wing beliefs', for example the Nazis.

over the whole country, make the army strong again, and then recover the lands Germany had lost in the Treaty of Versailles. President Ebert and the rest of the government fled from Berlin. However, Kapp didn't have the support of the workers and they all went on strike, resulting in no gas, water, electricity, or trains. After only 100 hours as Germany's newest leader, Kapp gave in and fled abroad. Ebert and his government returned to the capital.

## Red Rising in the Ruhr

As soon as Kapp fled abroad, left-wing workers in the industrial area of the Ruhr stayed on strike, rose up and took over several towns. Known as the **Red Rising** (red is the traditional colour of communists and left-wing supporters), the government, now back in Berlin, sent soldiers and some Free Corps units to deal with the rebellion. Over 1000 workers were killed.

## Assassinations

Some groups used terror tactics against the government to eliminate those who accepted the Treaty of Versailles. Between 1919 and 1922, there were over 350 political murders in Germany, mostly carried out by right-wing extremists. In August 1921 Matthias Erzberger, the man who signed the armistice in 1918, was shot dead by a right-wing group. They also killed the Foreign Minister, Walter Rathenau, and threw acid on Philipp Scheidemann, an important politician in the Weimar government. Many of these right-wing murderers were given short sentences (an average of four years in prison).

## Key Words

putsch Red Rising

## Work

- What is meant by the terms 'left-wing' and 'right-wing'? Draw a diagram to show your understanding of what the beliefs are and what types of people are associated with them.
  - Can you suggest reasons why both left-wing groups and right-wing groups didn't support the new Weimar government?
- Who was Matthias Erzberger and why was he killed?
- Look at **Source B**.
  - What is happening in the photograph? Why do you think the Free Corps soldiers are doing this?
  - What sort of message do you think the newspapers contain?
- Why did right-wing groups kill Walter Rathenau and other politicians?

## Extension

Right-wing murderers of German politicians were given only short prison sentences. Can you think of any reasons why the courts and judges did not punish them more?



▼ **C** *Political violence in Germany from 1919 to 1923*



In late 1923, the Weimar Republic was in serious trouble. Millions were frustrated with the government. The French had invaded the Ruhr and hyperinflation was crippling the economy. It was at this point that a 34-year-old ex-soldier called **Adolf Hitler** would try to get rid of the government with his new political party nicknamed 'the Nazis'. The Nazis' plan was first to seize control of Munich (a large city in southern Germany) and then march to the capital, Berlin, to take over the whole country. Who was Hitler, and did the Nazis succeed in their attempt to take over Germany?

### Objectives

- ▶ **Describe** Hitler and the Nazi Party's attempt to take over Germany in 1923.
- ▶ **Evaluate** different interpretations of the Munich Putsch.
- ▶ **Assess** the impact of the Munich Putsch on Hitler's future political career.

### Key Biography

#### Hitler's early years



Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) wasn't born in Germany, but in a small town in Austria-Hungary. His parents were both dead by 1907. He tried to train as an artist in his late teens, but failed to get a place at the famous Vienna Art Academy. He made money doing odd jobs and moved to Munich, across the border in southern Germany. In 1914, he joined the German army when the First World War broke out. During the war, he worked mainly as a messenger and fought in many battles. He was awarded several medals, including German's highest bravery award. He was injured in October 1918 and was still in a military hospital when the war was over. He returned to Munich after he recovered.

### Hitler and politics

Hitler first discovered the German Workers' Party in May 1919, when he was sent by the army to investigate new political groups. This party had only started a few months before. It was one of many small political parties in Munich at this time. Its members met in beer halls and Hitler attended regularly because he liked what was being said. People made speeches about how the Treaty of Versailles made Germany weak and defenceless, and how the country would become a great nation once more. This appealed to Hitler, a wounded and defeated ex-soldier who hated the politicians who ended the war which Germany had not lost on the battlefield.

Hitler soon joined the party and threw himself into the task of attracting new members. He put advertisements in newspapers, and held public meetings all over Munich. Hitler was a brilliant speaker who could fascinate his audience with powerful speeches. In the early days of radio, and with no television, this was a very important skill. He even persuaded the party to buy a newspaper – the *Munich Observer* – to put forward their views. Before long, Hitler was running the party.

### The Nazi Party is born

As leader, Hitler made some key changes. He designed a new flag and symbol – the **swastika** – in order to attract attention, and set up a private army of thugs to beat up anyone who disagreed with him. They were known as the **Stormtroopers** (SA) and wore a brown uniform with swastika armbands. This violent group of mostly ex-soldiers would guard Hitler's meetings and disrupt the meetings of other political parties. He also changed the party name to the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP), known as the Nazi Party for short.

### SOURCE A

One of the earliest known photographs of Hitler's supporters and members of the Stormtroopers, pictured around 1922. Hitler himself isn't in the photograph, but his dog is pictured in the lower right corner. Note the swastika armbands, lack of uniform, and the clubs that some of the men are carrying.



### Key Words

swastika Stormtroopers

Under Hitler's influence, the Nazi Party grew. There were 3000 members in 1920 and 5000 in 1921. The party was still a minor political party, but by 1923, Hitler felt confident enough in his party – and his own abilities – to try to take over Munich, and then Germany.

### Munich Putsch

On 8 November 1923, Hitler interrupted a meeting in a beer hall in Munich where Gustav von Kahr, the head of the Bavarian government, was speaking (Bavaria is a region of Germany; Munich is its biggest city). Hitler fired a bullet into the ceiling and announced that he was taking over Bavaria, and then he would march to the German capital of Berlin and take over the whole country. He locked Kahr and his companions in a small room. Then General Ludendorff, a great German war hero who knew about the plan, walked in and said he supported Hitler. Around Munich, Hitler's Stormtroopers took control of government buildings and arrested officials.

▼ **SOURCE B** From the speech Hitler gave on the night of the Munich Putsch on 8 November 1923:

I am going to carry out the promise I made five years ago when I was in the army hospital: to neither rest nor sleep until the November Criminals have been hurled to the ground, until on the ruins of the pitiful Germany of today has risen a Germany of power and greatness.

### Fact

The famous Nazi swastika was actually an ancient Hindu religious symbol meaning 'well-being'. Hitler wanted something eye-catching and simple to draw as his party's icon.



### Work

- 1 Use no more than 50 words to sum up Hitler's life up to the end of the First World War.
- 2 Test your understanding so far by explaining what these terms mean:
  - a swastika
  - b Nazi Party
  - c Stormtroopers.
- 3 Hitler always claimed he was the seventh member of the German Workers Party, even though he wasn't (he was the 55th member). Why do you think Hitler claimed this?
- 4 Look at **Source A**.
  - a What impression of the Nazi Party does this photograph give you?
  - b Why do you think some of the men were carrying clubs?
- 5 Look at **Source B**. Judging by this evidence, what was Hitler's main motive for trying to take over Germany in 1923?

The morning after the Munich Putsch, things did not go to plan for Hitler. Kahr promised to help him and was released, but he went back on his word and contacted the police. When Hitler and about 2000 supporters began their march through Munich's streets, they were met by armed police. After a short gun battle, three policemen and 16 Nazis lay dead. Hitler was wounded with a dislocated shoulder, and he and Ludendorff were arrested and taken to prison. The Munich Putsch, as it became known, was over, and Hitler went on trial for treason.

▼ **INTERPRETATION C** Adapted from an official biography of Adolf Hitler, published by the Nazi Party in 1934:

Hitler shouted, 'Close the ranks!' and linked arms with his neighbours. The body of the man with whom Hitler was linked shot up into the air like a ball, tearing Hitler's arm with him, so that it sprang from the joint and fell back limp and dead. Hitler approached the man and stooped over him. Blood was pouring from his mouth. Hitler picked him up and carried him on his shoulders. 'If I can only get him to the car,' Hitler thought, 'then the boy is saved.'

▼ **INTERPRETATION D** Adapted from *Hitler by the historian Joachim Fest (1973)*. Fest grew up in an ordinary German family who resisted the Nazi regime. This extract covers what happened to Hitler the day after the Munich Putsch:

[During the short gun battle] Hitler [was pulled] down, wrenching his arm out of joint amidst the hail of bullets while all were dropping to the ground. Ludendorff stalked upright, trembling with rage, through the police cordon. The day might possibly have ended differently had a small band of determined men followed him: but none wanted. Hitler scrambled up from the pavement and took [off], leaving behind the dead and the wounded. In the midst of the general chaos he managed to escape. A few years later he concocted the story that he had carried a child out of the firing line to safety.

▼ **INTERPRETATION E** A painting made in 1933 by the Nazis, showing Hitler addressing the audience in the beer hall during the Munich Putsch of 1923



### Trial and imprisonment

Hitler's trial lasted 24 days. It was a media sensation, reported in newspapers all over Germany. This was the largest audience Hitler had ever had – and he used every opportunity to criticise the government and put across his political views. His tactics seemed to work and he impressed the judges. Ludendorff was set free and Hitler was sent to prison for just five years (he could have been executed for such a serious crime). Other Nazis got away with equally light sentences.

### Mein Kampf

Hitler spent some of his time in prison sorting out his ideas, and seeing as many visitors as he wished. He also wrote a book called *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) which became a bestseller; it described his life story and his political views. He was released from prison in December 1924 after serving just nine months.

▼ **SOURCE F** Hitler pictured in Landsberg Prison with several other members of the Nazi Party, imprisoned with him for their role in the Munich Putsch



### Impact of the putsch on Hitler

The failure of the Munich Putsch, and his time in prison, taught Hitler a valuable lesson. He realised he had to change his strategy. The Nazis would have to stand in elections and win votes, just like any other political party. Their attempt to forcefully take over Germany had failed – instead they would have to win power democratically.

▼ **SOURCE G** From a speech by Hitler in 1925:

Instead of working to achieve power by armed rebellion, we shall have to hold our noses and enter the Reichstag. Outvoting them may take longer than outshooting them but sooner or later we shall have a majority and, after that, Germany.

### Practice Question

How does **Interpretation D** differ from **Interpretation C** about what happened at the Munich Putsch? **4 marks**

Why might the authors of **Interpretations C** and **D** have a different interpretation about what happened at the Munich Putsch? **4 marks**

Which interpretation do you find more convincing about what happened at the Munich Putsch? **8 marks**

### Work

- 1 What was the Munich Putsch?
- 2 Look at **Interpretation E**.
  - a What impression of the Munich Putsch does this painting give?
  - b Suggest reasons why the Nazis might have produced a picture of a putsch that failed.
- 3 Look at **Source F**.
  - a What does the image show?
  - b How can you tell from this scene that the conditions Hitler faced inside prison were not hard?
  - c Hitler received a light sentence. What does this suggest to you about the attitude of the judges?
- 4 Read **Source G**.
  - a What do think Hitler meant when he said 'we shall have to hold our noses' when entering the Reichstag?
  - b What can you learn from this source about Hitler's methods of trying to achieve power after the Munich Putsch?

### Study Tip

Remember that people will have different views of the same event, even if they were both there when it happened. A good historian should not just consider *what* is different in the two accounts, but *why* they are different. Think about what reasons the person could have for saying what they say.

# To what extent did the Weimar Republic recover after 1923?

In 1923, Germany was in crisis: not only was there hyperinflation, but different political groups continued to cause trouble. However, between 1924 and 1929 Germany began to recover from some of its problems, and most historians put Germany's recovery down to the influence and hard work of one man – **Gustav Stresemann**.

## Objectives

- ▶ **Outline** how Germany's economic problems were dealt with.
- ▶ **Assess** Stresemann's role in Germany's recovery.

## Key Biography

### Gustav Stresemann (1878–1929)



Stresemann had been a member of Germany's parliament since 1907. After Germany's defeat in the war, he felt that the only way Germany could be accepted by other European countries was to agree to the Treaty of Versailles's terms. Stresemann was briefly the Chancellor in 1923, but is best known for his work as Germany's Foreign Minister from 1924 until his death in 1929. He faced several issues.

#### Issue 1: Hyperinflation crisis – German money was worthless.

**Stresemann's solution:** he stopped the printing of the old paper money and replaced it with a temporary, new currency called the **Rentenmark**. This could be exchanged for the old currency. In 1924 the Rentenmark was replaced by the Reichsmark, a stable currency that remained for the next 25 years.

**Success?** Yes. Germans quickly accepted the new currency and hyperinflation ended. However, people who had lost all their savings never got their money back, and blamed Stresemann and his government.

#### Issue 2: French and Belgian troops invaded the rich industrial area of the Ruhr when Germans stopped paying reparations.

**Stresemann's solution:** he met with the American Vice President, Charles Dawes, and arranged for the USA to lend money to Germany (800 million gold marks). Germany could now begin to pay what they owed, and a repayment schedule was agreed which saw Germany re-start their reparation payments. This 'deal' was known as the **Dawes Plan**.

**Success?** Yes. French and Belgian troops left the Ruhr. However, some Germans felt Stresemann had 'given in' to the bullying tactics of the French and Belgians, and should have demanded an end to the reparations altogether. In 1929, through a new agreement called the **Young Plan**, Stresemann negotiated the reparations down from £6.6 billion to £1.8 billion – and Germany was given longer to pay it.

#### Issue 3: Germany was no longer considered a great power. Since the First World War, Germany's status in the world had declined. Stresemann was determined to improve Germany's image abroad.

**Stresemann's solution:** he worked hard to improve Germany's relationships with other nations. In 1925, Germany signed the Locarno Pact with Britain, France, Belgium and Italy. They promised to never invade each other. In 1926, Germany joined the **League of Nations**,

an international peacekeeping organisation which Germany had been banned from when it was first set up in 1919. In 1928, Germany signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact. The participating countries agreed never to go to war, unless to defend themselves if they were attacked.

**Success?** Germany regained its international status and became an important part of the League of Nations. However some right-wing Germans criticised Stresemann for not demanding back some of the land that had been taken from Germany by the Treaty of Versailles.

#### Issue 4: German industries were in trouble after the war. Factories were run down, and there were few jobs and poor schools, housing and hospitals.

**Stresemann's solution:** as well as using some of the money Germany borrowed from the USA (Dawes Plan) to pay reparations, Stresemann used it to build new factories, houses, schools and roads. This meant more jobs, with Germans earning more money. Some American companies (such as Ford and Gillette) built factories in Germany too.

**Success?** Slowly, Germany became more prosperous and many Germans were better off. For instance, sales of radios (the 'must have' item of the 1920s) rose from one million in 1926 to four million in 1932. However, some Germans, even Stresemann himself, feared that Germany relied too much on the American loans.

## Fully recovered?

Stresemann, one of Germany's most able politicians, died of a stroke in 1929. His time as Chancellor and Foreign Minister had seen Germany enter a new era of peace and prosperity. In fact, there were no attempts to overthrow the government between 1924 and 1929. However, there were still some underlying problems in Germany:

- There were still many political parties in Germany, and no single party could ever get enough votes to rule on their own. This meant that parties were always joining up with others in order to rule together, but often fell out with one another because they found it hard to agree on their priorities and spent a lot of time arguing.
- Political parties with extreme ideas, like the Nazis and the Communists, continued to hate the politicians in the Reichstag. Hitler, for example, had expanded the Nazi Party since he'd been released from prison, but for now, Hitler found it difficult to persuade millions of Germans they needed to vote for him (when the country was doing so well). In 1924, about five per cent of Germans voted for the Nazis. By 1928, their support had dropped and only around two per cent of Germans were voting for them.
- There were still large groups in German society that were in trouble: farmers' incomes were really low and the middle classes had had their savings wiped out by the hyperinflation of 1923.
- Much of the prosperity was created by the American loans. What if the Americans wanted their money back?

## Key Words

Rentenmark Dawes Plan  
Young Plan League of Nations

## Work

- 1 Consider the four issues that Germany faced after 1923, and Stresemann's actions. For each issue, make notes on whether you think Stresemann's policy was a success, a failure, or a bit of both. Explain your answers fully, with supporting evidence.
- 2 **a** How had Germany used American money in the 1920s?  
**b** What had been the impact of these loans?  
**c** Why do you think Stresemann was so concerned about these loans?  
**d** Do you think Stresemann's decision to take loans from America was wise? Explain your answer.
- 3 In your opinion, how far did Stresemann postpone, rather than solve, Germany's problems?

## Extension

Discuss with a partner: why might the Nazis have received only around two per cent of the votes in the 1928 elections, even though they were a highly organised party with over 100,000 members? You could consider the underlying problems on this page, and how they were dealt with, to help you come up with an answer.

The early 1920s were a difficult and unstable time in Germany. As well as having to come to terms with defeat in the First World War and the Treaty of Versailles's punishments, it was a time of invasion, hyperinflation, putsches and murders. There were great cultural changes in Germany at this time too: cinema, art, literature, and music changed dramatically. But did all Germans welcome these changes?

### A 'golden age'?

The 1920s have been called a 'golden age' for German artists, writers, poets and performers, who became known for their creativity and innovation. Before the First World War, the Kaiser kept tight control on all types of entertainment – but these controls were removed in Weimar Germany and now many German people felt a new sense of freedom. After the horrors of the war and the difficulties of the early 1920s, many people decided to experiment with new ideas and try new things.

### Cinema

Cinema became very popular in Weimar Germany. *Metropolis*, directed by Fritz Lang, was the most technically advanced film of the decade, while German-born actress Marlene Dietrich became a worldwide star playing glamorous, strong-willed women.

▼ **SOURCE A** *Marlene Dietrich, starring in the 1930 film The Blue Angel*



### Objectives

- ▶ **Explain** the cultural changes taking place in Weimar Germany during the 1920s.
- ▶ **Consider** the reasons for the changes.
- ▶ **Contrast** the different reactions of Germans to Weimar culture.

### Nightlife

Germany became a centre for new plays, operas and theatre shows during this time. Kurt Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*, adapted by Bertolt Brecht, was a box office smash; musicians performed vulgar songs, about politicians, that would have been banned in the Kaiser's day. Berlin, in particular, was famous for its nightclubs with live bands that played American jazz music. Some clubs provided dancers who appeared naked, or put on 'transvestite evenings' where men dressed as women and women dressed as men.

### Literature

Writing became big business – people had 120 newspapers and magazines to choose from. A German anti-war novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Remarque, sold half a million copies in just three months.

### Art

Art also flourished. **Avant-garde** artists such as Otto Dix and George Grosz believed art should show the reality of everyday life, in particular the differences in social classes and society, and should make people think. They tried to show what Germany was actually like at this time and often painted in a way that criticised current events.

### Design

A new group of designers and architects began work at this time. They were known as the **Bauhaus** and designed anything from chairs to coffee pots to office buildings. They believed in modern, simple and practical designs, rather than the more elaborate designs of long ago.

### Reactions to the cultural changes

While some Germans embraced the changes, others hated them. They wanted art, music, theatre, film and literature to celebrate the older, traditional values of Germany. They thought the new nightclubs, shows

▼ **SOURCE B** *Otto Dix was one of the most famous artists of his time. He painted the stark differences between the richer, fashionable people in nightclubs (the middle panel) and the poor beggars on the streets who had fought in the war and returned home with missing limbs or shattered minds (the two outside panels).*



and paintings were leading Germany into a moral decline. Berlin was viewed by some as corrupt and sex-obsessed. The Nazis, for example, openly criticised the nightclubs and art of this period, and when Hitler finally came to power in 1933, many Weimar artists and performers (like Fritz Lang and George Grosz) had to flee Germany.

▼ **INTERPRETATION C** *From Germany by Jon Nicol and Robert Gibson (1985), this was written by a German poet who lived in Berlin in the 1920s:*

Theatres, opera and concert houses were filled to capacity. European artists from Paris, London and Rome who came to Berlin were excited by it and didn't want to leave. The atmosphere was electric.

▼ **INTERPRETATION D** *Adapted from a letter written by Professor Willy Maillard of the Berlin School of Art, to the Nazi Minister of Science and Art in 1933, about the changes to German art in the 1920s:*

In recent years, developments in art have led to chaos. The [experimental ideas] that have been foisted on German art must be taken care of, everything that encourages **subversion** must be thrown out, just as the new government has already done in political and economic life.

### Key Words

culture avant-garde Bauhaus subversion

### Work

- 1 What do you understand by the word 'culture'? Try to write your own definition.
- 2 Look at **Source A**.
  - a Why might this film appeal to both men and women?
  - b Why might some people criticise the film?
- 3 Look at **Source B**. What do you think Dix felt about the disabled ex-soldiers featured in his painting, and the richer middle classes at the nightclubs?

### Extension

In what ways did German culture change in the 1920s? Explain your answer.

### Practice Question

Why might the authors of **Interpretations C** and **D** have a different interpretation about Weimar art?

4 marks

### Study Tip

Consider who the authors of the interpretations are, and how this might affect what they think about the changes in German culture.

# How did the Depression affect Germany?

From 1924 onwards, foreign banks lent huge amounts of money to Germany. Most of it was from America. The money meant that Germany could build factories and businesses, and this created more jobs, more money and a better standard of living. However, in 1929, disaster struck. Within three years, over six million Germans would be out of work. So how did Germany go from 'boom' to 'bust'? And how did the Depression help Adolf Hitler and the Nazis?

## Objectives

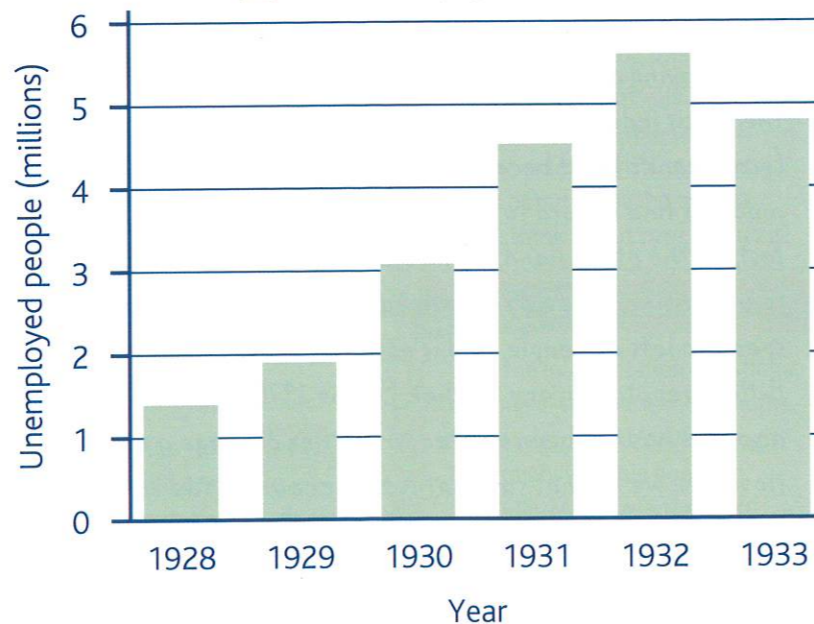
- ▶ **Discuss** the causes and effects of the Depression in Germany.
- ▶ **Assess** the impact of the Depression on Germans and how it affected the growth in support for extremist parties.

## What caused the Depression?

America had grown rich after the First World War, by manufacturing goods such as cars and fridges in America and selling them all over the world. Some Americans even had money to spare and bought shares in companies and businesses, hoping to make a profit. Some borrowed money from banks in order to join this share-buying trend. However, in October 1929, what is now known as the **Wall Street Crash** occurred. Many Americans hadn't made as much money as hoped from their shares and decided to sell them very quickly. But the share prices dropped as more and more people tried to sell their shares. Millions of Americans couldn't sell their shares for as much as they had paid for them. Some couldn't pay the banks back either and were left ruined as debt collectors took their cars and homes. Soon, many Americans couldn't afford to buy any new goods at all and as a result, firms went out of business and millions lost their jobs.

### Fact

A depression is a time when lots of businesses fail and factories close. As a result, lots of people lose their jobs and some become homeless. Sometimes banks fail too and people lose all their savings. A depression happened in the late 1920s and 1930s. It started in America but spread throughout the world. It was so severe that it is sometimes called the Great Depression.

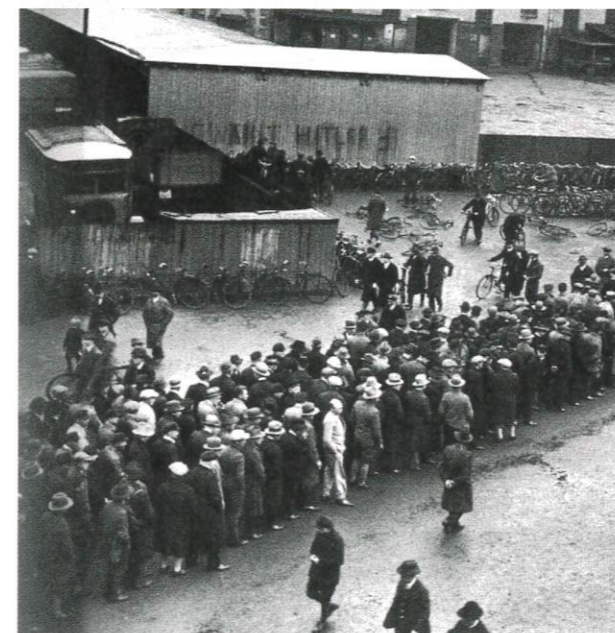


## The impact on Germany

Americans didn't just buy goods that were made in the USA; they also bought items from Germany, Italy, Britain and Japan. The Depression meant that Americans couldn't afford these things anymore, so foreign factories had to shut down. Germany was hit particularly hard by the Depression. Goods made in German factories, such as cars, electrical goods and clothing, were not selling, so factories had to close down and millions became jobless.

To make matters worse, American banks demanded back all the money they had lent to Germany after the First World War. German banks tried to get this money back from German businesses, which could not pay, and so went bankrupt. People were soon living on the streets – jobless, hungry, angry, and full of resentment.

▼ **SOURCE B** Unemployed Germans queuing to find work outside an employment office in Hanover in 1930. The writing on the warehouse wall translates as 'Vote Hitler'.



## The growth in support for extreme parties

Unemployment and hunger changed the way many Germans thought and behaved. Millions blamed the Weimar government for their problems. People were prepared to listen to political parties (like left-wing Communists and right-wing Nazis) whose leaders promised them **radical** solutions to all Germany's problems, and ways of making their lives better. Interpretation C demonstrates how one of these groups gained a supporter.

▼ **INTERPRETATION C** From an entry by a German worker in a prize essay contest in 1934 for the best personal life history of a Nazi; the contest was organised by an American researcher trying to find out why people became Nazis:

Thousands of factories closed their doors. Hunger was the daily companion of the German working man. Many an honest working man had to resort to theft to obtain food. All fellow citizens yearned for better times. As for me, like many another, I had lost all I possessed, so, early in 1930, I joined the Nazi Party.

## Key Words

Depression Wall Street Crash radical

▼ **INTERPRETATION D** Adapted from an entry in the same 1934 prize essay contest, by a railway worker who was wary of communism:

As a railroad worker, I had plenty of opportunity to see the confusion particularly among workers. I saw workers being alienated from the Fatherland. I shuddered at the thought of Germany in the grip of [communism]. At the same time, National Socialism, with its promise of a community of blood, barring all class struggle, attracted me profoundly.

## Work

- 1 **a** What is meant by the term 'depression'?  
**b** Explain in your own words why the German economy collapsed in 1929–30.
- 2 Look at **Source B** and **Interpretation C**. What can you learn from these about the effects of the Depression?
- 3 Study **Interpretations C** and **D** about the appeal of Nazism.  
**a** How do they differ?  
**b** Why might the authors have different interpretations about the appeal of Nazism?

## Practice Question

In what ways were the lives of Germans affected by the Depression? Explain your answer. **8 marks**

## Study Tip

This question is not asking you to define the Depression. It is asking you to think about how the Depression made an impact on the lives of ordinary people, so make sure you answer the question correctly.

## Extension

Research the impact of the Depression on people in the following countries: Britain, France, the USA. Why might Germans suffer more (or differently) during the Depression than other nations?

# 4.2A The growth of the Nazi Party

By 1928, Hitler and the Nazis were very well known, but they were still only the eighth most popular political party in Germany. They received only 800,000 votes in elections, with less than three per cent of the population voting for them. In 1928, few Germans would have predicted that Hitler could ever become leader of Germany, yet, by July 1932, the Nazis were the most popular party, recording nearly 14 million votes. How did the Nazi become so popular?

## Objectives

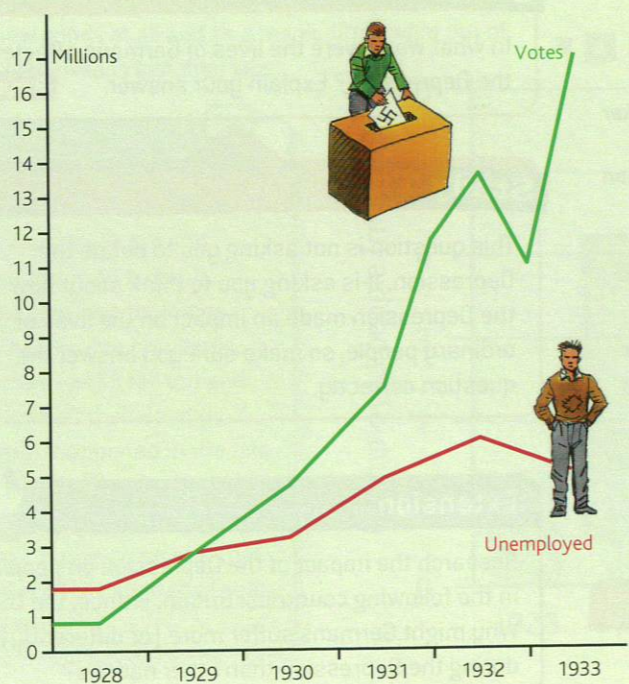
- **Examine** the growth in popularity of the Nazi Party from 1928 to 1932.
- **Summarise** the key factors in the growth of support for the Nazis, including the role of the SA and Hitler's appeal.

There was no single reason why Hitler and the Nazi Party's popularity grew at this time. A number of different factors [or reasons] combined to help Hitler become the leader of the most voted-for political party in Germany.

### Factor 1: The Depression

The Depression hit Germany hard. Businesses collapsed, unemployment soared and banks closed, but this helped Hitler. Those voters who had paid little attention to Hitler in the 1920s now started listening to him. The Nazis continued to repeat their core beliefs: that the Treaty of Versailles was a crime to Germany, that Jews should be blamed for the economic problems, and that Germany should be reborn as a great and powerful country. Their message was still the same as in the early 1920s, except that now desperate Germans wanted to believe them and to vote for them.

▼ **A** A graph showing both unemployment in Germany and the amount of votes the Nazis were receiving in elections



▼ **INTERPRETATION B** From *The World at War: The Landmark Oral History by Richard Holmes (2011)*, in which Konrad Morgen (a student in Germany in the early 1930s) states in an interview in 1973:

What did he promise? Work and bread for the masses, for the millions of workers that were unemployed and hungry at that time. Nowadays, work and bread doesn't mean very much, but at the time it was an absolute necessity – a basic need, and this promise that wouldn't make any sense today – then it sounded like a promise of paradise.

▼ **INTERPRETATION C** From the BBC documentary series *The Nazis: A warning from history (1997)*:

In the economic crisis, the Nazis' vote increased. They still said the same – Versailles was a crime, Jews should be persecuted, Germany must be reborn. Their message hadn't changed, it was just that now more Germans were ready to hear it.

### Factor 2: Germans were unhappy with the Weimar government

The Weimar politicians couldn't seem to agree how to help the unemployed and get Germany out of the Depression. They argued constantly and achieved very little. First one Chancellor (Müller) and then another (Brüning) made little impact. At one point, Brüning was passing laws by using the President's emergency decrees and making them legal under Article 48. However, when Brüning tried to pass laws to seize rich people's land and give it to poor peasants, the new President Hindenburg quickly withdrew his support (Hindenburg himself owned lots of land). Without this support, Brüning resigned.

For many ordinary Germans then, the democratic system of Weimar Germany was just not working. Some people, who had always tried hard to support the key principles of democracy, were drawn towards political parties (both left- and right-wing) with more extreme ideas about how to run the country.

▼ **D** Election results 1928–32. The numbers show the amount of politicians (or seats) each political party had in the Reichstag. Note the steady increase in votes for the Nazis and Communists.

Party	May 1928	September 1930	July 1932	November 1932
Nazi Party	12	107	230	196
National People's Party (DNVP)	73	41	37	52
People's Party (DVP)	45	30	7	11
Centre Party (Zentrum)	62	68	75	70
German Democratic Party (DDP)	25	20	4	2
Social Democratic Party (SPD)	153	143	133	121
Communist Party (KPD)	54	77	89	100

### Factor 3: The appeal of Adolf Hitler

Hitler himself had a lot to do with his increasing popularity. He had a charismatic personality, and could make people believe that he could be trusted

to make Germany a great nation. As a powerful and inspiring speaker, he was able to fill his audiences with hope.

▼ **INTERPRETATION E** Adapted from *Inside the Third Reich by Albert Speer (1960)*. Speer was a leading Nazi, and he describes what he felt after hearing a speech by Hitler in 1931:

Here it seemed to me was hope. Here were new ideals, a new understanding, new tasks. The perils of communism could be checked, Hitler persuaded us, and instead of hopeless unemployment, Germany could move towards economic recovery. It must have been during these months that my

mother saw a Stormtrooper parade in the streets of Heidelberg. The sight of discipline in a time of chaos, the impression of energy in an atmosphere of universal hopelessness, seemed to have won her over.

### Work

- 1 Look at line graph **A** showing the relationship between unemployment and Nazi popularity.
  - a Make a copy of the graph in your book or work file.
  - b In your own words, explain what the graph shows.
- 2 Study **Interpretation B** and **Interpretation C**. According to these two views, why did the Depression affect the way ordinary Germans voted?

### Extension

It is important that History students understand that key changes in a country's history often happens as a result of turning points. These are times of great change or important events or discoveries that leave things permanently different from how things were before. Make sure you make a note of what you think are the key turning points in Germany's history from 1918 to 1939.



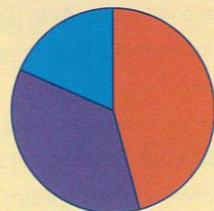


### Factor 4: Fear of the rise of other German extremist parties such as the Communists

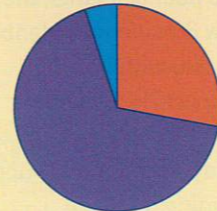
In 1917, there had been a communist revolution in Russia, and the Communist Party took over all businesses and farms. There had been attempts by German communists to take over Germany in the years after the end of the First World War too. As a result, middle- and upper-class Germans, particularly businessmen and landowners, were frightened of German communists. They didn't want to lose the wealth and position in society that they had worked so hard to build. Communists didn't believe in religious institutions either, so this worried churchgoers too. From the start, Hitler said he would fight communism. He sent his own private army, the Stormtroopers (SA), to fight with communist gangs. Hitler gained support from the German middle and upper classes because he promised to deal with the communist threat.

▼ **F** A comparison between different classes among German society as a whole, and within the ranks of Nazi Party membership in 1930. As you can see, the middle class was incredibly important to the Nazis.

Percentage of different classes within German society



Percentage of different classes within Nazi Party



Key ■ Working class ■ Middle class ■ Upper class

### Factor 5: Nazi Party structure, methods and tactics

Hitler thought he could become Germany's ruler by leading armed soldiers in a revolution. He tried this in 1923 but his Munich Putsch failed. He realised that he needed to change tactics, so he decided to win power legally by winning votes in elections. After prison, Hitler and the Nazis started to spread their ideas systematically and to build up support through an effective combination of persuasion and intimidation:

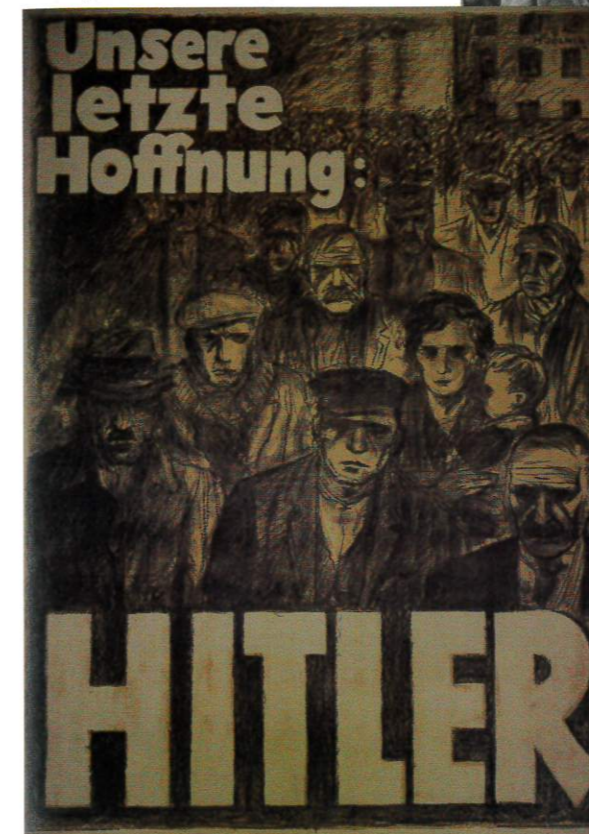
- Nazi Party offices were set up all over Germany to recruit more loyal followers. There were 100,000 men in the SA by 1931, growing to 400,000 by 1932. The SA protected Hitler's meetings and tried to influence voters at elections.
- The Nazi Party made use of **propaganda** through new media like radio broadcasts and cinema news reports. They also bought newspapers and printed millions of leaflets and posters to persuade and influence Germans to their ways of thinking. Hitler made one of his most loyal

followers, Joseph Goebbels, the chief Nazi propagandist from 1928.

- Hitler himself took part in fabulous parades to show off the Nazi power, and rallies where he made passionate speeches.
- The Hitler Youth Organisation was set up to encourage younger followers. Special clubs and camping trips were organised for young Nazis where they could learn to fire guns, wrestle, read maps and build campfires.

After the Depression hit Germany in the 1930s, the Nazis appeared the most organised and disciplined group in the country – a party that might restore the nation's greatness. Hitler used new technology in new ways. In 1932, he used an aeroplane to take him to 20 cities in seven days to make election speeches. This, and his constant use of radio, which had only recently become widely popular, showed how 'in touch' and modern the Nazis were.

▼ **SOURCE G** The caption of this Nazi election poster of 1932 is 'Our last hope: Hitler'. Hitler was trying to appeal to different groups in German society. The woman and child are very significant here; Hitler knew he had to secure women's votes and to appeal directly to them by understanding how badly they were affected by the Depression.



▲ **SOURCE H** A crowd gathers to read the Nazi poster; note all the different types of people staring at the poster

### Practice Question

Which of the following was the more important reason why the Nazis became more popular:

- fear of communists
- the appeal of Hitler and the Nazi Party?

Explain your answer with reference to both reasons.

12 marks

### Study Tip

Remember a good answer to this type of question will have something to say about each bullet point. In your conclusion you may explain which point has the edge!

### Key Words

propaganda

### Work

- 1 In your own words, explain what the word 'propaganda' means.
- 2 Look at **Source G**.
  - a Who was this election poster designed to appeal to?
  - b What does this poster tell us about the tactics used by the Nazis to gain power?
- 3 a Make notes on how each of the following factors helped the Nazis to become more

popular: the Depression; unhappiness with Weimar democracy; fear of communism; the appeal of Hitler; Nazi Party structure and methods.

b In your opinion, which was the most important reason? Discuss with a partner and give reasons for your answer.

## Who voted for the Nazis?

Germans who voted for the Nazis came from all different sections of German society. This was rather uncommon: most supporters of the Communist Party, for example, came from poorer, working class areas. After all, the Communist Party wanted all classes to be equal, and this appealed to the poor. In fact, in some industrial areas of Germany such as the Ruhr, the Communist Party attracted as much as 70 per cent of the vote. But the Nazis appealed to all sorts of people – rich, upper-class Germans, farmers and factory workers, middle-class families, women, the unemployed and businessmen. Why was that, and how much of it was due to people sharing the same likes or dislikes as the Nazi Party?

### Objectives

- ▶ Outline the types of supporters that were attracted to the Nazi Party.
- ▶ Examine the reasons behind this support.

### Voting for the Nazis

The Nazis are popular in the countryside. Farmers have been hit hard by the Depression; people are not buying as much food and farmers have had to lower prices. The Weimar government didn't help farmers either. The Nazis have promised farmers higher prices for their crops, a better quality of life, and higher status in German society. The Nazis also hate communists – and if communists took over they would seize the land that families have farmed for generations.



The Nazis appeal to many women voters. They say that family life, good morals and self-discipline are important. Some women agree with Hitler when he said that over the last 10 years 'our youth have been exposed to a flood of muck and filth, in word and print, in the theatre and in the cinema'. The Nazis promise to sort this out!



Middle-class people – small business owners, bank workers, doctors, managers – vote for the Nazis in large numbers. Some people's wages have been cut by the government in the Depression, and large groups of unemployed youths are all over the place. The middle class fear that law and order might break down or a communist takeover could destroy their way of life. They want the Weimar government to be strong, but they just seem to argue between themselves. The Nazis promise to deal with problems decisively – and their Stormtroopers are not afraid to take on communists. The Nazis seem to show order and discipline in this time of chaos.



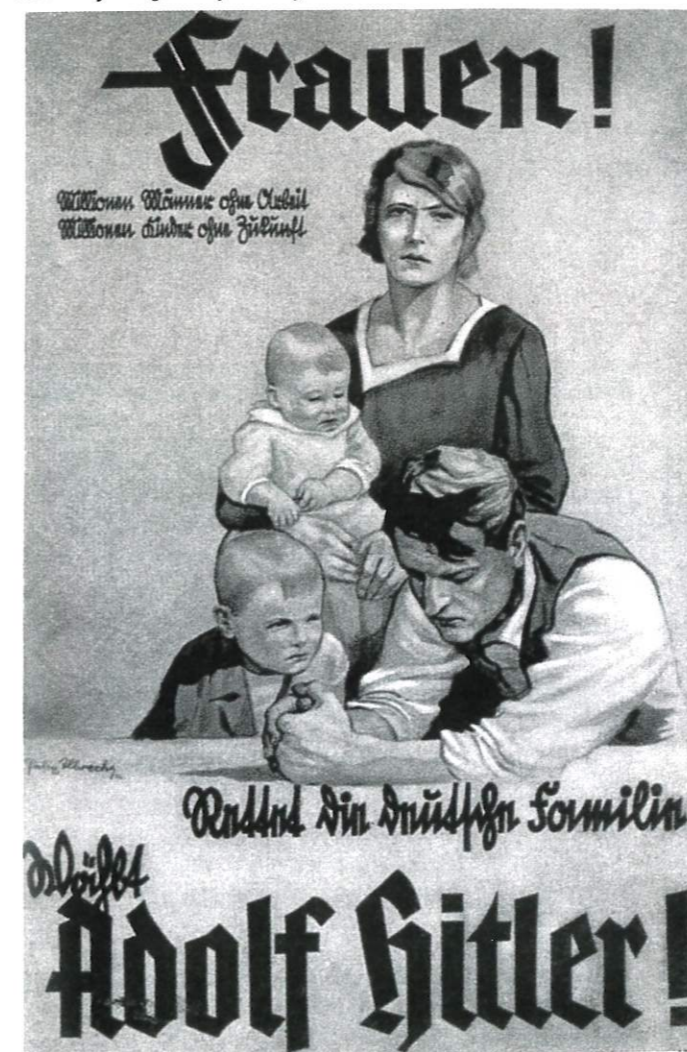
Hitler is an old soldier who knows the value of a powerful army, navy and air force. He promised to tear up the Treaty of Versailles signed by weak Weimar politicians, and make this country strong once more. Many young people want to be a part of Germany's bright future and get jobs in the armed forces or building new homes, motorways and hospitals. People who have heard Hitler speak are won over by the sheer force of his beliefs.



The upper classes and rich factory owners might not support everything the Nazis want, but they do support them on some key issues. They have promised the wealthy classes strong leadership and a more powerful nation, like the 'good old days' when Germany was feared and respected throughout Europe. Hitler has promised to allow them to run factories how they want, and his plans to use their factories to build weapons, battleships and fighter planes mean they might make even more money. The Nazis will fight communists too, and not let them take their businesses.



▼ **SOURCE A** This election poster reads, 'Women! Save the German family. Vote for Adolf Hitler!'



Not everyone voted for the Nazis though.

▼ **INTERPRETATION B** From a documentary on Auschwitz, this is a quote from a 1997 interview with a former German soldier, who shared his thoughts on what he first thought of Hitler in the 1930s:

He began to speak and I immediately disliked him. I didn't know then what he would later become. I found him rather comical with his funny little moustache. He had a scratchy voice and a rather strange appearance, and he shouted so much. He was shouting in this small room, and what he was saying was rather simplistic. I thought he wasn't quite normal. I found him spooky.

### Work

- 1 Find examples on these pages of types of people who share the same views as the Nazis. Then do the same with those who share the same dislikes or worries as the Nazis.
- 2 Look at **Source A**. In what way is this poster trying to appeal to particular sections of German society?
- 3 Read **Interpretation B**. What sort of first impression did Hitler make on the author of this interpretation? Explain your answer.

### Extension

After you have completed Work question 1 and identified the different types of Nazi supporters, consider: What kinds of conclusions can you draw about the appeal of the Nazis? Why do you think the Nazis became more and more popular during the Depression years? And what do you think is the most important reason for the increasing support for the Nazis?

# How did Hitler become Chancellor?

In Weimar Germany, there were lots of political parties (around 30, in fact). However, parties rarely ever got a majority in Weimar Germany, so they usually formed a **coalition** government. A Chancellor was then chosen from the coalition. But coalition governments often disagreed with each other, and very little was done. The President, however, could use Article 48 of the Constitution to appoint new Chancellors in emergencies. Against his wishes, President Hindenburg appointed Adolf Hitler as Chancellor on 30 January 1933. How did this happen?

## Objectives

- ▶ Describe the events from 1930 to 1933, including election results, that allowed Hitler to come to power.
- ▶ Explain the roles of von Papen and Hindenburg in relation to Hitler becoming Chancellor.

## The 1930 Reichstag election

There was an election in September 1930. A year after the Depression hit the country, unemployment had more than doubled in Germany, to around three million. As usual, a coalition government was formed since no single party won a majority, and Heinrich Brüning, a Centre Party politician, became the Chancellor. However, Brüning was not a popular Chancellor because he reduced unemployment pay and increased taxes for everyone.

However, one very significant event happened during this election. Hitler, who was hoping to get 50 or so seats (or politicians) in the Reichstag, gained far more than that. The Nazi Party was now the second largest party in the Reichstag.

### Support for the Nazis

After their September 1930 election success, the Nazis worked hard to get their messages across to even more people. They put up millions of posters and flags, and Hitler gave speeches at huge meetings, called **mass rallies**, all over the country. Hitler's popularity was clearly growing fast.

### Violence on the streets

The Stormtroopers (SA), Hitler's private army, helped him at this time too. They beat up the Communists and disrupted their meetings, making it hard for them to campaign freely. Other political groups had their own version of the SA too. The **Reichsbanner** supported both the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Centre Party (Zentrum), and regularly clashed with the Nazis and the Communists. In 1932 alone, there were dozens of bomb plots, street fights and murders as different

## Fact

Between 1919 and 1933 there were over ten different Chancellors. On average, the Chancellor changed every year. It's not surprising that many Germans were disillusioned with politics and were desperate for a strong leader who promised to stay in power and change things for the better.

## The September 1930 Reichstag election results

Party	Seats won
Social Democratic Party (SPD)	143
Nazi Party	107
Communist Party (KPD)	77
Centre Party (Zentrum)	68

groups fought. To many people, the chaos and violence on the streets and the unstable governments proved that the Weimar government was failing. Some argued that democracy had already failed because one man, Hindenburg, was using his emergency decrees to make decisions without the consent of the democratically elected Reichstag.

## The 1932 Reichstag election

The increasingly unpopular Brüning resigned in July 1932 and Hindenburg appointed another Centre Party politician, Franz von Papen. Von Papen didn't have much support either, so called an election. The results were astonishing: the Nazis were now the largest political party.

## The July 1932 Reichstag election results

Party	Seats won
Nazi Party	230
Social Democratic Party (SPD)	133
Centre Party (Zentrum)	97
Communist Party (KPD)	89

### More success for the Nazis

As a result of his success, Hitler demanded the Chancellor's job – but Hindenburg refused because he thought the Nazis were a disruptive and violent party. Instead, Hindenburg used his emergency powers to give the job to von Papen again. Von Papen called yet another election in November 1932. This time, the votes for the Nazis fell slightly, but they were still the largest political party. Von Papen's Centre Party got fewer seats too, so he resigned yet again.

### Another new Chancellor

Next, Hindenburg gave the Chancellor's job to his old friend, Kurt von Schleicher. Again, the new Chancellor had no support and couldn't make any new laws – so he resigned! So two Chancellors had come and gone in less than a year. Who was left? Hindenburg had little choice and on 30 January 1933, Hitler was appointed as Chancellor. Hindenburg tried to limit Hitler's power by appointing von Papen as Vice Chancellor and restricting the number of fellow Nazis that Hitler was allowed in the **cabinet** to two. Hindenburg and his closest advisers thought they would be able to control him. How wrong they were!

## Work

- 1 Explain what is meant by the following terms: majority; coalition government; Article 48.
- 2 Construct a timeline of events for 1930 to 1933. Make sure you include the various elections, Chancellors and key decisions.
- 3 a In your own words, explain why you think Hindenburg was reluctant to give Hitler the job of Chancellor.  
b How did Hindenburg try to control Hitler once he had made him Chancellor?

## Key Words

coalition mass rally Reichsbanner cabinet

**SOURCE C** Hitler meeting Hindenburg at a ceremony soon after becoming Chancellor in 1933



## Extension

It has been said that 'democracy started to die' in Weimar Germany between the years 1930 and 1932. What evidence can you find to support this view? Do you agree with the statement?

## Practice Question

Describe two problems Hitler faced as Germany's leader when he became Chancellor in January 1933.

4 marks

## Study Tip

Questions that ask you to 'describe' usually require you to write in detail about an event, situation or discovery, for example. You should write down lots of factual information. These questions should not take you longer than a few minutes to answer in an examination.

# How did Hitler begin to eliminate his opposition?

Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany on 30 January 1933, but he was not in complete control. For a start, Hitler owed his job to President Hindenburg, who could easily replace him. Also, Germany was a democracy, so Hitler could only make laws if the Reichstag agreed to them, but more than half the Reichstag politicians didn't belong to the Nazi Party. In just 18 months, however, Hitler was a **dictator** with total power to make any new laws he liked. How did Germany change from a democracy to a Nazi dictatorship in such a short time?

## Objectives

- ▶ **Summarise** the events that led Hitler and the Nazis to take complete control of Germany.
- ▶ **Assess** why the events that led to Hitler's dictatorship were able to occur.
- ▶ **Evaluate** the impact of these events on ordinary German citizens.

### 1 February 1933

Hitler arranged a new election for March 1933. He hoped he'd win a huge victory and get the majority he wanted in the Reichstag.

As Chancellor, Hitler now had greater influence over many newspapers and radio stations. He also controlled the police, who he could use to intimidate voters and beat up opponent.



### 2 27 February 1933

A week before voting day, the Reichstag burned down. Although the evidence was unclear, a young communist, Marinus Van der Lubbe, was arrested and blamed for the fire.

Hitler said the fire was part of a communist plot to take over the country. He said he knew how to deal with the plot.



### 3 28 February 1933

Hitler asked Hindenburg to pass a special emergency 'Protection Law', giving Hitler the power to deal with Germany's problems.

Because of the Reichstag fire and the appearance of a communist plot, Hindenburg agreed.

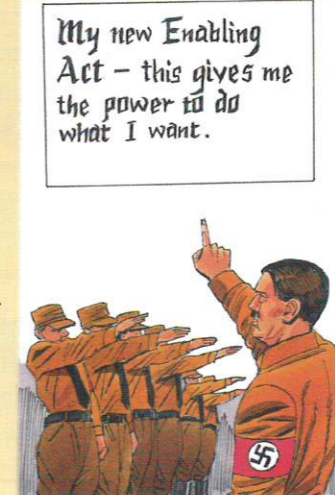


### 4 March 1933

The new decree (a type of law), for the 'Protection of the People and State', banned leading communists from taking part in the election campaign. Four thousand communists were thrown into prison and all their newspapers were shut down. In the election on 5 March, due to the way Hitler dealt with the communists, the Nazis got more votes than ever before. But Hitler still didn't get the majority he wanted!

### 5 23 March 1933

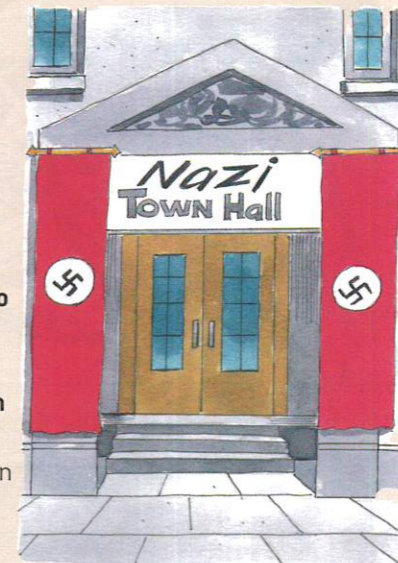
Hitler had stirred up enough fear of communism to persuade politicians in another political party, the Centre Party, to join the Nazis. Hitler now had the majority he wanted. Hitler forced the Reichstag to pass the **Enabling Act**. This gave him the power to make laws without asking the rest of the politicians in the Reichstag if they agreed. Now Hitler didn't even have to worry about what Hindenburg or the Reichstag thought of him.



### 6 7 April 1933

Hitler immediately began to use his new powers.

Nazis were put in charge of all local government, councils and the police. The **Gestapo** (secret police) was formed. The first **concentration camp** for political prisoners opened in Dachau, southern Germany.



## Key Words

dictator Enabling Act  
Gestapo concentration camp

## Work

- 1 a What is meant by the term 'dictator'?
- b Up to April 1933, in what ways did Hitler act like a dictator?
- 2 How did the Reichstag fire benefit Hitler and the Nazis?

## Extension

There have been many theories about what caused the 'Reichstag Fire'. Was it an accident, the work of a mad arsonist or part of a communist plot? There is also some evidence to suggest the Nazis may have started the fire themselves – then blamed the communists in order to whip up anti-communist feeling before an election. What do you think? Research the Reichstag Fire in more detail (this could be a group project) and present your findings to the class.

# How did Hitler begin to eliminate his opposition?

7 2 May 1933

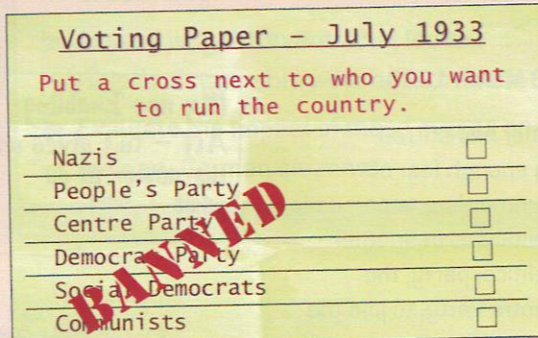
Hitler banned all trade unions. He took away their money and threw their leaders in jail.



By removing trade unions, Hitler had taken away a worker's way of complaining about pay and conditions.

8 14 July 1933

Hitler banned all political parties in Germany, except the Nazis.



The 'Law Against the Formation of New Parties' stated that anyone trying to set up or run another party would go to prison for three years. Germany was now a one-party state.

▼ SOURCE A A cartoon that appeared in an American magazine in 1933; it shows Hitler as the Grim Reaper (who is often shown to represent death)



9 2 August 1934

By this time, Hitler had murdered his opponents in the SA and brought them under control with the Night of the Long Knives [see pages 50–51].



When President Hindenburg died, Hitler immediately took over the President's job as well as remaining Chancellor. In addition, he made the army swear an oath of loyalty to him, and not to the country. Hitler decided on giving himself the simple title of **Der Führer** – the leader.

▼ INTERPRETATION B From a television interview in the 1970s with Heipke Remer, a former member of the League of German Maidens, a Nazi youth group:

People were enthusiastic and accepted events because they had got work and bread again. Even we children were able to meet and be friends in the Hitler Youth when we previously had not been able to understand each other, and had been against one another because our parents held different political views.

▼ INTERPRETATION C From the same television interview in the 1970s, this time with Sigmund Weltlinger, a former member of Berlin Jewish Council set up by the Nazis in April 1933:

When Hitler came I regarded him as just one of the many political idiots which were springing up all over the place as far back as I could remember in recent times, and I did not take him seriously. With time, however, I gradually changed my mind – but very gradually. At the beginning I did not believe such mad ideas could find any support in Germany.

## Work

1 Copy and complete the table below, explaining how Hitler was able to increase his power on each of the following dates: 27 February 1933; 28 February 1933; 23 March 1933; 7 April 1933; 2 May 1933; 14 July 1933; 2 August 1934. An example is shown.

Date	Event	How it increased Hitler's power	The impact on ordinary Germans
27 February 1933	The Reichstag burned down	With 'evidence' of a communist plot, Hitler was able to go to Hindenburg and try to get him to ban the Communist Party	If the Communist Party was banned, ordinary German communists....

- Look at **Source A**.
  - Do you think this cartoon was produced by a supporter of the Nazi Party or one of its opponents? Give reasons for your answer.
  - What point do you think the artist was trying to make?
- In groups or in pairs, discuss: Out of the key dates listed on pages 46–48, which event in your opinion was the most pivotal (or important) to Hitler becoming the supreme leader? Support your answer with evidence. You may also look through pages 50–51 for more information.
- How does **Interpretation B** differ from **Interpretation C** about why Germans supported Hitler?
- Why might the authors of **Interpretations B** and **C** have a different view about German support for Hitler?

Shortly before dawn on 30 June 1934, Hitler and a group of his elite personal bodyguards, the black-uniformed *Schutzstaffel* (SS), stormed into a hotel, armed with machine guns. Staying at the hotel were many important members of the SA (Stormtroopers), Hitler's private army. The SA leader Ernst Rohm and others were arrested and later shot dead. This event became known as the Night of the Long Knives. Over the next few days around 400 people were executed in this way, including a former Chancellor, Kurt von Schleicher, who wasn't even a Nazi! Hitler proudly publicised this event and rewarded the SS. Why was Hitler so brutally and openly killing these people?

As Chancellor, Hitler still felt threatened by the power of two groups – the army and the SA – so he decided to take action. The SA had been a real asset to Hitler in the beginning. They had guarded Hitler from harm and had beaten up political opponents, but now they had become a problem. Many of them were unemployed, violent thugs who wanted well-paid jobs as a reward for their loyalty, now that Hitler was in power. Rohm also wanted to join the SA with the army, with both under his control. This alarmed Hitler, as well as the army leaders. A merger of the two would make Rohm incredibly powerful. Hitler really needed to keep the army leaders happy too: he would need their skills if he were to get back the land Germany had lost through the Treaty of Versailles. On top of this, there were rumours that Rohm was about to seize power and take over from Hitler.

Hitler decided to deal ruthlessly with the problem of Rohm and the SA. This led him to arrange a meeting with SA leaders on 30 June 1934 – the Night of the Long Knives.

▼ **INTERPRETATION A** *From Hitler Speaks by Hermann Rauschnig (1940). Rauschnig was a disillusioned Nazi who left Germany in 1936 to live in America. Here he describes what he heard Rohm say in 1934:*

[Rohm said] Adolf's a swine. His old friends aren't good enough for him. Adolf is turning into a gentleman. What he wants is to sit on the hilltop and pretend he is God. He knows exactly what I want. The generals are a lot of old fogies. I'm in the nucleus of the new army.

### Objectives

- ▶ **Examine** how the Night of the Long Knives helped to establish Hitler's dictatorship.
- ▶ **Evaluate** the importance and the impact of the Night of the Long Knives on Germans.

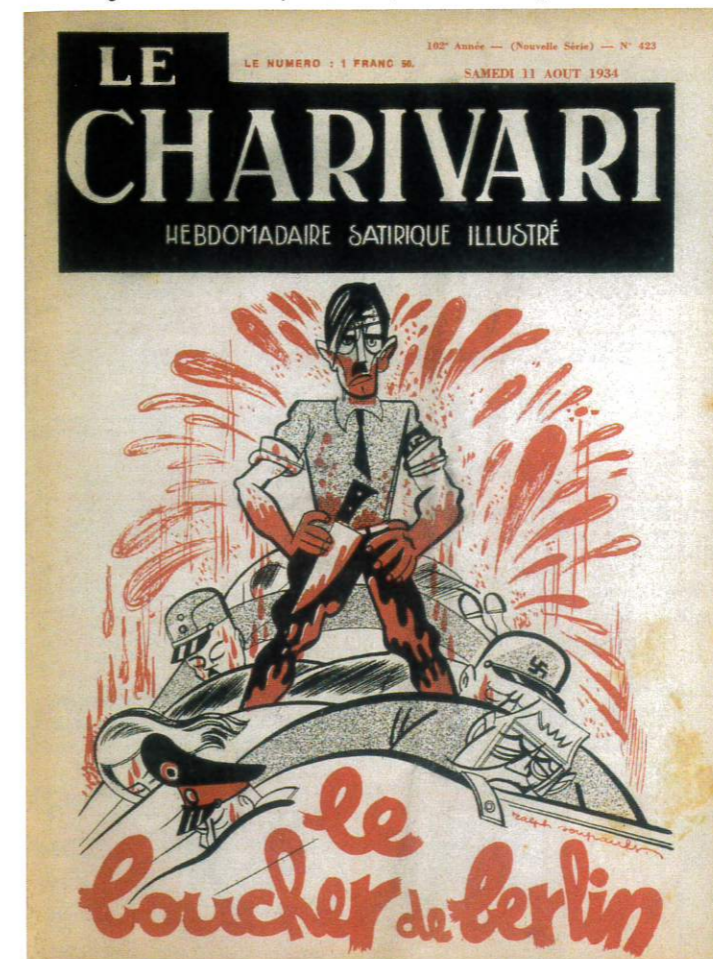
▼ **SOURCE B** *Hitler, with Ernst Rohm immediately behind him, and other SA leaders in October 1931*



▼ **INTERPRETATION C** *Adapted from Professor William Dodd's diaries. Dodd was the American ambassador to Germany from 1933 to 1937:*

The subject of SA atrocities came up. I spoke to von Neurath, the Foreign Minister, for an hour. [He] said 'the SA men are so uncontrollable that I am afraid we cannot stop them.' I requested a report from the Foreign Office about what the officials had done. No reply came, which I think means that the police have taken no measures against the guilty SA men.

▼ **SOURCE D** *The front cover of Le Charivari, a French magazine, on 11 August 1934. The caption reads, 'The butcher of Berlin'.*



### Impact of the Night of the Long Knives

The Night of the Long Knives had a major impact:

- Many of the people close to Hitler who were regarded as a threat to him were now dead – and not just Rohm, but all the leading Nazis who didn't agree with Hitler.
- The SS, led by Heinrich Himmler, emerged as the group now responsible for Hitler's security, not the SA. The SS would grow in importance after this. They, along with the Gestapo, now formed the basis of the 'police state' that Germany had become. The SA itself was not abolished, but was never again a major force in Germany.
- The fact that Hitler was very open about what he had done meant that he had quite literally got away with murder. Hitler had now established murder as part of what the Nazi government did.

President Hindenburg died soon after. A new President wasn't appointed. Instead, the powers of the President were joined with those of the Chancellor. Hitler was now Führer; the army swore a personal oath of loyalty to him. The army leaders agreed to stay out of politics and serve Hitler. In return, Hitler promised to spend large sums of money to make Germany a great military power once more.

### Work

- 1 What happened on the Night of the Long Knives?
- 2 Why do you think Hitler executed people like von Schleicher, who had nothing to do with the SA?
- 3 Look at **Source D**. Do you think this magazine supported Hitler's actions during the Night of the Long Knives or not? Explain your answer.
- 4 Look at **Interpretation A**. What did Rohm mean when he said, 'He knows exactly what I want.'?
- 5 Look at **Interpretation C**. What is the writer saying about the people responsible for the Night of the Long Knives?

### Extension

Hitler gave a speech about the Night of the Long Knives in the Reichstag on 13 July 1934. Research to find out what he said. How does he explain his actions?

### Practice Question

Describe two consequences of the Night of the Long Knives.

4 marks

### Study Tip

Make sure you identify two outcomes and explain the impacts that they had.

### Key Words

Schutzstaffel police state

Over six million Germans were out of work when Hitler came to power in 1933. In his election campaigns, he had promised the voters 'work and bread' if he became their leader. How did the Nazis get Germans back to work, and what was the impact of the Nazi work policies on ordinary Germans?

**Objectives**

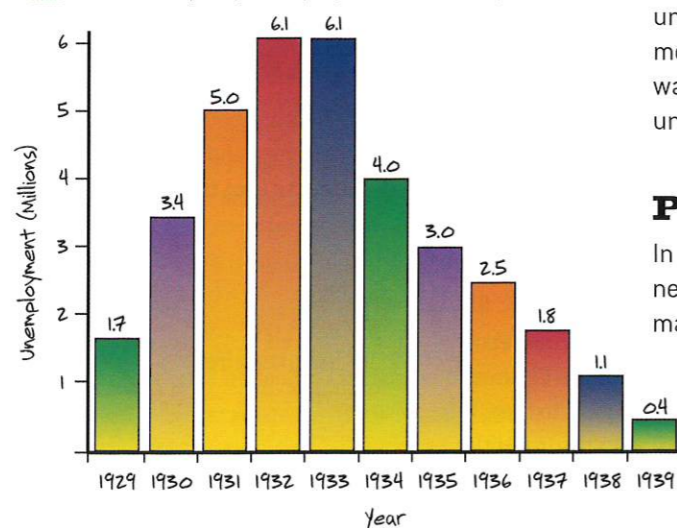
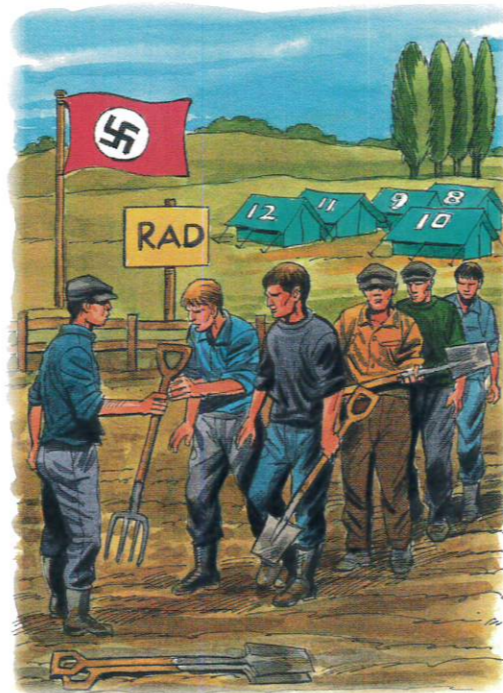
- ▶ Recall ways in which the Nazis reduced unemployment.
- ▶ Assess Hitler's success in fulfilling one of his major election promises.

As soon as the Nazis took control of Germany they set up a number of schemes, programmes and organisations that aimed to get Germans back to work.

▼ **SOURCE A** A Nazi election poster from the early 1930s; it promises 'Work and Bread'



▼ **B** The rise and fall of unemployment in Germany, 1929–39

**The National Labour Service (RAD)**

All men aged between 18 and 25 had to spend six months in the RAD. They planted forests, mended hedges and dug drainage ditches on farms. Men in the RAD had to wear uniforms and live in camps, but they were given free meals. They were paid only pocket money, but at least it was a job – and because more people were working, the unemployment figures began to drop rapidly.

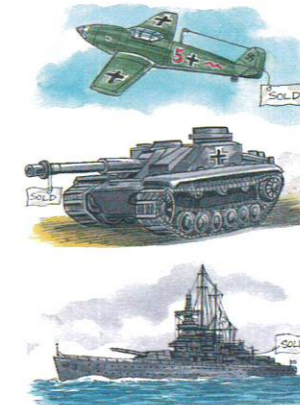
**Public Work Schemes**

In June 1933, the Nazis ordered the creation of a new network of autobahns (motorways) to link Germany's major towns and cities. This gave work to nearly 100,000 people, and by 1938 around 3800 kilometres of highway had been built. At the same time, a huge number of new schools and hospitals were built, again giving work to more people.

▼ **SOURCE C** A Nazi poster boasting that only three years after Hitler dug the first spade of soil, 1000 km of autoban had been completed

**Rearmament**

Rearmament is when a country rebuilds its armed forces (army, navy and air force). Hitler was determined that Germany should become a great military power again, so he ordered the building of new tanks, battleships, fighter planes and guns. Thousands of jobs were created, and huge government contracts made factory owners and bosses of large businesses a fortune. These were the people Hitler had promised to help if he got to power.



Hitler also introduced **conscription**. From 1935, all males aged between 18 and 25 were forced to join the armed forces for at least two years. Within five years, the army grew from 100,000 to 1,400,000, giving even more people jobs.

**Key Words**

rearmament conscription

▼ **INTERPRETATION D** Adapted from an interview in the 1970s with Hans Kehrl, a factory owner who joined the Nazi Party in 1933:

Well, really, it was the only party that promised to get us out of the hole. And they promised to do away with unemployment, and to reorganise and build up agricultural life again, and they thought they could do that in the course of about five to six years. As this was much better than anything else that was brought forward and as there was such a hopelessness I thought it was a real chance to follow them and their advice.

**'Invisible' unemployment**

The Nazis used a variety of methods to reduce unemployment figures. For example, women who gave up work to have a family did not count in the official figures. And part-time workers were counted as full-time. Also, the Nazis actually created jobs by sacking people. Many Jews lost their jobs, for example, and were replaced by unemployed non-Jews. The Nazis then didn't count these newly-unemployed Jews in their figures.

**Work**

- 1 Look at **Source A**.
  - a Who was this election poster aimed at?
  - b How was it trying to appeal to them?
  - c How successful do you think it would have been?
- 2 Look at **Source C**.
  - a Why do you think the Nazis produced this poster?
  - b What sort of jobs would be created by a huge road-building project?
- 3 Who were the winners and losers of Hitler's employment policies?

**Practice Question**

Describe two ways in which Hitler reduced unemployment in Germany.

4 marks

**Study Tip**

If you are asked for two ways, make sure you do write about two!

# Did Hitler make Germany 'self-sufficient'?

One of Hitler's main aims was to make Germany a powerful nation that was respected throughout the world. Like most Germans, he felt that the country had been humiliated at the end of the First World War, when land had been taken away and the armed forces were reduced. Hitler knew that the way to get this land back was to start a rearmament programme. But he knew that this could only be done if the Nazis controlled the economy and directed all factories, businesses and industrial production to do what the Nazis wanted. How were the Nazis going to achieve this?

## Objectives

- ▶ **Outline** ways in which Germany became self-sufficient.
- ▶ **Evaluate** Hitler's success in making Germany economically self-sufficient.
- ▶ **Assess** whether the Nazis helped German farmers.

### The economy under Schacht

As soon as Hitler came to power in 1933 he appointed the respected banker, Hjalmar Schacht, as Minister of Economics. Schacht realised that Hitler's plans to build more weapons would cost a lot of money and need a lot of raw material, such as iron, steel, rubber and wood. But Germany didn't have all these goods so they had to be bought from other countries, which could be very expensive. So Schacht signed deals with countries in South America and south-east Europe to supply Germany with raw materials in return for German-made goods. For a short time, things went well – weapons production increased and unemployment fell. But Germany was still dependent on raw materials from foreign countries and the changes were happening far too slowly for the impatient Hitler. So Schacht was sacked and replaced by one of Hitler's oldest and most loyal colleagues, Hermann Goering.

### The economy under Goering

In 1936, Goering introduced a scheme, called the **Four Year Plan**, to get Germany ready for war. The main priority was to increase military production, so the Nazis ordered huge amounts of weapons, equipment and uniforms. This created jobs in steel factories, textile mills and shipbuilding yards. Very high production targets were set (and achieved) in industries like steel and explosives production. However, targets were not met in other key industries, like oil production. Indeed, despite the huge amount of extra goods and material produced under the Four Year Plan, Germany was still not ready for the long war it would become involved in

from 1939. Also, Germany still needed raw materials from abroad, so Goering attempted to make Germany 'self-sufficient'.

### A self-sufficient nation

The Nazis hoped to make Germany self-sufficient. This meant that they wanted to stop trading with other countries and rely entirely on their own resources. If Germany was unable to find particular goods or resources, they would find alternatives to the things it needed, or develop artificial substitutes. For example, German scientists found ways to make petrol from coal, artificial wool and cotton from pulped wood, make-up from flour, and coffee from acorns. Goering said in a speech, 'Would you rather have butter or guns? Shall we bring in lard, or iron? I tell you, guns make us powerful. Butter only makes us fat.'

▼ **INTERPRETATION A** *From Account Settled by Hjalmar Schacht (1949). Schacht was Hitler's Minister of Economics and introduced the 'new plan'. He was dismissed from the government in 1943:*

Goering set out with all the folly and incompetence of the amateur to carry out the programme of economic self-sufficiency. He exploited the powers Hitler had given him, as chief of the Four Year Plan, to extend his own influence. I had to denounce this economic nonsense, which I did in a speech to the Reich chamber of economics in honour of my sixtieth birthday.

▼ **SOURCE B** *This picture was produced by a German artist called John Heartfield. It appeared in Germany in a banned communist magazine in 1935. The caption says 'Hurrah, the butter is all gone!'*



### Did the Nazis help the farmers?

Farmers had been important supporters of the Nazis. Around 30 per cent of the population were involved in agriculture and forestry. In the late 1920s, farmers were unhappy that they were suffering when other people were doing well. These farmers turned to Hitler because he promised to improve their lives. He also needed the farmers to produce more if the country was to become self-sufficient. Now in power, Hitler tried to reward farmers and save them from the worst effects of the Depression. He cut the taxes that farmers had to pay and guaranteed that they could not be thrown off their land if they got themselves into debt. However, some Nazi policies annoyed farmers. Laws were introduced that stopped farmers dividing up their land and giving a part to each of their children. This was an attempt to keep the farms large and under control of the same family for years to come. Some farmers resented this, especially as some of the children who were no longer allowed to inherit land left the farms to look for jobs in cities. However, other farmers welcomed the idea as it meant that their farm was secure for generations.

## Key Words

Four Year Plan self-sufficient

## Work

- 1 a Who was Hjalmar Schacht?  
b Why did Schacht make deals with other countries in South America and south-east Europe?
- 2 a Who was Herman Goering?  
b Describe his Four Year Plan.  
c Was the Four Year Plan a success?
- 3 Look at **Source B**.  
a How is this picture critical of the Nazis?  
b What do you think the artist wanted people to think when they saw this picture?
- 4 a Why were farmers so important to the Nazis?  
b In your own words, explain how the Nazis pleased some farmers but not others.
- 5 Study **Interpretation A**. What is Schacht's opinion of Goering?

## Extension

**Interpretation A** shows that Schacht did not think highly of Goering and his Four Year Plan. How do you know? Pick out all the words and phrases you can use as evidence.



# Were ordinary Germans better off under the Nazis?

Ordinary working-class Germans such as shop workers, builders and secretaries were the largest social group in Germany in the 1930s. Many of these people had not supported the Nazis before 1933. They joined trade unions, and had voted for political parties like the Social Democrats and the Communists, who were dedicated to improving the lives of the working classes. But now trade unions, and all political parties except the Nazis, were banned, so Hitler needed to think carefully about what to do about ordinary Germans. He obviously wanted them to support what he was doing – but he also needed them under control.

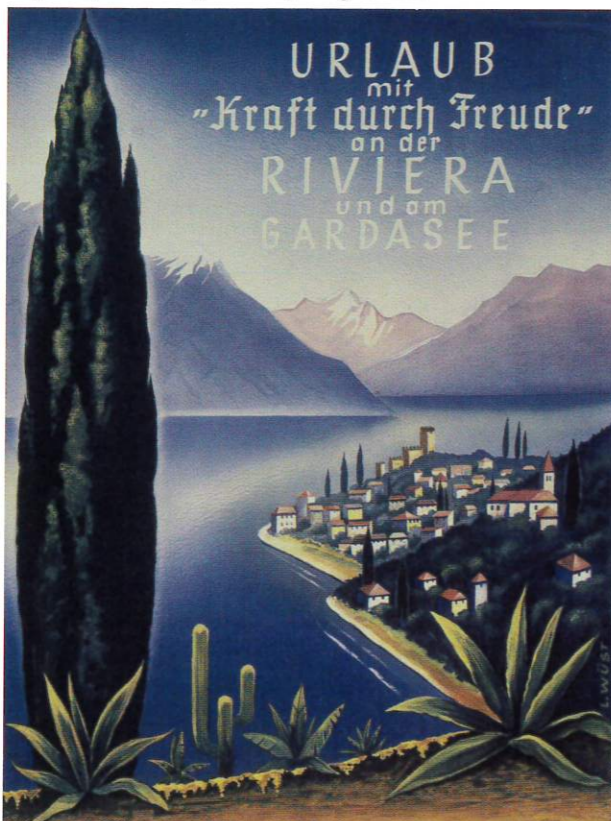
## Objectives

- ▶ Explain how ordinary Germans were treated by the Nazis.
- ▶ Assess whether German people were better or worse off under the Nazis.

## Work and control

Through the National Labour Service, and the public works and rearmament programmes, the Nazis provided work. The army grew in size and weapons production increased too. More schools, hospitals and roads were being built, which created more jobs. Wages didn't increase for a few years, but at least jobs existed.

▼ **SOURCE A** A poster advertising cheap holidays abroad as part of the Strength through Joy scheme



An organisation called the German Labour Front (*Deutsche Arbeitsfront* – **DAF**) replaced trade unions. It promised to protect the rights of workers and improve conditions. The DAF ran two schemes, which aimed to improve Germans' lives:

- Beauty of Labour (*Schonheit der Arbeit* or **SDA**): this scheme tried to improve the working environment by installing better lighting, safety equipment, new wash rooms, low-cost canteens and sports facilities.
- Strength through Joy (*Kraft durch Freude* or **KDF**): this scheme organised leisure activities to encourage hard work. It was a reward scheme that offered cheap holidays, trips to the theatre, and tickets to football matches if workers met their targets.

The DAF also had a scheme to help workers save for a car. Hitler himself helped design a 'People's Car', a **Volkswagen**, that ordinary people could afford.

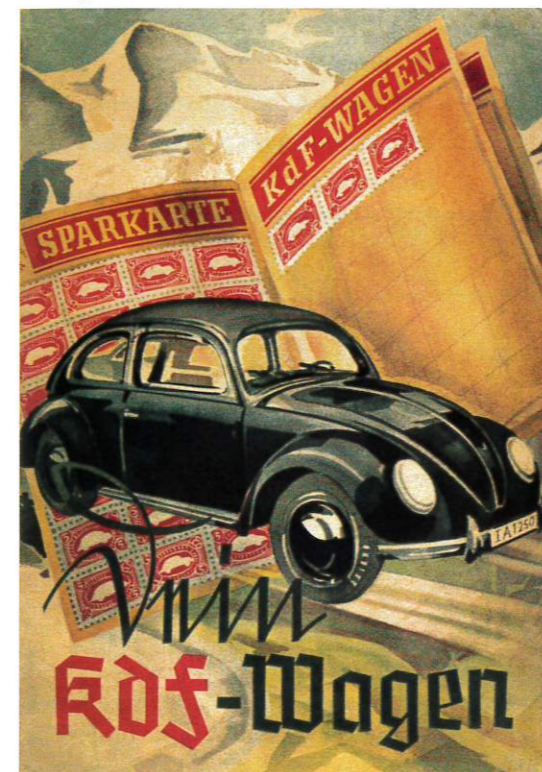
▼ **INTERPRETATION B** From *World at War* by Konrad Morgen (2007), in which Dr Morgen, a German lawyer and magistrate, is interviewed in the 1970s:

What did Hitler promise? Work and bread for the millions of unemployed and hungry masses. Nowadays in our prosperous society work and bread doesn't mean anything any more, but then it was a basic need of life, and this promise sounded like a promise of paradise.

## Key Words

DAF SDA KDF Volkswagen

▼ **SOURCE C** A poster encouraging workers to save up for their Volkswagen. Designed by Ferdinand Porsche, the car's price was set at 990 marks. Workers saved five marks a week until they had 750 marks in their savings stamp book. After that they were given an order number entitling them to a car when it was made. The whole scheme was a swindle though: not one customer got their car as the money was used to make weapons instead!



## Better off or not?

Although the Nazis fulfilled their promises to provide work, workers lost their rights because trade unions were banned. Workers could not quit without the government's permission and were banned from striking. People could also be forced to work as many hours as the Nazis required.

The KDF did provide rewards for Germans, with free trips to the cinema and concerts. However, some of holidays, such as cruises around Italy or skiing in Switzerland, were still too expensive for most working-class Germans.

## Practice Question

Which of the following groups were more affected by Nazi policies?

- farmers and agricultural workers
- industrial and factory workers?

Explain your answer with reference to both groups of people.

12 marks

## Study Tip

It is advisable to spend some time looking back at pages 54–55 where you will find more information on farmers, agricultural workers, industrial workers and factory workers.

Food also cost more than it used to. Germany was trying to be self-sufficient and not rely on imports from other countries. As a result, there was less food in the shops, so shopkeepers charged more because of the high demand.

▼ **INTERPRETATION D** Adapted from an oral history project in Essen (1983–87) studying industrial workers between 1930 and 1960. Ernest Bromberg worked at the Krupp steelworks and was asked about his involvement with the Nazis in the 1930s:

I had no time for [Nazi activities]. Regarding the [German] Labour Front, yes people kicked against it a bit and then just carried on. If you're on piecework, you didn't have any time to make speeches, you didn't extend your breaks because the money was very good. I didn't worry any more about the Nazis, I didn't have anything to do with them.

## Work

- 1 Imagine you work for the DAF and are responsible for promoting the work of the SDA and the KDF. Design a poster to show the advantages of these organisations. You want workers to see the benefits and rewards of these two organisations.
- 2 a What did DAF do?  
b What rights did workers lose?  
c Would workers be happy with their pay? Explain your answer
- 3 Look at **Source C**, including the label. Read this joke that went around Germany in 1939: A car worker in the Volkswagen factory can't afford to buy his own car, so smuggles parts and pieces out of the factory one by one, day by day. He takes them all home, hoping to put the car together when he has all the pieces. When the big day arrives, he puts it all together and makes a tank!  
a Explain what the joke means.  
b What does this joke tell you about the attitude of some Germans to the Nazi government?

In the first few years of the Second World War, the German military forces won one great battle after another. In 1940, Hitler had attacked and defeated six European countries within a few weeks of each other. Germans at home certainly felt the impact of the war, but the news from the war zones was always good and many Germans felt that Hitler was right when he said that war would make Germany very rich and powerful. Luxury goods, such as fur coats and perfume, from conquered countries began to find their way back into Germany, but most of these goods went to high-ranking Nazi officials. However, the war soon turned for the worse.

### Objectives

- ▶ **Describe** how life changed in Germany as a result of the Second World War.
- ▶ **Evaluate** the impact of war (including bombing, rationing, labour shortages and refugees) on Germans at home.

In 1941, Hitler's armies attacked the USSR (Russia). At first, German forces did well, but a freezing Russian winter forced the Germans to stop. Their guns wouldn't fire and they were poorly clothed. Soon, the huge Russian army began to push them back towards Germany. In one great battle at Stalingrad, over 80,000 Germans died and 90,000 surrendered. There were defeats elsewhere too, and then America joined in on Britain and Russia's side. By the beginning of 1944, it was clear that Germany was doomed to defeat.

### Hardship on the home front

#### Rationing

The German people soon began to realise how difficult war was when they were not winning. Supplies were needed for the soldiers, so sacrifices had to be made at home. There were severe food shortages, and by November 1939, food and clothing were **rationed**. For example, people were limited to one egg per week. Goods like soap and toilet paper were in very short supply and this led to some interesting alternatives. For example, it was suggested that soggy, stewed pine needles could be used in a bath instead of soap. Hot water was also rationed to two days per week. The Nazis responded to these hardships by asking the German people to completely commit themselves to winning the war.

#### Severe labour shortages and refugees

In 1942, Albert Speer was made Armaments Minister and was told to organise the country for **Total War**. This meant that everything was entirely focused on making weapons and growing food for soldiers. Anything that didn't contribute to the war was stopped.

For example, beer houses, dance halls and even sweet shops were closed. Letterboxes were boarded up.

Factories were forced to stay open longer, but because male workers were now soldiers fighting in the war, great numbers of women were drafted in to work in them. By 1944, around seven million foreign workers had been brought in from countries Germany had conquered to work as slave labour in the factories.

▼ **INTERPRETATION A** *Mathilde Wolff-Monckeberg, a well-educated translator, lived in Hamburg during the war. In her diary, she recorded not only the change in atmosphere in Germany, but also the shortage of workers in factories:*

How different the atmosphere is from that of the first war year when Nazi flags were flown, and drums were beaten on the radio announcing victory. Since the defeat at Stalingrad and the start of Total War, all is grey and still. Everyone has been called up, even women up to 50 years old, and boys have to do anti-aircraft duties.

#### Bombing

From 1942, Britain and America began pounding German cities with bombs. Due to the impact of the bombs, there was no electricity, water or transport, and panicked people left their homes to look for refuge (as **refugees**) in safer places. Indeed, there were thousands of deaths and injuries and people had to be retrieved from their homes by the medical services, which were at full stretch. The bombing caused flooding and gas explosions, and there was a constant danger of unexploded bombs. Not surprisingly, support for the Nazis began to weaken.

▼ **INTERPRETATION B** *Adapted from Frauen, by Alison Owings (1993), in which Frau Margarete Fischer, interviewed in 1982, recalls the bombing in 1942:*

You can't imagine the blackout; I longed for a full moon so I didn't fall into holes in our streets. I was buried in a cellar four times during bombing attacks. I had to leap from a train several times when they were bombed. We didn't blame people; Hitler said the war was necessary. We only had to survive it.

▼ **INTERPRETATION C** *From World at War by Richard Holmes (2007), in which Albert Speer, Hitler's Armaments Minister, is interviewed:*

In the Ruhr valley, almost every night there were bombing alarms for weeks and weeks and only when it was pouring rain they maybe had one night's sleep. But work went on there in spite of that, morale was still there.

### Key Words

rationed Total War refugee

▼ **SOURCE D** *Two men scavenge meat from a dead horse in 1945*



### Work

- 1 Write your own definitions for: rationing; Total War; refugee.
- 2 Describe ways in which the German people experienced Total War.
- 3 Hitler's invasion of Russia has been described as a 'turning point' in the war. Why do you think this is so?
- 4 Look at **Interpretations B** and **C**.
  - a In what ways do they differ in their views of the impact of the war on the German people?
  - b Can you suggest reasons why these two interpretations might be different?

### Extension

Remember that as events and policies change over time, so people's perceptions of these events and policies change also. To help you evaluate the impact of war on ordinary Germans, imagine you live in a large German city during the war. Write three diary entries: one in the early years of the war, another in the year after defeat at Stalingrad and the introduction of Total War, and the third from late in the war when conditions in Germany are very bad. Write about the mood of the nation, changes to daily life, and how people feel about the Nazis.

# How did the Nazis change the lives of young people?

Hitler went to great lengths to make sure that young people were loyal to him and the Nazi Party. He tried to control all aspects of a young person's life in school and outside of it. He believed that if young people were brought up to believe in Nazi ideas, then they would grow up to be good Nazis who would never rebel against the regime. How did the Nazis try to change German schools and control young people both at school and in their leisure time? And were young boys and young girls treated in the same way?

## The Nazi German school system

Hitler hoped to use the German school system to brainwash young Germans into loving him and the Nazi Party. He believed that children who learned to idolise him when they were young would continue to admire him for the rest of their lives. He realised that in future he may have to call on these people to put up with hardships, to fight and perhaps even die for him. To ensure their loyalty, Hitler used every subject in school to put forward Nazi propaganda and beliefs.

A young German schoolchild would have studied many subjects, including History, Geography, PE, Science and Maths. But the topics the students did and the way they were taught meant that they were 'brainwashed' (or **indoctrinated**) to think in a certain way and believe a particular set of ideas. There were very few opportunities for students to think for themselves. For example, in History, students would learn mainly about great German military victories and how badly Germany was treated at the end of the First World War. Geography lessons outlined areas in the world that Germany would soon conquer. Science lessons concentrated on weapon-making and chemical warfare, while Maths lessons asked students to calculate how much money Germany would save if they got rid of all disabled people, for example. The amount of time given over to PE trebled in the 1930s and a new subject, Race Studies ('**Eugenics**'), appeared on the timetable. Here, students were taught how to improve their race and about the Nazi belief in the inferiority of black people, eastern Europeans and, in particular, Jews. This meant that a whole generation of young people grew

## Objectives

- ▶ **Describe** what Hitler's 'ideal' young person was like and what the Nazi policies were on education and youth groups.
- ▶ **Explain** why millions of young people joined the Hitler Youth.
- ▶ **Assess** the reasons why boys and girls were educated and trained differently.

up believing that they were better than other races – and this could help explain why so many ordinary Germans failed to speak out against the way the Nazis persecuted other races in the years to come.

Textbooks were rewritten so that Nazi beliefs were taught as accepted facts, and teachers were made to put across Nazi ideas in their lessons. All teachers had to join an organisation called the German Teachers League, and any who refused to teach the way that the Nazis wanted were sacked. Students who were identified by their teachers as potential future Nazi leaders were sent to special academies known as 'Napolas' (National Political Educational Institutions). The Hitler Youth Organisation set up schools too, called 'Adolf Hitler Schools'. After intense training, including many academic examinations and tough physical exercise, the youngsters who attended these places graduated as 'ideal Nazis' – clever, tough and fiercely loyal to Hitler.

## The Nazis and universities

Many university lecturers suffered the same fate as schoolteachers. Between 1933 and 1934, fifteen per cent of university lecturers or professors were replaced, a third for racial reasons and half for political reasons. By 1939, over 3000 had been dismissed. Many leading academics left the country too, including world-famous physicist Albert Einstein. German universities had to change their courses so they reflected what the Nazis believed – for example, Physics courses did not include Einstein's Theory of Relativity because he was Jewish.

All students had to train as a soldier for a month each year, and the top university professors were hand-picked by the Nazis. However, the Nazis did not regard a university education as particularly important, and fewer Germans attended university during the Nazi era.

▼ **SOURCE A** *These questions have been translated and adapted from a 1933 German textbook:*

Question 46: The Jews are aliens in Germany and shouldn't be here. In 1933, there are 66,060,000 people living in Germany. Of this total, 499,862 are Jews. What is the percentage of aliens in Germany?

Question 52: It costs, on average, four RM [Reichsmarks] a day to keep a cripple or a mentally ill person in hospital. There are currently 300,000 mental patients, lunatics and so on in Germany's hospitals. How much would the German nation save if they got rid of all these people?

▼ **SOURCE B** *A picture from a German school textbook, 1935; in these books, Jews were always portrayed as evil – or doing nasty or illegal things*



## Practice Question

Describe two main features of the education of children in Nazi Germany.

4 marks

## Study Tip

In this question, 'main' means important. Before beginning your answer you need first to decide on two important features. Then you must describe them. In your answer you do not have to explain your choices.

## Key Words

indoctrinate eugenics

## Work

- 1 a What is eugenics?  
b Why do you think the Nazis insisted that all schoolchildren must be taught about eugenics?
- 2 Why were boys and girls taught different things?
- 3 Read **Source A**. Do you think the real aim of these questions was to improve students' maths skills?
- 4 Study **Source B**.  
a Look at the way the Jewish children and adult (bottom left) are drawn. Why do you think they have been drawn this way?  
b Look at the Jewish boy on the right, pulling another child's hair. Why has this been included?  
c What do you think the Nazis wanted students who read this book to think? Explain your answer.

## Extension



'A healthy man filled with decisiveness and strength of will is more valuable for the nation than an intelligent weakling.' (From *Mein Kampf*, by Adolf Hitler)

How would schools under the Nazis have produced the sort of Germans Hitler wanted? Use the sources to help you explain your answer.

# How did the Nazis change the lives of young people?

## The Hitler Youth clubs: controlling young people outside school

Hitler wanted total control of young people, in school and in their spare time too. In 1935, he gave a speech outlining what the ideal teenager should be like. He wanted to train up a 'new type' of disciplined and healthy human beings, 'young men and women who can suffer pain. They must be as fast as a greyhound, as tough as leather and as hard as steel'.

In 1922, Hitler set up the Hitler Youth Organisation. There were many youth clubs all over Germany at this time but the Hitler Youth clubs met after school to talk about Nazi beliefs and ideas. As well as learning how important it was to be loyal to Hitler, the boys were taught military skills while the girls learned how to be good wives and mothers. When the Nazis came to power in 1933, Hitler banned all other youth groups (for example, the Cub Scouts and Church youth clubs). As a result, lots more young people joined the Hitler Youth. In 1936, a Law for the Incorporation of German Youth gave the Hitler Youth 'equal status' to school and home. In other words, the Hitler Youth was legally just as important as a child's school and his home life. The organisation also controlled all sports facilities and youth competitions for children under 14. Membership of the Hitler Youth was made compulsory in 1939.

### German boys

Typically, a boy would join a Nazi club called the 'Little Fellows' from age six to age ten. Then he joined the 'Young Folk' from 10 to 14. Finally, he would become a fully-fledged member of the 'Hitler Youth' at 14 until he reached adulthood at age 18.

Boys would go to Hitler Youth meetings several times a week after school, and to special weekend camps every month. At Hitler Youth meetings, boys learned how to march, fight with knives, fire a gun, and keep themselves fit. The emphasis in all these activities was on competition, struggle, heroism and leadership. The Nazis wanted to prepare the boys for their future role as soldiers.

▼ **SOURCE C** A Hitler Youth poster; the Nazis produced lots of posters like this, hoping to inspire young men to join the Hitler Youth and become the elite soldiers of the future. This poster shows an SS soldier, with the words 'And You' at the bottom.



▼ **INTERPRETATION D** From Account Rendered by Melita Maschmann (1964). Maschmann joined the League of German Girls in March 1933. She was arrested after the war as a Nazi Party member, and was sent to prison.

I remember with more pleasure the weekend outings, the hikes, sports, campfires and youth hostelling. Occasionally there would be field exercises with neighbouring groups. I began to play truant from school as work for the Hitler Youth took up more and more of my time and energy. I would often leave the house at 5:00 am and only arrive at school for the second or third lesson.

### German girls

Girls normally joined a club called the 'Young Girls' between 10 and 14, and the 'League of German Girls' from 14 to 17. Girls still went on tough marches and attended weekend camps, but they would mainly learn how to keep fit, cook good meals and look after babies, to prepare for motherhood.

Both boys and girls were encouraged to report their parents or teachers if they criticised Hitler or told jokes about the Nazis.

### Key Words

Swing Youth  
Edelweiss Pirates

▼ **E** Membership of the Hitler Youth clubs. At first, membership was not compulsory but the camps, sports activities and shooting practice proved attractive for many youngsters.

Year	Membership	Population of Germany aged 10–18
1933	2,292,041	7,529,000
1936	5,437,601	8,656,000
1939	7,287,470	8,870,000

▼ **SOURCE F** Teenage girls in the League of German Girls learning to iron and mend uniforms



## Did all young people support the Hitler Youth organisations?

Not all young Germans liked what they saw of the Nazi way of life. Some youngsters who refused to join the Hitler Youth went to parties, listened to American jazz music (banned by the Nazis because of its black origins) and had Jewish friends. They were known as the **Swing Youth**. Other youngsters formed gangs – the 'Roving Dudes', the 'Edelweiss Pirates', the 'Navajos' – which went camping and sang songs making fun of Hitler. They even physically attacked Hitler Youth groups. These gangs included boys and girls, including Jews.

▼ **INTERPRETATION G** Adapted from an account by a young German, Arno Klönne, whose parents were teachers and had access to banned books. In his account he remembers his time in the Hitler Youth during 1940:

When I was older, I became a Hitler Youth leader. I found the need for absolute obedience unpleasant. The Nazis preferred people not to have a mind of their own. In our troop the activities consisted almost entirely of endless military drill. Even if sport or shooting practice or a singsong was planned, we always had to drill first.

▼ **SOURCE H** An excerpt of tests a German boy aged 10 to 14 would have to do in a Hitler Youth club to get an 'Achievement Award':

- To gain your Hitler Youth Achievement award:
- Complete the following lessons:
    - Life of Hitler
    - Germans abroad
    - Germany's rightful place in the world
    - National holidays of the German people
  - Complete the following athletic tests:
    - Run 60 metres in 10 seconds
    - Long jump 3.25 metres
  - Hiking and camping tests:
    - A day's hike of 15 kilometres
    - Camp in a tent for three days
  - Target practice:
 

Hit a bull's eye on a target at a distance of eight metres with an air gun

### Work

- Look at **Sources C, F** and **H**. What do these sources tell you about:
  - what young people did in the Hitler Youth Organisation
  - the aims of the organisation?
- What were the key differences between the youth clubs Hitler set up for boys and for girls?
- Why do you think some young people refused to join the Hitler Youth Organisation?
- Why do you think Hitler and the Nazis put so much effort into organising the lives of young people?

### Practice Question

How does **Interpretation G** differ from **Interpretation D** about the Hitler Youth clubs? **4 marks**

Why might the authors of **Interpretations D** and **G** have a different interpretation about the Hitler Youth clubs? **4 marks**

Which interpretation do you find more convincing about the Hitler Youth clubs? **8 marks**

### Study Tip

When reading these interpretations, don't just focus on the differences in content. Try to think about *why* the two writers might be saying different things about the Hitler Youth.

In a 1934 speech, Hitler made his views on the role of women very clear. When comparing the lives of men and women, he said, 'The world of women is a smaller one. For her world is her husband, her family, her children and her house.' So why did Hitler think this, and what impact did Hitler's policies on women have on their lives?

### Objectives

- ▶ **Summarise** the attitudes of the Nazis towards women.
- ▶ **Examine** the impact of Nazi policies on women's lives.
- ▶ **Evaluate** how successful the Nazis policies towards women and the family were.

### The place of women

In the 1920s, before the Nazis took over Germany, women had many rights and freedoms that women in other countries did not have. For example, they had the right to vote and if they worked for the government, their pay was equal to men. Many women attended university and became lawyers and doctors. However, the Nazis had very different views about the role of women. They were worried about the declining number of births in Germany during the Weimar period, which was a result of career-driven women having fewer children. In 1900 there had been over two million births per year but this had dropped to under one million by 1933. The Nazis felt that a low birth rate and a lower population didn't fit with their plans to expand Germany's territory and settle Germans in other areas of Europe. They felt it was a woman's patriotic duty to stay at home, have lots of children and support their husbands. Hitler even said women should stick to the three Ks – **Kinder, Kirche and Küche** (children, church and cooking). Women were not seen as equal to men. Within months of Hitler coming to power, many female doctors, teachers, lawyers and judges were sacked. Getting a job was discouraged, as it might get in the way of producing children. Women were even banned from jury service because the Nazis said they were unable to think without emotion.

### Controlling women

The Nazis tried to interfere in other aspects of women's lives. In many cities, women were banned from smoking because it was 'unladylike'. Wearing trousers or high heels was also discouraged for the same reason. The only thing that women were actively encouraged to do was to have children.

Loans were given out to newly married couples (the equivalent of a year's wages) to encourage them to have children. On the birth of a first child, they could

keep a quarter of the money. On the birth of another, they could keep the second quarter, and so on.

The Nazis banned contraception and abortion too. Even slimming was discouraged because it was not thought to be good for getting pregnant. Every year, on 12 August (the birthday of Hitler's mother) the Motherhood Medal was awarded to women who had the most children. Mothers with eight children received the 'Gold Cross'. The Nazis also set up the **Lebensborn** movement as an attempt to increase the birth rate. An estimated 8000 children were born in Germany as a result of this.

The Nazis promoted their views on women through the organisations they set up. The German Women's League coordinated all adult women's groups in the country, and representatives travelled around giving advice on cooking, childcare and healthy eating. By March 1939, 1.7 million women had attended one of its motherhood training courses. Another group, The Nazi Women's Organisation, was set up to develop an elite female group dedicated to Nazi beliefs and ideas.

### Were the policies a success?

The birth rate in Germany did increase. There were around 970,000 babies born in Germany in 1933 – and this had risen to 1,413,000 by 1939. Yet despite what the Nazis said about a woman's role and her place in the workplace, the reality was different. The Nazis needed women back at work because more men were joining the army, and workers were needed to run factories. As more men were killed after the Second World War began in 1939, it became vital for thousands of women to take on the role of main wage earner and mother. Unlike Britain though, women were still not called up to work.

### Key Words

*Kinder, Kirche and Küche Lebensborn*

### Fact

Not all women were encouraged to have children. The Nazis thought that some women were unfit to be mothers. The 'Law for the Prevention of Diseased Offspring' meant that women with a history of mental illness, hereditary diseases or anti-social behaviour (like alcoholism) could be forcibly sterilised.

▼ **SOURCE A** A portrait of the 'ideal' German family, painted by German artist Wolfgang Willrich in 1934



### Work

- 1 Why did the amount of working women both decrease and then increase during the 1930s?
- 2 Suggest reasons why the Nazis were so keen to increase the birth rate.
- 3 Look at **Source A**. Why do you think the Nazis approved of this painting?

### Practice Question

In what ways were the lives of women in Germany affected by Nazi social policies? Explain your answer. **8 marks**

▼ **INTERPRETATION B** Adapted from *Frauen* by Alison Owings (1993) in which Frau Mundt recalls the time in 1930s Germany when she was a young girl. Her parents were poor and unemployed during the Depression:

The things we learned at home were put into practice. When you sat on a bus or train, if there were old people you gave them your seat and showed respect. The children were obedient in the school and were obedient to their parents. Young people were brought up to be clean and honest. In the Hitler Youth we sang, did sports and danced. I do not regret that time. For as long as I went to school there was singing, but also prayer. We were happy then. Parents had work and money. Unemployment was ended.

▼ **SOURCE C** An advertisement in a German newspaper, 1936:

52-year-old doctor. Fought in First World War. Wishes to settle down. Wants a male child through marriage to a young, healthy, virgin, Aryan woman. She should be undemanding, used to heavy work, not a spender, broad-hipped and with flat heels, without earrings, if possible without money.

### Extension



- 1 Read **Interpretation B**. What impact did the Nazis have on the life of this woman?
- 2 Read **Source C**.
  - a In your own words describe what sort of woman the doctor wanted.
  - b What does this advert tell us about the doctor's views on the role of women?
- 3 After considering **Interpretation B** and **Sources A** and **C**, discuss with a partner: how do you think women felt about the Nazi policies and laws that affected them?

### Study Tip

Be careful to not just list all the Nazi policies that relate to women. You must also think about the effects they had on women.

When the Nazis came to power in Germany, most Germans were Christians. But the beliefs and values of Christianity were very different from those of the Nazis. As a result, the Nazis and Christianity clashed, and religion did not prosper under Nazi rule.

## Objectives

- ▶ Describe the Nazi control of churches and religion.
- ▶ Outline why there was support for and opposition to the Nazis from Christians in Germany.
- ▶ Assess the impact of Nazi policies on Christians, and how they responded to Nazi rule.

Germany's Christians were mainly divided into two Christian groups. Around one third of Germans were Catholics (20 million people) and two thirds were Protestants (40 million). Religion was an important feature of German society and Hitler realised that he had to be very careful in how he dealt with it.

### Why did some Christians support the Nazis?

The Nazis had some very extreme views, so it might be difficult to understand why some Christians supported the Nazis in the early years. However:

- The Nazis said they believed in the importance of marriage, the family and moral values. Most Christians also believe in the importance of these.
- Christians feared communism because it was anti-religious, and Hitler promised to destroy communism.
- Hitler promised to respect the Catholic Church.

### The Nazis and the Catholic Church



At first, Hitler cooperated with Catholic leaders. In 1933 he signed a Concordat (agreement) with the Pope, the head of the Catholic Church, so that they would not interfere with each other. But Hitler soon broke this agreement. He felt that German Catholics listened to the Pope more than him, so he harassed and arrested Catholic priests and closed down

Catholic youth clubs and schools. Relations became so bad that in 1937 the Pope issued a statement called 'With Burning Anxiety', saying that the Nazis were 'hostile to Christ and his Church'. This was read out in Catholic churches across Germany, but it had little effect. The Nazis continued to arrest priests. In August 1941, one of Germany's best-known religious leaders, Catholic Archbishop Galen, openly criticised the Nazis for their use of terror tactics, **ethanasia** and concentration camps. As a result of his protests, Galen was put under house arrest until the end of the war.

### The Nazis and the Protestant Church

Some Protestants admired Hitler for his views on marriage and moral values, and wanted to see their Church under Nazi control. They were known as '**German Christians**' and their leader, Ludwig Müller, became the first Reich Bishop in September 1933. German Christians often wore Nazi uniforms and used the slogan 'the swastika on our chests and the Cross in our hearts'. However, some Protestants hated this because they felt that the core Nazi beliefs were totally opposed to those of Christianity. A new Protestant group called the **Confessional Church** was then formed, led by Pastor Martin Niemöller, and they openly criticised the Nazis. However, the Nazis struck back and arrested around 800 pastors. Niemöller himself was sent to a concentration camp and the Confessional Church was banned.

### ▼ A Comparison of core Nazi and Christian beliefs

Nazism 	Christianity 
Nazis thought strength and violence were glorious	Christians believe in love and forgiveness
Hated the weak and vulnerable	Help the weak and vulnerable
Believed some races were better (superior) than others	Believe all people are equal in God's eyes
Hitler was a God-like figure	Believe in God and the teachings of Jesus Christ

### ▼ SOURCE B A famous poem by Pastor Martin Niemöller, written in 1946:

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out – because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out – because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out – because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me – and there was no one left to speak for me.

### The Nazis and other religious groups

About one third of Jehovah Witnesses were killed in concentration camps because they were **pacifists** and refused to serve in the army. Also, the Salvation Army, Christian Scientists, and the Seventh Day Adventist Church all disappeared from Germany. It wasn't just Christians who were persecuted by the Nazis. The Jews suffered relentless persecution in Nazi Germany. In short, the Nazis tended to persecute anyone who didn't put Nazism and Hitler at the centre of their beliefs.

### ▼ SOURCE C A German nun gives the Nazi salute during a Nazi rally in Dachau, 1935



## Work

- 1 Look at the table of Nazi and Christian beliefs.
  - a In no more than 20 words, sum up the key differences between Nazism and Christianity.
  - b Why did some Christians support the Nazis, despite the differences in beliefs and values?
- 2 How did Christians react to Nazi rule? What did they do to either support or rebel against Nazi policies?

## Extension



## Study Source B.

- a Conduct further research to find out more about who Pastor Martin Niemöller was.
- b What is the message of Niemöller's poem? Does knowing more about his background give you a different view of the poem?

## Practice Question

Describe how the Nazis gained control over German Christians. **4 marks**

## Study Tip

Make sure you don't just talk about Christians in general. Try to give details about the different groups of Christians that the Nazis tried to control.

## Key Words

ethanasia German Christians  
Confessional Church pacifist

Having worked hard to get into power, Hitler was determined to remove any possible threats. He said that anyone who spoke out against him would 'have their skulls bashed in'. Some of Hitler's first targets therefore were his old political opponents, and powerful people who had belonged to political parties other than the Nazis found themselves sent to concentration camps. But other groups in German society also found themselves high on Hitler's hate list, despite not appearing to be a threat to his power at all. Why did Hitler persecute certain racial groups? Who were the so-called 'undesirables' that Hitler was so determined to remove?

### Objectives

- ▶ Explain what Nazis' Aryan ideas were.
- ▶ Describe the ways in which particular minority and racial groups were persecuted in Nazi Germany.
- ▶ Outline reasons why the Nazis persecuted different groups.

### Persecution of racial groups

Hitler believed that some races were better than, or superior to, others. He felt that Germans were the master race, the most superior race of all, and had the right to dominate inferior races such as Jews, Gypsies, Slavs (such as Russians), black and Indian people. Hitler used the word **Aryan** to describe the 'master race' of Germans. Ideally, an Aryan would be strong, tall, blond, blue-eyed and white. Hitler said that 'the strong must dominate and not blend with the weak', and feared that Aryans would mix with some of the so-called inferior groups, so the Nazis began to persecute and, later, murder them. Over half a million Gypsies, and over six million Jews from all over Europe, died in **death camps** in the years up to 1945.

▼ **A** *Laws against Jews, 1933–39. Each of these laws was designed systematically to drive Jews out of Germany. There were approximately 500,000 Jews in Germany in 1934 (about one per cent of the population). By the time Hitler*

Hitler had an obsessive hatred of Jews, and as soon as he came to power he began to discriminate against them. When war broke out in 1939, the persecution became even worse. For example, Jews were rounded up and forced to work in areas known as **ghettos**, and some were hunted down and murdered by execution squads. Later in the war they were sent to specially built death camps, to be murdered by poison gas.

### Persecution of 'undesirables'

Hitler believed that every single German should work to make Germany a greater nation. There were certain groups, he felt, that were incapable of this and whose existence weakened the nation. Hitler called these

*stopped Jews leaving Germany (in 1941), nearly 80 per cent had left for new lives in other countries. From 1941 onwards, Hitler began his 'Final Solution' to kill all of Europe's Jews.*

people 'undesirables' and wanted to get rid of them in order to strengthen Germany.

- Around half a million tramps, beggars and alcoholics were sent to concentration camps in 1933. Many were worked to death.
- Thousands of prostitutes, homosexuals and problem families were sent to the camps too.
- Many people with strong religious beliefs were sent to the camps. Some were pacifists who refused to go into the army. Others refused to offer total loyalty to anyone other than God.
- About 350,000 physically and mentally disabled men and women were forcibly sterilised by the Nazis. They didn't fit in with Hitler's vision of a race of strong and powerful Aryans, so he wanted to stop them passing on any of their 'deformities' to their children. From 1939, the Nazis began to kill them. About 200,000 people, including 5000 children, were murdered in specially-built 'nursing homes'.

▼ **SOURCE B** *Adapted from a 1939 British Foreign Office report on the treatment of Germans in Germany:*

There were about 8000 men in the camp, but it was rumoured that the number was shortly to be increased to 20,000. There were 1500 Jews, and 800 Bible students. The rest were politicals, so-called criminals and gypsies. Deaths took place daily in the camp.

### Key Words

persecute Aryan master race death camp  
ghetto Nuremberg Laws Kristallnacht

### Work

- 1 What is meant by the term 'Aryan'?
- 2 Why did Hitler feel he had the right to persecute certain racial groups?
- 3 Look at timeline **A**. Explain which of the restrictions:
  - a were annoying or minor nuisances
  - b prevented Jewish children from having a normal childhood
  - c prevented Jews from earning a normal living
  - d prevented Jews from enjoying the same rights as other German citizens.
- 4 Between 1933 and 1941, nearly 80 per cent of Jewish families left Germany for new lives in other countries. Make up a conversation between two Jewish families – one determined to leave, the other determined to stay. Think about the factors that might influence their decision.
- 5 In pairs or in groups, discuss why Hitler regarded each of the following as 'undesirable' in Nazi Germany: prostitutes, homosexuals, tramps, pacifists.

### Extension

Research the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 in more detail. Who announced them? Where? What were the specific laws called? What exactly did the laws say? What was the immediate impact on Jews?

### Timeline

March 1933	April 1933	September 1933	January 1934	September 1935	January 1936	July 1938	August 1938	November 1938	December 1938	April 1939	September 1939
All Jewish lawyers and judges sacked	All Jews banned from any sports clubs. All Jewish teachers sacked	'Race studies' introduced in German schools	All Jewish shops marked with a yellow star of David – a symbol of the Jewish religion – or the word <i>Juden</i> (German for 'Jew'). Soldiers to stand outside shops turning people away	Jews not allowed to vote. Marriages between Jews and non-Jews banned. These were known as the <b>Nuremberg Laws</b>	No Jew allowed to own any electrical equipment (including cameras), bicycles, typewriters or music records	Jewish doctors sacked	Male Jews must add the name 'Israel' and female Jews must add the name 'Sara' to their first names	Jewish children banned from German schools. Jewish homes, synagogues and businesses attacked all over Germany and Austria. About 100 Jews killed and 20,000 sent to concentration camps. Known as <b>Kristallnacht</b> (Night of Broken Glass)	Jewish and non-Jewish children forbidden to play together. Jews banned from using swimming pools	Jews can be evicted from their homes for no reason	Jews no longer allowed out of their homes between 8:00pm and 6:00am

# The journey to the Final Solution

In early January 1942, a group of leading Nazis gathered in the elegant Berlin neighbourhood of Wannsee. They met to discuss the quickest and cheapest way to kill all the Jews left in Europe. This amounted to an estimated 11 million people. The Wannsee Conference, as the meeting became known, resulted in one of the most appalling plans ever devised – they decided to exterminate the entire Jewish population using poison gas. The plan was called the **Final Solution**. Why did Hitler hate the Jews so much, and how close did the Nazis come to achieving the destruction of Europe's Jews?

## Objectives

- ▶ Investigate how and why the persecution of Jews worsened between 1933 and 1945.
- ▶ Examine why Hitler persecuted Jewish people and the reasons for the Final Solution.

## The persecution of Jews

**Anti-Semitism** is the term for the discrimination of Jews. Anti-Semitism has been common in Europe for many centuries. Jews have been blamed for the death of Jesus Christ and the outbreak of Black Death in the 1300s. Jews value education very highly and often gain well-paid positions as doctors, lawyers or businessmen. This sometimes means that people often become jealous of their 'privileged' lives. At one time or another, Jews have been persecuted in nearly all European countries and there are many nations today with a record of anti-Semitic violence in their history. In 1290, for example, King Edward I expelled all Jews from England, and they were banned from returning for over 350 years.

## Hitler and the Jews

Hitler's own violent anti-Semitism is a bit of a mystery. Even today, historians are unsure as to why he hated Jews so much. Some argue that it could have had something to do with his jealousy of the richer Jewish population in Vienna when he was living there as a struggling young artist. He blamed Jews for Germany's defeat in the war and thought that Jewish bankers and businessmen had not done enough to help. He believed that Jews had started the revolution in Germany that led to the Kaiser leaving the country and then the signing of the hated Treaty of Versailles.

As soon as Hitler became leader of Germany in 1933 he introduced laws and rules that made Jewish lives very difficult. Non-Jewish Germans were bombarded with speeches, news articles and even films showing how evil, selfish and damaging the Jews were to the German nation. One Nazi-owned propaganda newspaper

in 1934 had a headline that read 'Jewish Murder Plan Against Non-Jewish Mankind Uncovered', with a sub-heading that read 'The Jews Are Our Misfortune'. Jews were banned from having government jobs or careers in medicine, teaching or journalism. They were banned from public places like swimming pools and cinemas. Then, in September 1935, came a series of laws called the Nuremberg Laws: the Reich Citizen Act said that no Jew could vote, whilst the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour banned marriage between Jews and non-Jews. In November 1938, under orders from Goebbels, SS troops carried out a nationwide campaign of terror against the Jews. On Kristallnacht, or the 'Night of Broken Glass', around 10,000 Jewish shops had their windows broken. Around 100 Jews were killed, 20,000 were sent to concentration camps and nearly 200 synagogues were burned down.

▼ **INTERPRETATION A** *From The World at War, by Richard Holmes (2007), in which Hugh Greene, a British journalist who visited Germany in the 1930s, said in 1973:*

I was in Berlin at that time and saw some pretty revolting sights – the destruction of Jewish shops, Jews being arrested and led away, the police standing by while the gangs destroyed the shops and even groups of well-dressed women cheering. Maybe these women had a hangover next morning, as they were intoxicated all right when this was taking place. I found it, you know, really utterly revolting. In fact to a German journalist who saw me on that day and asked me what I was doing there, I remember I just said very coldly, 'I'm studying German culture.'

## The impact of war on Jews

Lots of Jews left Germany to live in nearby countries such as Holland and Belgium, but found themselves back under Nazi rule when Germany invaded and occupied those countries during the Second World War. As the war went on, and Hitler invaded more countries, more Jews became trapped under Hitler's rule all over Europe – three million Jews in Poland, 2.7 million in western Russia and over one million in France, Denmark, Norway and the Balkans.

## Ghettos and execution squads

Hitler's methods of dealing with the Jews under his control were brutal. In some countries Jews were bricked into ghettos in the major cities, or sent to work in labour camps. Execution squads (called **Einsatzgruppen**) even went out into the countryside and shot or gassed as many Jews as they could find. But for some Nazis, the destruction of Europe's Jews was not happening quickly enough, and by the end of 1941 leading Nazis had begun working on plans for what they called 'a final solution to the Jewish question'.

▼ **SOURCE B** *Nazi Stormtroopers attaching a poster to a Jewish-owned business. The poster reads 'Germans! Defend yourself! Don't do business with Jews!'*



▼ **SOURCE C** *Local workers under Nazi order in Warsaw, Poland, building a brick wall around the Warsaw Ghetto in 1940. Conditions inside ghettos were horrific. Food, water and power were cut off, resulting in hundreds of deaths every day. At this time, the population of the ghetto was estimated at 440,000 Jews (nearly 40 per cent of the whole Warsaw population), but the ghetto itself was only about five per cent of the size of Warsaw.*



▼ **SOURCE D** *An Einsatzgruppen soldier shooting a Jewish woman and her child in the Ukraine, 1942.*



## Key Words

Final Solution anti-Semitism Einsatzgruppen

## Work

- 1 For what reasons do historians think that Nazi Germany became an anti-Semitic state?
- 2
  - a In the years up to 1941, describe how the treatment of Jews got gradually worse.
  - b In your opinion, what was the impact of Nazi anti-Semitic policies on non-Jewish Germans?
  - c Can you suggest reasons why the persecution of Jews got gradually worse?
- 3 Read **Interpretation A**.
  - a What examples of persecution did the journalist see?
  - b Is there any evidence that it wasn't only Nazis, but also ordinary Germans, that joined in with the persecution?
  - c What do you think the journalist meant when he said, 'I am studying German culture.'?



# The journey to the Final Solution

## The Final Solution

At the Wannsee Conference in 1942, Nazi leaders met to discuss the Final Solution for the mass murder of every Jew in German territory, either by working them to death or by killing them in poison gas chambers. Six major death camps (or extermination camps) were to be built for this purpose. Soon Jews from all over German-occupied Europe were being transported to these camps. They were joined by thousands of Gypsies, homosexuals, political opponents, the disabled and any other groups whom the Nazis considered unfit to live.

**E** A map of Europe showing the main concentration and extermination camps. Concentration camps tended to be more like prisons where inmates were put to work in terrible conditions. They were often worked to death. The extermination camps' only purpose was to kill.

### Number of Jews killed %

Poland	3,000,000	90
Germany	210,000	90
Czech	155,000	86
Holland	105,000	75
Hungary	450,000	70
Ukraine	900,000	60
Romania	300,000	50
Russia	107,000	11



### Key

- ▲ Major extermination camps
- Concentration camps
- Transport routes (rail)

**SOURCE F** Hungarian Jews lined up by the railway tracks on arrival at Auschwitz death camp. Most were sent straight to the gas chambers.



## Fighting back: Jewish resistance

Some Jews fought against what was happening to them in both Germany and in the areas that Germany occupied. When *Einsatzgruppen* soldiers arrived in some towns and villages, some Jews escaped to the forests and formed resistance groups. They attacked German soldiers and blew up railway lines that the Germans were using. However, these groups were rare and were hunted down ruthlessly. In some ghettos there was resistance too. The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943 lasted 43 days before the Germans finally regained control, arrested and executed all those

involved, and burned down the ghetto. There were also occasional rebellions in death camps. The best known of all was in Treblinka in 1943. One of the prisoners managed to get into the weapons store where he handed out guns and grenades. After setting the camp on fire, 150 prisoners managed to escape, killing 15 guards in the process. However, the Nazis soon regained control and all of the escapees were killed. Some 550 other prisoners were then killed by the Germans in revenge.

## Who knew?

Around six million Jews were killed by Hitler's Nazis, and around three million of these deaths took place in death camps like Auschwitz, Belzec and Treblinka. Thousands of people, not only loyal Nazis, helped with the Final Solution: ordinary Germans such as railway workers who loaded Jews onto cattle trucks bound for the camps, office clerks, typists, telephone operators, policemen and soldiers. Around 150 German companies used Auschwitz prisoners as slaves to build their goods. Other firms competed for the contract to design and build the gas chambers and ovens in which people were murdered and burned. In 1943, a newspaper in one of Germany's largest cities even carried the headline 'Jews to be exterminated'.

For many years, there has been controversy over how much governments in other countries, such as the USA and Britain, knew about the Nazi death camps. Today, most historians agree that they knew something terrible was happening, but not the scale of it. They were in a difficult position too. The camps were deep in the heart of Nazi-occupied Europe and bombing was the only option, but that wasn't a very practical or humane thing to do.

**INTERPRETATION G** From *The World at War* by Richard Holmes (2007), in which Emmi Bonhoeffer, the wife of anti-Hitler activist Klaus Bonhoeffer, is interviewed:

Standing in the line for vegetables I told my neighbours standing next to me that now they start to kill Jews in the concentration camps and they even make soap out of them. And they said, 'Frau Bonhoeffer, if you don't stop telling such horror stories you will end up in a concentration camp too and none of us can help you. It's not true what you're saying, you shouldn't believe these things, you have heard them from the foreign broadcasts and they tell those things to make enemies for us.'

## Key Words

Holocaust

## Fact

The Nazis' attempt to wipe out the Jewish race is commonly known as the **Holocaust**. However, in recent years, some Jews have objected to this word, as it means 'sacrifice'. They argue that this implies that Jews were 'offering themselves' in some way. The word 'genocide' is preferred by some, which means the deliberate extermination of a race.

## Extension

There is much debate among historians as to whether or not Hitler intended to wipe out the Jewish race from the start, or whether Hitler had no clear plan and it was a gradual process. Conduct research to find the evidence for both views. Which argument is more convincing to you?

## Work

- In what ways was the Final Solution different from the way Jews had been treated in the first few years after 1933? You may want to revisit pages 68–69 to refresh your memory.
- Based on all the evidence you have seen on pages 68–73, which event was the turning point for Hitler's treatment of the Jews?
- In what ways did Jews resist what was happening to them?
- Read **Interpretation G**.
  - What does the writer tell the person standing next to her in the queue?
  - How does the person react to Frau Bonhoeffer's statement about the Jews?
  - What does the person's reaction tell us about the Nazi regime?

## Practice Question

Describe two examples of armed resistance by Jews to the Nazis. **4 marks**

## Study Tip

Remember to focus on just two examples!

# Fear and terror: repression and the police state

The vast majority of Germans supposedly supported Hitler and the Nazis throughout the 1930s. Like a movie star today, Hitler was mobbed wherever he went. Outside his home, some visitors even went so far as to eat the gravel where he'd stood! It was clear that many Germans were pleased with what he was doing with the country. What is difficult to judge is just how many people were against what he was doing. This is because the Nazis allowed no opposition; killing or imprisoning all opponents. People were too scared to speak out. Why were many ordinary Germans so terrified?

## Objectives

- ▶ **Explain** the roles of Himmler, the SS (Schutzstaffel) and the Gestapo in the Nazi police state.
- ▶ **Analyse** how the Nazis used terror tactics to maintain control.
- ▶ **Assess** what the police state was like for ordinary Germans.

## The police state

Hitler was the Führer, the all-powerful supreme leader of Germany, also known as a dictator. He felt that if people didn't accept Nazi ideas and beliefs willingly, then they would be forced to accept them. All dictators need a large police force to both protect them and make sure people do what they are told, and Nazi Germany was no exception. Under Hitler, Nazi Germany was a police state, a country where the police are very powerful.

The diagram opposite outlines how the Nazi police state was organised, and how terror was used to keep the country in control.

### Concentration camps

Lots of these camps were set up as soon as Hitler took power. They were large prisons where any 'enemies of the state' could be held for any length of time. They were set up to 'correct' people who were not doing what the Nazis wanted. Anyone the Nazis didn't like was sent there – Jews, Gypsies, political opponents and anyone who criticised Hitler. Inmates were forced to work hard and some were even tortured or worked to death.



### A The main features of the Nazi police state

#### Himmler

All police forces were put under the control of Himmler, the Head of the SS. He personally reported to Hitler and was a loyal Nazi who had known Hitler since 1923.



#### The SS (Schutzstaffel)

Set up in 1925, the blackshirted SS were originally Hitler's personal bodyguards. Gradually, the group, led by Himmler, was built up over the years to become the most feared organisation in the country. SS members were tall, strong, athletic, and totally loyal to Hitler. Over time, the SS were divided into three sections:



- The SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*) looked after 'security' – they could arrest anyone for any reason, search homes and seize property. They even spied on and policed the Nazi Party itself.
- The Waffen SS were an elite unit in the army.
- The Death's Head Units ran the concentration camps, and later, the death camps.

### The regular police and the law courts

The ordinary police continued their regular work, but ignored crimes committed by Nazis. All the top jobs in the ordinary police went to Nazis.



The law courts and judges were under Nazi control too. New laws meant that the death penalty could be given for, among other things, telling an anti-Hitler joke, having sex with a Jew, and listening to a foreign radio station.

### The Gestapo

The secret police were known as the Gestapo. They didn't wear uniforms, and spied on people they thought might be a threat. They tapped telephone calls and opened mail. They had the power to arrest, imprison without trial, and torture anyone. They set up a huge network of 'informers' who would report anyone who even moaned about the Nazis.



They encouraged children to report their parents or teachers. In fact, there were not that many Gestapo officers, but because people didn't know who they were, ordinary Germans informed on each other because they thought the Gestapo would probably find out anyway.

▼ **SOURCE B** *An incident reported by the SD in the Rhineland area of Germany, July 1938:*

In a café, a 64-year-old woman remarked to her companion at the table, 'Mussolini [leader of Italy] has more political sense in one of his boots than Hitler has in his brain.' The remark was overheard and five minutes later the woman was arrested by the Gestapo, who had been alerted by telephone.

### Fact

Don't be fooled into thinking everything was brilliantly well organised in Nazi Germany. Hitler himself was lazy, got up late and rarely read through official documents. He left much of the work to his loyal 'inner circle' of followers who worked on the details of his grand plans and put them into practice.

### Work

- 1 What is a 'police state'?
- 2 Who was Heinrich Himmler?
- 3 Study **Source B**.
  - a What was the Gestapo?
  - b What does the source tell you about the role of ordinary Germans within the police state?
- 4 Create your own revision spider diagram or mind map by using images and no more than 20 words to illustrate how the Nazis used fear and terror to control Germany.

### Practice Question

In what ways would the behaviour of ordinary Germans be affected by the police state? Explain your answer. **8 marks**

### Study Tip

Think about the impact that the SS and the Gestapo would have on the lives of ordinary people. You should consider the use of – and fear of – the SS, the Gestapo and, of course, the concentration camps.

Fear of arrest and imprisonment by the Gestapo or the SS meant that many Germans kept their heads down and didn't complain. But Hitler and the Nazis knew that they didn't have to instill fear in all Germans: many supported them. To make sure that as many people as possible continued to support them, the Nazis used two clever methods of control – propaganda and censorship. What are these methods, and how successful were they in 'winning people over' to support Nazi plans and ideas?

**Objectives**

- ▶ Define 'propaganda' and 'censorship'.
- ▶ Outline how and why the Nazis gained control of all radio and newspapers after they came to power.
- ▶ Examine how propaganda and censorship increased control.

**Propaganda**

Propaganda comes from the word 'propagate', which means 'spread information and ideas'. Hitler employed a leading Nazi, Joseph Goebbels, to persuade large numbers of Germans to think and believe what Hitler wanted them to think and believe. Goebbels' official title was the Minister of Enlightenment and Propaganda. He understood that propaganda worked best if people were repeatedly given some basic ideas with short messages and powerful images. Blaming Jews for Germany's problems, criticising the Treaty of Versailles, and making Germany great again were identified as key messages, and they continuously appeared all over Germany, on posters, in newspapers, speeches, films and on the radio.

**Key Biography****Joseph Goebbels (1897–1945)**

- Couldn't fight in the First World War because of a disability in his foot. After the war, to explain his limp, he claimed that he had been wounded during the war.
- Joined the Nazi Party in 1924. Was not fully supportive of Hitler to begin with, but grew to admire him totally.
- In charge of Nazi propaganda. He was brilliant in this role and was a gifted speaker.

**Propaganda and censorship**

Propaganda is the art of persuading other people that your version of the story is correct. However, Goebbels knew he couldn't just rely on propaganda to do this.

He needed to control and limit other ideas and beliefs too, so he used censorship. This meant that the government tightly controlled (or censored) what German people heard, read or saw. So, anything was banned (such as books, films, news articles, even jokes) if it was viewed as harmful to the Nazis or Hitler.

▼ **SOURCE A** Goebbels speaking about propaganda at a Nazi rally in 1937:

*The essence of propaganda consists in winning people over to an idea so sincerely, so vitally, that in the end they succumb to it utterly and can never escape from it.*

▼ **INTERPRETATION B** From *The World at War* by Richard Holmes (2007), in which Lieutenant von Kleist-Schmenzin, a surviving conspirator of the 1944 July Bomb Plot (see page 87 for details), is interviewed:

*I think a person who has never lived in a dictatorship can't understand the power of propaganda. If you just hear always the same, if you read in every newspaper the same and you have very few possibilities for other information then you become very impressed by the things which you are told. And it's very difficult to have to make up your own mind, to be critical.*

**Key Words**

censorship

▼ **C** How Goebbels controlled what people heard, read and saw

**Newspapers**

Only stories that showed the Nazis doing good things were allowed to be printed. There were also many negative stories about Jews. Newspapers that printed stories that Goebbels hadn't approved were closed down.

**Films**

All film plots were shown to Goebbels before the actual film was made. All films had to show the Nazis in a good way, and their 'enemies' in a bad way.

**Radio**

The Nazis controlled all radio stations, which were used to put across Nazi ideas. Cheap radios were produced that could only tune in to Nazi-controlled stations; more Germans owned radios in the 1930s than Americans. Loudspeakers were placed in the streets, in factories and cafés to air radio broadcasts.

**Goebbels' propaganda and censorship****Mass rallies**

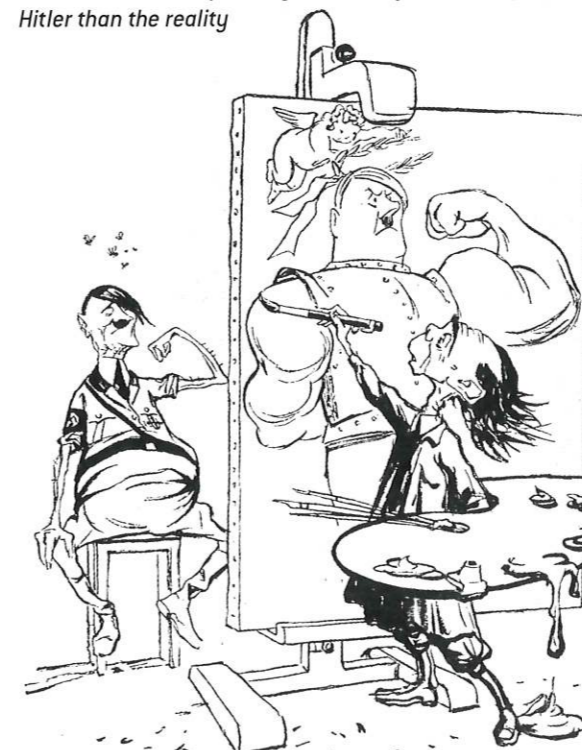
Spectacular parades (called mass rallies) were held often to celebrate Hitler's greatness. Special arenas were built that could hold half a million people. Choirs, bands, speeches, fireworks and air shows were performed to showcase how impressive and well organised the Nazis were.

**Books, theatre and music**

Writers were forced to write books, plays and songs that praised Hitler and the Nazis.

**Work**

- 1 What is the difference between 'propaganda' and 'censorship'?
- 2 **Source D** is critical of Hitler's Germany. How do you know?
- 3 Here are four real-life situations. Do you think each person is controlled by: i) fear; ii) propaganda; iii) a combination of the two? Briefly describe each situation then state how you think the person is being controlled or why they acted in the way they did:
  - a A famous musician and his family fleeing from Germany because they are Jews and fear the Nazis.
  - b A woman in Munich donating money to the Nazi Party because she is impressed by one of Hitler's speeches.
  - c A teacher giving the Nazi salute every morning to each of his classes, even though he hates Hitler.
  - d An eight-year-old boy informing his head teacher that his father keeps telling anti-Hitler jokes, which are banned.
- 4 Read **Interpretation B**. What point does the writer make about propaganda?



▼ **SOURCE D** A Russian cartoon from 1941 showing Goebbels the artist painting a rather different image of Hitler than the reality

# How were the arts and culture of Germany affected by Nazi rule?

The Nazis were determined to control all aspects of people's lives, including the paintings they looked at, the books they read, the music they listened to, the films they watched, and even the buildings they used and lived in. How did the Nazis do this, and how did the arts and culture of Germany change during this period?

## Objectives

- ▶ **Examine** the arts and culture during the Nazi regime.
- ▶ **Evaluate** the impact that censorship had on art and culture activities in Germany after 1933.
- ▶ **Contrast** art and culture in Nazi Germany with art and culture in Weimar Germany.

## The Chamber of Culture

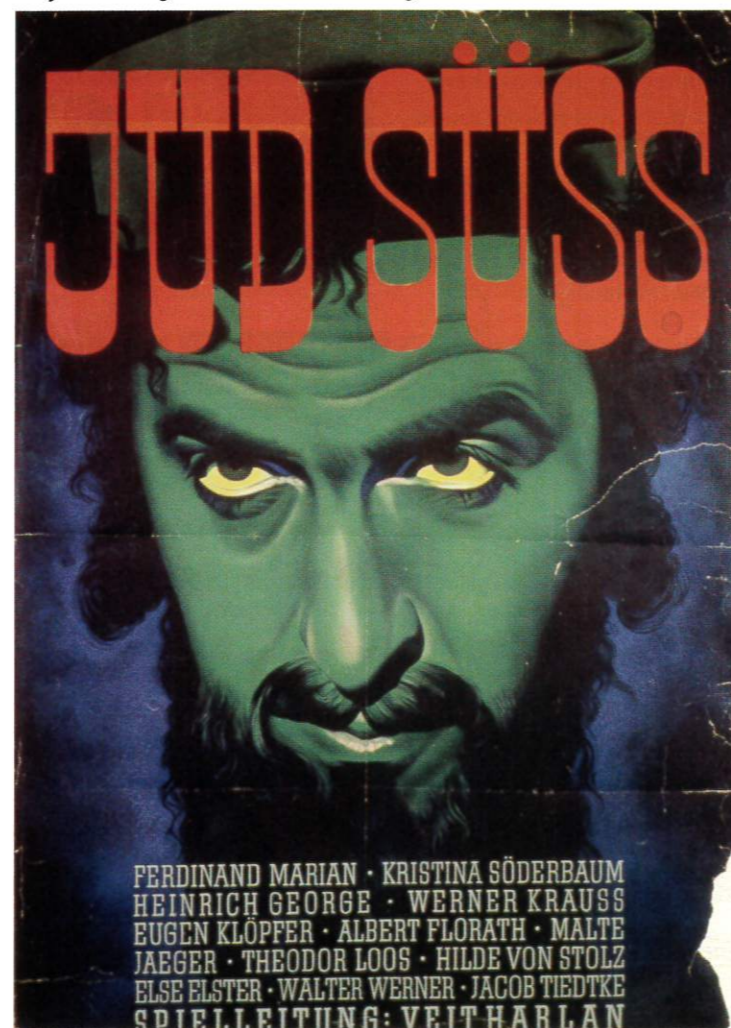
The Nazis set up an organisation called the Chamber of Culture. It was led by the loyal Nazi, Joseph Goebbels. All musicians, writers, artists and actors had to be members of the new organisation, and anyone who refused would not be allowed to work. Some people, such as Jews, were banned from joining.

The Chamber of Culture ruled that all cultural activities such as art, theatre, music, film and literature all had to give the same 'message': that Nazi beliefs and ideas were correct, and everything that Hitler did was in the best interests of the country.

## Cinema

Goebbels realised how popular cinema was and how powerful it could be. Nazi supporters such as Alfred Hugenberg owned film studios, so the Nazis had a direct influence on exactly which films were made. Goebbels himself made sure he read and approved all film scripts, and all films – thrillers, comedies, factual films and dramas – had to carry a pro-Nazi message. For example, German soldiers were always shown as heroes while Jews were portrayed as mean and nasty. He also made sure that a news report of Hitler's achievements was always shown before the main film.

▼ **SOURCE A** A film poster for a 1940 film, *Süss the Jew*, about a greedy ambitious Jewish businessman who uses his power to corrupt a German duke before he rapes a local German girl and tortures her father and fiancé. The film was a great success in Germany, with around 20 million viewers.



▼ **SOURCE B** From a letter of complaint written in April 1933 by the conductor, Wilhelm Furtwängler, to Joseph Goebbels:

The function of art is to bring together, not to separate. I recognise the line between good and bad art, not the line between Jewish and non-Jewish art. I appeal to you in the name of German art to prevent things from happening which it may not be possible to put right.

## Music

Goebbels ruled that music should be German or Austrian. Marching music, old folk songs and classical music by Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and Wagner were popular. Some music that was popular in Weimar Germany was not permitted. Jewish composers like Mahler and Mendelssohn were banned, and so was jazz music because it had its origins among the black people of America.

## Theatre

Before the Nazis took over, they set up a group (Militant League for German Culture) that protested against some of the more 'modern' plays and films they didn't approve of. For example, Jewish writer Kurt Weill's hit

musical, *The Threepenny Opera*, came under attack. Set among a group of beggars in Victorian London, the play contained lots of jazz music. It was banned by the Nazis as soon as they took power. The Nazis ruled that plays should mainly focus on German history and politics, and allowed the work of some 'older' playwrights like Goethe and Schiller to be performed.

The Nazis also shut Germany's cabaret clubs. These noisy, smoky theatre bars were places where songs about sex and politics were common.

## Literature

Goebbels created a list of banned books, which were removed from libraries and bookshops. They were classed as 'un-German' or were by Jewish authors. Not surprisingly, *Mein Kampf* was the best-selling book in Germany. Goebbels encouraged books about race, the glory of war and the brilliance of the Nazis. He even wrote a book himself that showcased this.

Popular books written in Weimar Germany were banned, including Erich Remarque's anti-war novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Around 2500 writers left Germany between 1933 and 1945, including Thomas Mann, for example, a strong critic of the Nazis who had written *Magic Mountain*, one the best-known German novels of the time.

▼ **SOURCE C** Stormtroopers collecting 'un-German' books in 1933. Goebbels organised several of these high-profile events in which books were gathered and later burned. In 1933, students destroyed around 20,000 books in a bonfire at the University of Berlin.



## Work

- 1 Look at **Source A**. How did the Nazis use cinemas and film?
- 2 Read **Source B**. What point is Furtwängler making?
- 3 Why do you think the Nazis were so keen to control the books people read, the music they listened to and the shows they watched at the theatre?

# How were the arts and culture of Germany affected by Nazi rule?

## Art

In Weimar Germany during the 1920s, art tended to show everyday life and could often be classed as 'modern' or 'abstract'. Artists like Otto Dix and George Grosz were popular (see pages 32–33). Hitler hated modern art and referred to it as 'degenerate' (perverted). In 1936, the Nazis publicly burned 5000 paintings they disapproved of. In 1937, they put on an exhibition of unacceptable art and opened another showing their officially approved paintings. The Nazis wanted art to be simple and clearly understandable to ordinary people. It should show healthy, heroic German figures, family scenes of happy, strong 'pure' Germans and, of course, lots of images of Hitler himself in heroic poses.

## Design

The 'Bauhaus' movement was an important architectural and design development in Weimar Germany. Bauhaus architects used new technology to design simple, practical, modern buildings and objects. Hitler did not approve of such modern design, and closed down this movement in 1933. He instead had clear ideas about the design of big, public buildings like libraries, government

buildings and parade grounds. He favoured huge, stone structures, often copies of buildings from ancient Greece or Rome.

▼ **SOURCE D** Goebbels (centre) visiting a 'degenerate art' exhibition; the Nazis collected art they felt was 'degenerate' and put it on display. The art was not displayed properly and there was graffiti on the walls, which insulted the art and the artists. The idea was to deliberately encourage a negative reaction.



▼ **SOURCE E** This painting, by Hans Schmitz-Wiedenbrück in 1941, was the type of art the Nazis approved of. It is called 'Workers, Farmers, Soldiers'.



## Sports and leisure

Health and physical fitness was important to Nazi culture, so success in sport was used to promote the Nazi regime. The Olympic Games were held in Berlin in 1936, and the Nazis used the opportunity to show the world how splendid Nazi Germany was. For a while, anti-Semitic posters and newspapers were stopped. The games were wildly popular and, to Hitler's great joy, the German Olympic squad came top of the medals table. This, Hitler claimed, showed how talented and strong the German race was and how it was superior to other 'inferior' races. World-respected German filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl filmed the entire games and pioneered the use of 'tracking shots' to follow an athlete's movements in slow motion. The Germans also used it as a chance to show the brilliance of German technology – the most advanced 'photo-finish' equipment was in use and the main stadium contained the largest stop-clock ever made.

▼ **SOURCE F** Hitler saw it as a great achievement when the England football team all gave the 'Heil Hitler' salute before an international game in Berlin in May 1938. England won the game 6-3.



## Work

- 1 Look at **Source E**. Why would Hitler and Goebbels approve of this painting?
- 2 Look at **Source D**.
  - a What was 'degenerate' art?
  - b If Hitler hated 'degenerate' art so much, why did he put it on display?
- 3 In your own words, explain why the Nazis were so keen to control the arts and culture in Nazi Germany.

## Extension



Compare and contrast the arts and culture of Weimar Germany and Nazi Germany. You may wish to revisit pages 32–33 to recall what Weimar German arts and culture was like. How were the aims of art and culture in Nazi Germany different from those in Weimar Germany?

## Practice Question

In what ways were art and culture used by the Nazis? Explain your answer.

8 marks

## Study Tip

Try to refer to two or three different areas of culture and indicate what was, and what was not, approved of by the Nazis.

# Resistance and opposition to Hitler

Although the Nazis made great efforts to persuade and force every German to idolise and respect Nazi ideas and culture, not everyone supported what Hitler and the Nazis were doing. There were different levels of challenge to the Nazis in Germany, from passive resistance to open opposition. Who were these brave Germans, and how successful were they in opposing Hitler?

## Objectives

- ▶ **Explore** why some Germans resisted and opposed the Nazis.
- ▶ **Outline** the different resistance groups and their methods to oppose the Nazis, including the White Rose group, the Swing Youth, the Edelweiss Pirates and the July Bomb Plot of 1944.
- ▶ **Assess** how effectively the Nazis dealt with resistance and opposition.

Many Germans admired Hitler and liked what the Nazis were doing. For example, many teenagers enjoyed the adventures they had in the Hitler Youth; wealthy businessmen and factory owners were pleased to help the Nazis mass-produce weapons and equipment for war; employed people were motivated by the Strength through Joy movement and the work conditions improved by the German Labour Front. They supported the Nazis because of what they were achieving in Germany.

However, not everyone supported what Hitler and the Nazis were doing. Some Germans were uncomfortable with the concentration camps and the dreaded Gestapo, while others were shocked at the treatment of Jews or the physically or mentally disabled. Others hated the restrictions and limits put on their lives. However, it was very difficult to actually show that you didn't support Hitler. You couldn't vote for someone else in an election because there were no elections, and you ran the risk of being arrested or punished if you publicly spoke out. In spite of this, a small number of Germans did find ways to show their unhappiness with the Nazi regime and oppose Hitler.

### Moaning or 'grumbling' about the Nazis

The lowest type of opposition to the Nazis was moaning or 'grumbling'. Often in the privacy of their own homes, people might tell an anti-Hitler joke or complain about the way their Jewish friends were being treated.

## Fact

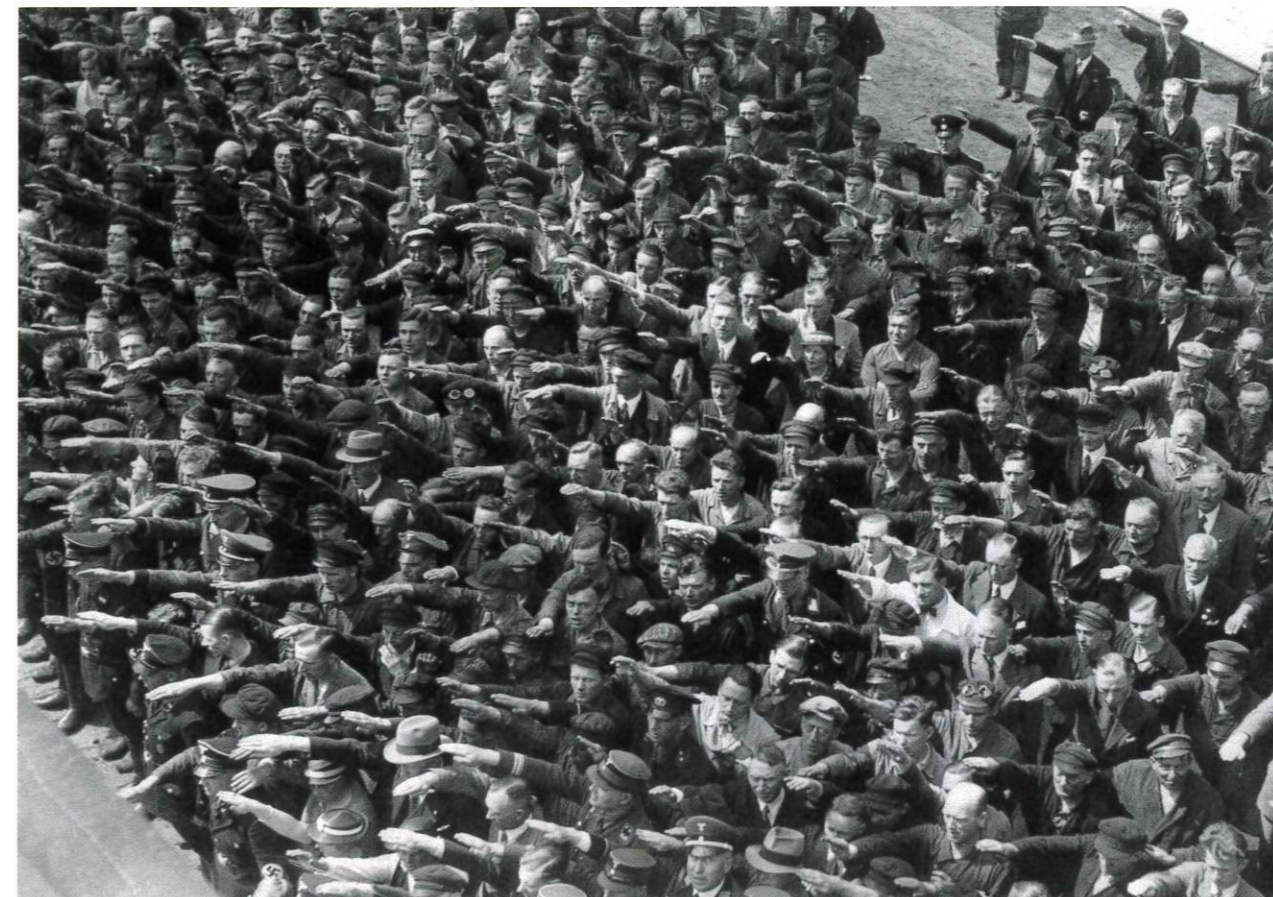
'Hitler and Goering are standing on top of Berlin's radio tower. Hitler says he wants to do something to cheer up the people of Berlin. "Why don't you just jump?" suggests Goering.'

This is an example of an anti-Nazi joke, known as *Flüsterwitze* (whisper jokes). A Berlin factory worker, identified only as Marianne Elise K., was convicted of undermining the war effort 'through spiteful remarks' and was executed in 1944 for telling this joke.

▼ **INTERPRETATION A** *From The World at War by Richard Holmes (2007), in which Hertha Beese, a Berlin housewife who was part of the Communist Party, is interviewed:*

I once took in the baby of a school friend, because both parents had been leading Communists and had been taken away. The baby had not been with me for an hour before they arrived to search my flat. Who was watching us, informing on us? Somebody must have seen us returning and must have informed on us immediately. It seemed we were surrounded by invisible, evil spirits, who watched and betrayed us.

▼ **SOURCE B** *At this 1936 launch of a new battleship, a shipyard worker refused to give the 'Heil Hitler' salute. Historians believe the defiant man was August Landmesser. In 1935, he applied to marry a Jewish woman named Irma Eckler, but was refused permission. They went on to have two children, but when they tried to flee Germany in 1937 they were arrested and Landmesser was sent to a concentration camp.*



## Work

- 1 Why do you think so many Germans did not oppose Hitler? List as many reasons as you can.
- 2 Look at **Source B**. Why do you think August Landmesser refused to give the Nazi salute?
- 3 Read **Interpretation A**.
  - a Why was Hertha Beese looking after the baby?
  - b What does her experience tell us about the way the Nazis dealt with people they suspected of opposing them?

## Passive resistance

Passive resistance was when Germans publicly showed they didn't support the Nazis, by refusing to do exactly as they were told. They refused to give the 'Heil Hitler' salute (see **Source B**), or to give money to the Hitler Youth members who went from house to house collecting funds, for example.

## Practice Question

Which of the following was the more important reason why resistance and opposition to Hitler was not effective:

- the strength of the Nazi police state
- the weaknesses of the protesters?

Explain your answer with reference to both reasons.

**12 marks**

## Study Tip

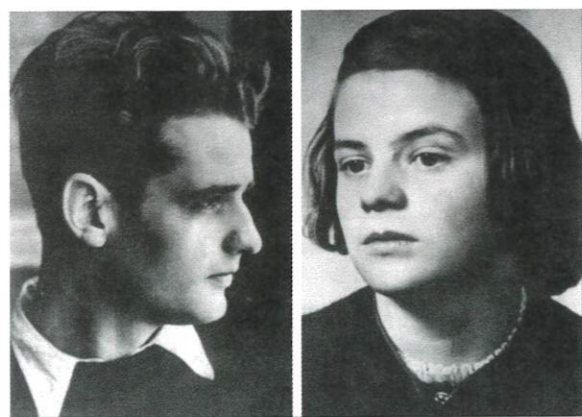
You will need to look at the whole of Chapter 9 to help you answer this question.

# Resistance and opposition to Hitler

## Open opposition

Some Germans, like the Swing Youth, openly declared their dislike of Nazi ideas and policies by listening to jazz music and having Jewish friends. Other groups like the **White Rose group** urged Germans to get rid of Hitler. They handed out anti-Nazi leaflets, put up posters and wrote graffiti on walls. Banned youth groups such as the Edelweiss Pirates and the Navajos beat up Nazi officials and helped army deserters. Others sabotaged railway lines and acted as spies, passing on military secrets to other countries. The leaders of Germany's two main religious faiths – the Protestant Church (40 million

▼ **SOURCE C** *The leaders of the White Rose group included brother and sister Hans and Sophie Scholl, who were Munich University students. They were particularly upset that ordinary Germans were not standing up to Hitler. They were caught in 1943 and beheaded for their 'crimes'.*



members) and the Catholic Church (20 million members) – made some criticism of the Nazis too. For example, the Catholic Church spoke out in 1941 against the killing of physically and mentally disabled people.

## Attempts to kill Hitler

Hitler and the Nazis could not be voted out, so some felt that one of the only ways to get rid of them was to **assassinate** Hitler. In fact, there were around 50 attempts on Hitler's life, some by lone individuals, and others by organised groups. The **Kreisau Circle**, for example, consisted of army officers, university professors and aristocrats who were shocked by Hitler's plans for war and the brutality of the Nazi regime. They discussed assassinating Hitler and getting rid of the Nazis, but didn't actually do anything. The Beck-Goerdeler group (led by former army general Ludwig Beck and Nazi official Karl Goerdeler) even contacted the British about the possibility of removing Hitler, but nothing could be agreed. The group did, however, make attempts on Hitler's life in March and November 1943, and was behind the **July Bomb Plot** of 1944.

▼ **SOURCE D** *The execution of a group of Edelweiss Pirates in November 1944. There were approximately 2000 young rebel groups all over Germany. During the war, they continued their resistance and even helped crashed enemy airmen get back to Britain.*

## The July Bomb Plot

The 1944 plot was the closest any Germans got to assassinating Hitler. The war was going very badly at this stage, and a disillusioned army officer, Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg, agreed to be part of a group that would detonate a bomb where Hitler was meeting other Nazi leaders. Then, they hoped to take over, end the war, and change Germany for the better. Despite killing four men, burning Hitler's hair, bursting his eardrums and blowing some of his clothes off, the bomb failed to kill Hitler.

▼ **INTERPRETATION E** *From The World at War by Richard Holmes (2007), in which Major General Warlimont, a high ranking Nazi army officer who spent from 1945 to 1957 in prison for war crimes, is interviewed:*

I couldn't say that the July plot had any effect on Hitler's ideas; he just kept to this illusionary idea that it would be possible to resume the offensive in the west as soon as possible. But his relations to the [leading army generals] had never been particularly good because they were, in his Nazi eyes, a flock of intellectuals or defeatists. And from July on, this opinion deepened to a suspicion of almost every General Staff Officer as an [enemy] of his regime and even his person.

## Key Words

White Rose group assassinate  
Kreisau Circle July Bomb Plot

► **SOURCE F** *Hermann Goering, Hitler's second-in-command (in white) shows other Nazi leaders the bombed-out remains of the map room after the explosion in July 1944. The bomb failed to kill Hitler and the planned takeover failed. Stauffenberg and Goerdeler were executed for their role in the plot, and Beck committed suicide. About 5000 others were executed in revenge for the attack.*



## Work

- List as many different ways as possible that an ordinary German could show their opposition to Hitler and the Nazis. Your first example could be 'telling an anti-Hitler joke' but you should be able to identify at least five others.
- Create a mind-map with the reasons why people resisted or opposed the Nazis near the centre, and the ways in which people resisted and opposed the Nazis are around the outside.
  - How effectively did the Nazis deal with each group?
- According to **Interpretation E**:
  - What effect did the 1944 July Bomb Plot have on Hitler's attitude to the war?
  - What was Hitler's attitude to the leading army generals before the plot?
  - Did the plot change Hitler's attitude towards them?

## Extension

Find out more about how different groups tried to oppose the Nazis openly. For each group you identify, try to find out why the group opposed the Nazis, their methods, and how effective their methods were.

