

# Modern history notes

[People](#), [Adolf Hitler](#)



Successes and failures of Democracy Nature and role of nationalism

Influence of the German army Nature and influence of racism Changes in

society 1. Weimar Republic Emergence of the Democratic Republic and the

impact of the Treaty of Versailles - Right wing parties are more

conservative/cautious in politics, while parties on the left tend to be more

radical. - In Germany, the moderate right and left wing parties tended to

support the new democracy, while the extreme left (communists) and right

(Nazis) wing parties wanted to overthrow democracy. - The working class

tended to support left wing parties. - The middle class and rural people

tended to support right wing parties. - After 1918, there existed many

political parties/groups, and new parties such as the Nazi party that emerged

in the 1920s. The left (SPD, USPD) - The largest left wing party in Germany

was the Social Democratic Party (SPD). It supported the cause of the German working class and the demand for increased political democracy in the state.

At the end of the war the party was a very moderate one and as the largest political group of the Reichstag, it was handed power and set out to establish

the new German democracy. - The SPD supported Germany's war effort, in

the third year of war, the more extreme groups of the SPD challenged the

continued support for the war and on April 17 they split from the SPD to

create the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) who were a more

radical party of the left. - An even more extreme group associated with the

USPD was the Spartacists who were situated on the far left of the political

spectrum. - The Spartacists wanted to overthrow the state and set up a

Soviet-style government like the one set up after the 1917 revolution in

Russia. They attempted to seize power in Jan 1919 but were crushed by the

right. - The German Communist Party (KPD) was then formed from what was left of the USPD and the Spartacists to be the political party on the extreme left. The right (DNVP, DVP) - Before the revolution of 1918 the most powerful groups in German society were the conservatives governing class. This group included the industrialists, the Junker landowning aristocracy, the conservative civil service, the Army High Command and German middle class. - They tolerated Ebert's Socialist Government for the sake of stability and order. - German National People's Party (DNVP) and the German People's Party (DVP). - The DNVP was the party of real conservatives and industrialists; it supported the monarchy and disliked the new republic. - The DVP was a more moderate right wing party. The centre (DDP, Zentrum) - German Democratic Party (DDP) — it was committed to democratic reform. - Members were cautions of the left and right wing parties - Centre Party (Zentrum) — a moderate party with broad middle class support that supported the Republic. It defended the interests of the Roman Catholic Church in Germany; it was strongest in Southern Germany. Weimar Government - 1919 — Germany becomes a democracy - The concept of true parliamentary democracy was totally new to Germans when the Ebert's Govt. called for democratic elections for a new German parliament. - The parliament would be responsible to all the people and would draw up a new constitution that would preserve German democracy and the liberties and rights of people. - German women were given the right to vote in 1919 - Elections for a new National Assembly were held on 19 Jan 1919, all Germans over the age of 20 had the right to vote. - Of 423 seats in the National Assembly, DNVP secured 44 seats, USPD gained 22 seats, SPD won 165

seats, Centre Party won 91 seats and the DDP won 75 seats. - The first meeting of the new German National Assembly took place in Weimar on Feb 1919, 200km north of Berlin. - The National Assembly elected Ebert the first president of the Weimar Republic. Ebert then appointed the new government, a coalition of the SPD, the Centre Party and the DDP. - Scheidemann, the new leader of the SPD, became the first chancellor and his coalition held 329 of the 423 seats in the National Assembly. This set the framework for every government of the Republic to be a coalition government. - Hugo Preuss, a lawyer and leading figure in the DDP created the new constitution. It approved in July 1919 and was one of the most democratic documents of its time. - Germany 1919 became one of the most democratic states in the world. - Under the new constitution Germany was to have a president who would be elected by all Germans every seven years. The president was head of state and supreme commander of the armed forces. He had power to appoint and dismiss the chancellor and the right to dissolve the Reichstag and call new elections. He was given emergency powers due to article 48; these powers included the right to intervene with the use of armed forces to restore order if stability was threatened and the power to suspend the basic liberties and rights of the German people. It gave him the power to suspend the constitution and to issue laws by decree regardless of the elected parliament. - The constitution provided for two houses of parliament. The 17 German states (Länder) were represented in the Reichsrat, a body that had very limited power. - Effective power resided in the Reichstag, the lower house, which represented the German people. All Germans over the age of 20 elected members every 4 years. Legislation had

to be passed in the Reichstag before it became law. - Members of the Reichstag were elected through a system of proportional representation, where votes were cast for the party, not the individual. This system allowed for small parties, even those opposed to democracy to gain representation in the Reichstag. This contributed to the fact that every government of the 21 Weimar governments in the 14 years from 1919-1933 were coalition governments. Treaty of Versailles - The military defeat of Germany in November in 1918 came as a shock to most Germans, who had been encouraged by their government to believe that Germany would be victorious. - The terms of the treaty, when they became known in May 1919 also came as a shock. Germany had sought an armistice in November 1918 and expected a peace settlement based on Wilson's 14 Points. - They expected a moderate peace from the democracies of Britain, France and USA, as they were now a democracy as well. - The Germans were given no say in the drafting of the peace, which was imposed by the victors, a diktat. - Despite the shock and anger of the Germans, the government had very little choice other than to accept the treaty. - The allied powers were prepared to resume the war if Germany didn't sign. - The Allied powers had maintained a brutal blockade that caused severe food shortages and the deaths of 70 000 Germans before it was finally lifted in June 1919. - 22 June — Chancellor Scheidemann resigned rather than sign the treaty. - A new government of the SPD and Centre Party was formed under Bauer and two days later the Reichstag reluctantly signed the treaty. - 28 June 1919 — in a ceremony in the hall of mirrors in Versailles, two German delegates, Dr Muller and Dr Bell signed the treaty of Versailles. - Germany lost 13% of its territory and 12% of

its population, 48% of its iron ore and 16% of its coal resources. - The French had demanded a more severe settlement that did not occur. - Germany was still the largest nation on the continent and still potentially the most powerful, despite the restrictions of the treaty. - Germany had suffered very little physical war damage. - Motivated by strong feelings of humiliation, the German govt. after 1919 aimed to revise or evade the provisions of the treaty, and in this task the German's had some success. - By 1924, after economic restrictions, the German economy was in recovery and expanding.

Effects of the treaty - The most important effect of the treaty was not the immediate hardships faced but rather the long-term legacy of bitterness and humiliation. - Germans felt betrayed and felt they'd been treated unfairly. - The Republic and democracy (foreign concepts to Germans) were held responsible. - The Weimar Republic was forever associated with the military defeat and international humiliation. - After the treaty Germans found it harder to have any emotional loyalty to a political system that appeared to have failed Germans (weakened German faith in a democracy - Immediate effect of the treaty was that Germany experienced serious economic and political instability and until it was restored Germany had no real hope of meeting the reparation burdens. - Long term effect — failed to solve the German problem. The treaty imposed a settlement that the Germans would certainly seek to overturn and it left virtually intact their capacity to do so by force in the near future. - By 1923 the German economy had collapsed and Germany was unable to meet its reparation bill.

Chapter 2 — the years of challenge 1920 - 1923 Political, economic and social issues in the Weimar Republic to 1929 The Kapp putsch, 1920 - 1919 — the German army had

supported the Weimar govt. when it was threatened by the radicalisms of the Spartacist Uprising and other left wing challenges - 1920 — Extreme right wing elements tried to overthrow the elected govt. in what was known as the Kapp Putsch. - It was caused by the govt's attempt to carry out military clauses of the hated treaty of Versailles. - March 1920 — the govt ordered the dissolution of the [Ehrhardt's brigade] Freikorps, the military commander of the city, General von Lüttwitz, refused to obey. - Chancellor Bauer and President Ebert expected the army would protect the government but the leader of the army, General von Seeckt, refused to allow the army to intervene. - Von Seeckt and most officer corps sympathised with the rebels and as the army refused to protect the govt. president Ebert and chancellor Bauer and the cabinet were forced to leave Berlin as rebels occupied key govt. buildings in the capital. - The military leaders of the putsch declared a new government, to be headed by the radical right wing politician Wolfgang Kapp. - The putsch had little chance of success and lasted a few days before the defiance of the Berlin working class. - In response to the challenge from the right, a general strike was declared by the workers and trade unions in support of the govt. It was effective and quickly paralysed the city. - Middle class Germans had no sympathy for the rebels, and civil servants who ran the German bureaucracy and the banking system supported the strike and within a few days the putsch had collapsed. - Von Lüttwitz and Kapp fled the city and the legal govt. returned. - It was the first attempt to seize power by the radical right and exposed the weakness of the govt. as the president and elected leaders had been forced to flee the capital. - During the Kapp Putsch the workers with the support of many industrialists and bankers came out in

support of the govt. and the workers' strike helped to end the putsch — thanks to the Stinnes-Legien Agreement of 1918. - Left wing politicians/workers saw the real threat to the political system from the extreme right. - It revealed the growing power of the German army within the state and the sympathy of the army leadership for the right wing of German politics. Army was prepared to protect the govt from the left but not the right. - Army was prepared to follow its own policy regardless of the elected govt. - Conservative and right wing had little faith in democracy. Political assassinations: 'the enemy stands to the Right' - 1920 — Most opposition to the new republic came from the extreme right. - Conservative landowning class of old Germany could never accept the idea of a republic. - Traditional orders who governed Germany (industrialists, the civil service, the judiciary, the educational system, the church) were dominated by people who had no faith in the republic. - Army could never accept the defeat and humiliation of 1918. - Nationalists looked for a restoration of German honour and power and an end to the restrictions imposed by the treaty. - Red terror (violence against the republic by the communists and Spartacists. - White terror (violence in the 1920s led by nationalist right wing extremists, made up mainly of ex-Freikorps members. - 1919-1922 (370 political murders, mostly by the extreme Right. - August 1921 (Matthias Erzberger was shot by ex-officers of the Erhardt Freikorp's brigade. He was a November Criminal who had signed the armistice in November 1918. - June 1922 (right wing extremists gunned down foreign minister, Walter Rathenau. His crime was seen to be his support of the policy of fulfilment, which Germany should seek to meet the terms of the treaty. - Level of shock and anger at Rathenau's



assassination caused the govt. to use article 48 and introduce a law for the protection of the republic ( aimed at curbing the excesses of extreme right-wing groups. - Right wing groups that came before the court were treated mildly by a legal system that was itself right wing. Militarism: the army and the Weimar Republic (2. 2) The German army in the Weimar Republic - The army tolerated the new democracy as the alternative in 1918 was anarchy - They had no real loyalty to the new system they had a fear of instability and disorder and a fear of the threat from the extreme left. - 1918 ( Army High Command realised war was lost and so they supported the change of government from Imperial Germany to Republican Germany and skilfully allowed the civilian politicians to take the blame for the defeat in war and the humiliation of peace. Hans von Seeckt and the German Army - The commander of the German army from 1920 — 26 was General Hans von Seeckt. He had little faith in the republic and believed the army's loyalty was to the nation. - Army was prepared to support the govt. and its policy of fulfilment and by the late 1920's the higher levels of army leadership came to have an increasing influence in the govt. ( Particularly when former Field Marshal, Paul von Hindenburg, became the president of Germany in 1925. - Von Seeckt was determined to overcome the restrictions the treaty of Versailles imposed on the army. He set the basis for the new German army: â–³ Despite the provision in the treaty that the General Staff be abolished, he retained it by preserving its function under the name of the Troop Office, a section within the defence ministry. â–³ The treaty had restricted the number of German officers to 4000, but von Seeckt was able to increase that number by giving many officers civilian titles and placing them within government

agencies. • Many soldiers retained their role by joining state police forces.

• The reduction of the German army was used to an advantage: the army became far more selective and rigorous in its recruitment. Every soldier was trained to do the duty of the rank above him, which allowed for rapid expansion of the army when the time came. • After 1922, when Germany signed the treaty of Rapallo with the Soviet Union and re established relations with its old foe, he set up a branch within the army, Special Group Russia, to begin military cooperation with the USSR. They negotiated the establishment of military training facilities on Soviet soil for German officers and men. • A loophole in the treaty of Versailles allowed German industrial companies like Krupp to open factories outside of Germany. Plants were opened in the Soviet Union and in Sweden where armaments were produced, and in Holland Krupp opened the Engineering Office for Shipbuilding, a company that focused on submarine development.

1923 a difficult year

(2. 3) The problem of reparations, 1923 - 1921 — The German govt. was given the final reparation figure to be paid ( 132 billion gold marks. It was to be paid in annual installments in cash and resources like coal and iron ore. - The presentation of the Allied reparation demands caused a political crisis and the fall of the govt., a new coalition govt. was quickly formed with the SPD, DDP and Centre Party. - Joseph Wirth of the Centre Party became the new chancellor. He was a firm believer in democracy and the republic, and he included in his govt. another true republican in Walther Rathenau as his foreign minister. - Wirth and Rathenau were the architects of the policy of fulfilment. It was believed that Germany's efforts to meet its obligations would create a situation where it would be possible to renegotiate and

modify some of the terms of the settlement, particularly since Clause 234 of the treaty allowed for a review based on Germany's capacity to pay. The occupation of the Ruhr, January 1923 - The Wirth govt., following the policy of fulfilment, met the first reparation payment in August 1921. - At the end of the year, due to a weakening economy, Germany announced that it was unable to meet the second reparation deadline. - December 1922 ( after a year of negotiation, the Reparation Commission declared that Germany was in default in the delivery of coal and telegraph poles to France. - January 1923 ( 60 000 French and Belgian troops occupied the Ruhr, the most important industrial area of Germany. The French were determined that Germany be made to meet its obligations. Passive Resistance - Occupation of the Ruhr created a wave of anti-French feeling throughout Germany. - Political parties united and the govt. called for a policy of ' passive resistance' in the Ruhr. - Germans went on strike and refused to cooperate in any way with the French. - French were forced to bring in workers and over 100 000 troops to control the restless population and deal with acts of sabotage by right wing extremists. - Thousands of Germans were forcibly removed from the Ruhr, industrial leaders were imprisoned and acts of violence increased. - Over 150 Germans were killed in protests. The problem of hyperinflation, 1923 - After the war, Germany had little capacity for economic recovery. - Key industrial resources had been lost in the peace treaty. - Germany had little export trade, and was unable to attract any major foreign investment or loans. - Govt. was weak and vulnerable to pressure from the left and right. It was not prepared to carry through the necessary economic reforms because they would have added to the

suffering of the people. - The alternative to raise taxes was avoided as industrialists benefited from inflation and due to the fear of unemployment. - To get more money to meet the growing cost of reparations, wages and war pensions, the govt. printed more money and so the value of the German currency continued to fall. - The shut down of the vital industrial area of the Ruhr in 1923 and the policy of passive resistance had disastrous results for the failing German economy. - Summer 1923 ( govt. costs had soared by 700% - The inflation that plagued the economy quickly degenerated into the phenomenon of hyperinflation, in which the Germans experienced a rapid fall in the value of their currency to the point where it was worthless. - August 1923 ( 44 trillion marks in circulation, with the press producing 46 billion marks a day. Exchange rate for one US dollar | 1914 | July | 4. 2 marks | | 1919 | July | 14 marks | | 1921 | January | 65 marks | | 1922 | January | 191 marks | | | July | 493 marks | | 1923 | January | 18 000 marks | | | July | 350 000 | | | August | 4 600 000 | | | September | 4 200 000 000 000 | | | November | 4 200 000 000 000 | - Collapse of the German economy in 1923 caused suffering - Junker land owning class and smaller farming class were generally not affected - Food was a valuable commodity and farmers were able to increase their wealth by barter ( widespread practise as currency became worthless - Industrialists and business class gained the most from the economic woes - They wiped out their debts with inflated currency and those that could sell on foreign markets made enormous profits - Those who suffered most were people on fixed income wages and those who lived off their savings The fall of the government, August 1923 - By June 1923 the govt. had lost control of the economy - Strikes were prevalent as workers

protested about rising unemployment and failure of their wages to keep up with the cost of living - August ( Ebert called on Gustav Stresemann (DVP) to create a new govt. - He formed a coalition between the DVP, the SPD and the DDP - Political opponents being the KPD and the DNVP - Stresemann (1878-1929) - 1917 — elected leader of the national liberal party - Strong sense of nationalism, supported war efforts and policies of Ludendorff - Had great self-confidence, courage, personal charm - Believed successful politics came from accurate assessment of the facts of a situation and a realistic assessment of what was possible - Supported the monarchy, but accepted reality of new political situation and became one of its champions - 1919 — when the national liberal party split into the German democratic party and the German national people's party, he formed his own political party, the German people's party - 13 august — 23 November 1923 - chancellor of a coalition government - Addressed the issue of the inflation crippling the nation The end of passive resistance - Stresemann government came to office when the French were in their 8th month of occupation of the Ruhr, the German economy was in chaos and the currency was worthless - Separatist movements in the German states of Bavaria, Saxony and Thuringia threatened the unity of the republic - Stresemann's first major step was to call off the policy of passive resistance in the Ruhr — enraged German nationalists ( saw it as a betrayal of nation and its honour - Few days later, Reichstag passed an enabling act to give the Stresemann government special emergency powers to deal with the problems facing Germany The Rentenmark - Govt used emergency powers to tackle problem of inflation - The mark was recalled and a new currency called the rentenmark was put

into circulation - Its exchange rate was fixed at about 4. 2 Rentenmarks to the US dollar and was worth about one billion of the old marks - The govt budget was balanced - Govt expenditure was cut - New taxes were introduced - These bold measures ended the inflation and stabilized the currency - 1924 — the Rentenmark which was always intended to be a temporary currency was withdrawn and a new German mark was introduced

New political unrest and the threat of separatism, 1923 - The decision to end passive resistance aroused nationalist anger - In the southern state of Bavaria, the right wing government of Gustav von Kahr defied the govt in Berlin - Military commander in Bavaria backed the state authority - Talk of Bavarian Separatism rose - Thuringia and Saxony - union of the socialists and communists in state governments presented a new difficulty as these radical left wing governments also began to challenge the authority of governments in Berlin - Ebert declared a state of emergency under article 48 - German army was ordered in to remove the governments of Thuringia and Saxony - In Bavaria, the Nazi party led by Hitler tried to seize control of the Bavarian govt. - 8 November 1923 — Munich Beerhall Putsch — attempt failed as no one was prepared to support it and sixteen Nazis were killed and Hitler was arrested

The fall of the Stresemann Government, November 1923 - 2 November 1923 — the SPD withdrew from the coalition govt. - Stresemann survived as chancellor for a few more weeks - After a vote of no confidence in the Reichstag, Stresemann tendered his resignation to Ebert

Chapter 3

The years of stability 1924-1929 - Compared to previous years, those from 1924-1929 were the good years for Weimar Germany - Republic had survived the crisis of the year 1923 (hyperinflation) and entered a period of

calm and stability - The economy prospered in these years - There was a flowering of brilliant culture that made Germany the European centre of creative expressionism in music, film, art, literature, and transformed Berlin into one of the most exciting cities in Europe - Bitterness of WW1 eased - Germany was accepted as an equal in the European community - Much of the stability after 1934 has been attributed to Gustav Stresemann - In his brief time as chancellor he had solved the problem of the Ruhr occupation and put in train the reforms that would end hyperinflation - 1924 — 1929 — Stresemann became German foreign minister The Dawes Plan - 1924 — Stresemann made negotiations for the Dawes Plan - Great Britain and the US always accepted that if Germany were to pay the reparation, the German economy had to be stabilized and Germany had to be given the capacity to pay - Seeking to remedy the hyperinflation, the Reparations Commission set up a committee, led by the American banker Charles G. Dawes, to investigate ways of assisting Germany to stabilise its economy - Dawes plan announces in April 1924 — Germany was still required to make the reparations, starting with a payment of 1000 million marks in 1925, and increasing over the next five years to 2500 million marks, after that, payment would be adjusted to Germany's capacity to pay - Germany was to receive an immediate loan and France finally agreed to leave the Ruhr - Germany accepted the Dawes plan and it marked the start of a period of impressive economic growth in Germany Foreign loans and a new prosperity - Prosperity of 1924-29 was made possible partly due to the new loans which Germany was able to secure, but mainly from the US - Between 1925-1930 Germany received over US\$ 2900 million in long and short term loans -

Germany now received more loans than she paid in reparations - The key to German recovery was this large amount of foreign capital that flowed into the country from 1924 - Standard of living of most Germans began to improve as money was spent on public works, housing, transport and social welfare - Germany already had great industrial potential, and the flow of money, the return of confidence and the creative determination of the German people saw a rapid growth in Germany's industrial strength - Industry was restructured and modernised and new techniques of management were developed - Coal, iron and steel production surpassed pre-war figures - German exports doubled in the period to 1929 - Germany was second to Britain as the leading exporter of Europe Weaknesses in the economy - The economic prosperity of the 1920s was built on weak foundations - The greatest danger was that Germany was living off borrowed money, over dependent on foreign loans and investments - By 1929 Germany had a foreign debt of almost 25 billion marks - If this money supply was to cease, as it did with the start of the depression, then the German economy would collapse - Stresemann had foreseen the danger ahead " we in Germany in recent years have lived on borrowed money, if a crisis ever hits us and the Americans withdraw their short-term credits then we would be bankrupt... we are not only militarily disarmed, we are also financially disarmed" — Nov 1928 - Another weakness was that economic power was concentrated in the hands of influential industrialists and bankers (this group opposed the republic and the idea of parliamentary democracy) their wealth and influence under the republican system increased - When their position was challenged by the onset of depression and the threat from the rising



German Communist Party (KPD) after 1930, they embraced and supported the extreme right and helped put Hitler and the Nazis into power -

Throughout this period unemployment remained high - In rural Germany agriculture remained depressed - There was a growing agricultural debt and the farming community was unable to share the prosperity of the urban and industrial centres - As prices fell, rural Germany became a source of support for Hitler, with almost half of Nazi votes in 1932 coming from rural areas

The welfare state in Weimar Germany - The suffering and hardship Germans faced in WW1 strengthened the belief that the new German state after 1919 should take more responsibility for the welfare of its citizens and one of the features of the Republic was the commitment of its governments to provide for the welfare of the German people - Some historians suggest that Weimar Germany became the first true Sozialstaat (welfare state) - The Socialist Party (SPD) was the largest political party, it embraced the need to provide welfare to win the support of the working class to the republic - German workers now had an 8hour day and an arbitration system also protected worker's rights - Wages increased, trade unions gained a new importance and their membership soared - Considerable progress was made after 1923 to introduce welfare in the form of war pensions for the former soldiers as well as invalid, widows' and orphans' pensions - The money spent on social welfare was increased in the 1920s to the point that by 1928, 26% of Gross National Product (GNP is the value of all goods and services produced in the country in any one year) was spent on welfare compared to 15% in 1914 -

The Weimar constitution had included a provision (article 161) that ' The Reich shall organise a comprehensive system of (social) insurance" - 1927 —

the unemployment insurance act was passed which provided a national unemployment insurance scheme to cover over 17million workers in the event that they became unemployed - Employers and workers contributed to this fund but when mass unemployment occurred with the Great Depression the funds were soon exhausted and the system failed - 1927 — the provisional work hours law was passed which limited the number of hours workers could work and provided overtime payments if they exceeded these hours ( it was not welcomed by employers or big businesses as they disliked the rising power of the German trade unions - Hard working middle-class Germans were also unhappy as they saw their taxes increase to help pay the welfare state ( there was a loss of support for the Republic from many middle-class Germans and from powerful business interests who were disadvantaged by the growing power of trade unions and loss of profit to welfare and unemployment insurance schemes for the working class Political stability 1924-1929 - After the political disorder and violence that had marked the first 5yrs of the Republic, the first 5yrs after 1924 was a period of relative political stability - 1924-1929 — (Germany had 6 changes of government) — the moderate political parties, the German Democratic Party (DDP), the Centre Party and the German People's Party (DVP) — were the basis of the coalition governments of the republic - For a time, the right wing German National People's Party (DNVP) seemed to reconcile the idea of a republic and joined the coalition - After 1928 the Socialists (SPD) returned to government, strengthening the opportunities for political harmony - During this time the extreme political parties did not benefit - In 3 elections between 1924-1928 — the communists averaged 10. 7% of the vote and the Nazi

party received 3. 6% President von Hindenburg, 1925 - February 1925 — President Ebert died suddenly after an appendicitis operation - In the first round of elections for a new president most of the major political parties stood a candidate, since no one received a majority of the votes cast, a second round of voting was needed - In the second round, the nationalist groups pressured Paul von Hindenburg to represent the right, he was reluctant to stand but won the narrow victory to become president - The republic now had a president who did not believe in the republic - Hindenburg's conservative Junker military background represented loyalty to the old Germany - Before accepting the office of Reich President, Hindenburg had sought permission from the ex-Kaiser in exile in Holland - His election was welcomed by the army and right wing groups who became more tolerant of the republic now that Hindenburg was president - In office, he worked conscientiously to carry out his duties and to uphold both the republic and the constitution - Until his health failed and political problems became too great, he had used the prestige of his name and reputation to make the system he did not like work - Germans saw Hindenburg as a man who gave to the office a respectability of a president, Ebert had never been able to achieve - ' The truth is the Germans do not want a president in a top hat...he has to wear a uniform and a chestful of medals. When they see as their leader a man who wears a top hat and looks as though he might have been a neighbour, then each thinks of himself ' I could do that too' " — British Ambassador German foreign policy in the 1920s Stresemann and the German foreign policy to 1929 - When Stresemann ceased to be chancellor in 1923, he became foreign minister in the new government until his death

in 1929 - He was a nationalist and set realistic goals for his foreign policy o He believed that the way ahead was not through resistance to old enemies; rather it was necessary to come to terms with the former enemies, particularly France o Since Germany had no military capacity it was necessary to cooperate with the West and end Germany's isolation and then use the economic potential of Germany to negotiate further changes o He believed Germany could recover from its place in the world by peaceful negotiation and he sought to restore Germany to the position of a great and respected European power. He was a diplomat of great skill and ability and he sought to achieve these goals by careful and patient diplomacy o He aimed to end the diplomatic isolation of Germany in world affairs, to seek to undo the injustice of the Treaty of Versailles, and in long term to recover lost German territory in eastern Europe The treaty of Locarno, 1925 - Stresemann enjoyed immediate success with the Dawes plan of 1924 - In 1925 — sensing that the time was now ripe for an improvement in relations between Germany and France, Stresemann proposed a new understanding with the old enemy - He found a genuine supporter of this new relationship with the French foreign minister, Aristide Briand - The result was the Treaty of Locarno, signed between France, Germany, Belgium, Britain and Italy in October of 1925 - The treaty guaranteed the French-Germany and German-Belgian borders and they renounced the use of war - Germany had been treated as an equal and there was a new spirit of reconciliation in the air as the former bitter enemies renounced war - Gave the French and added sense of security and added to the German security as France would never occupy Germany again Germany joins the League of Nations - Germany was

admitted as a member of the League of Nations in 1926 and Stresemann insisted Germany be acknowledged as one of the major powers and a member of the Council of the League - Many Germans had been opposed to Germany joining the League as it had been formed by the victorious powers who had imposed the Treaty of Versailles on Germany - The league was important to Stresemann as it gave Germany an added voice in world affairs and a forum from which Germany could seek to settle other German grievances Germany and Eastern Europe - Germany sought to build a better relationship with USSR and in 1922 under foreign minister Walter Rathenau, Germany and the USSR signed the Treaty of Rapallo - At the time both countries had been excluded from the international community and both nations gained benefits from the treaty - Germany recognized USSR as a nation and Germany was given favourable trade agreements in Russia - A secret part of the treaty allowed Germany to train troops in the USSR and to build aeroplane and later tank factories as well (getting around military restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles) - Stresemann sought to build a better relationship with the West and with Eastern Europe - As a nationalist he wished to see the return of Danzig and the Polish Corridor, taken from Germany in 1919 and was determined to pursue his goals realistically and by diplomatic means - In 1926 Stresemann negotiated the Treaty of Berlin with Russia which reaffirmed the Treaty of Rapallo and provided neutrality in the event of an attack by a third party The Young Plan - Stresemann's final successful policy was the Young Plan in 1929 - This plan followed the earlier work of the Dawes plan and it set out to revise the reparation issue - The plan reduced the final reparation figure from 132 000 million to 37 000

million marks and arrangements that it be paid in annual instalments to the year 1988 - The reparations were cancelled a few years later when the Great Depression began An assessment of Gustav Stresemann - His achievements as chancellor and foreign minister place him as one of the most important figures of the republic - His policies began the economic recovery and restored Germany to a position of equality within Europe and fostered the genuine spirit of goodwill that characterized the late 1920s - In 1926 he and the French foreign minister won the Nobel Peace Prize for their contribution to the new spirit of reconciliation - The Nazis hated Stresemann's policy of reconciliation and fulfilment and erased all reference to him - Faced hostile critics such as the DNVP and the Nazis who saw him as giving in to the old enemy with arrangements like Locarno and joining the league of nations - His cautious policy did not please the army or its leader von Seeckt - The army believed that with their ally Russia, they should take action to resolve the problem of Poland and regain territory both Germany and Russia lost to the new Polish state - He wanted to revise the eastern border with Poland but not through force - At the end of his life, with the young plan, he faced new attacks as he had negotiated lower reparations rather than ending them altogether

Historian's views page 50 Social and cultural life in the Weimar Republic to 1929 Women in Weimar Germany - Women experienced a degree of freedom and equality totally unknown for German women before the Weimar Republic - They were given full equality with men and a new openness and tolerance allowed many woman, particularly younger ones to experience a sense of freedom and liberation - Women joined the work force so that by 1925, some 35% of German workers were women - Free to adopt

new styles of dress and behaviour, greater sexual freedom - The law for combating venereal diseases (1927) decriminalised prostitution and women had greater access to contraceptives as the ban on these items was relaxed - Many women excelled in their own right, particularly in arts and entertainment - Women were given the right to vote and political parties began to promote policies which would be supported by women - In the first election of 1919 women cast more votes than men — women dominated this election possibly due to 2million young men being killed in WW1 and 2million more who were injured - Working class women tended to support the SPD - Middle class women initially supported the DDP, the DVP and the DNVP - 1930s — significant part of the Nazi vote was from middle class and rural women - Despite involvement and the election of women to the German Reichstag, women had little influence on political process - The Nazi party which attracted a following of women, actually promoted policies to end the emancipation and freedoms women enjoyed and when the party came to power after 1933 it happened - While some women had great new freedoms and opportunities, the great majority of women were still influenced by the traditional view of women in society, taking care of the home, husband and children - Despite the greater sexual freedom, aborting remained illegal, and women's wages were well below that of men - There was still a clear focus in Weimar Germany on the differing roles and expectations of men and women Cultural life in Weimar Germany - During the 1920s there was a remarkable upsurge and Germany become one of the world centres for creative arts and ideas which flourished in Germany after ww1 because of the free and tolerant environment of the Weimar Republic - The theme of much of this

creative work was to confront the existing system with the innovative and the experimental - Within the creative arts the expressionist movement was the most influential, where artists, writers, and film makers sought to convey experiences and emotions in their work - Berlin became a thriving centre of this new cultural expression Theatre and cinema - Provocative theatre and cabaret flourished in the decade, much of it with a political and social message - Erwin Piscator developed much of the concept of Proletarian Theatre, which produced plays that challenged the views of the middle class society - A figure associated with this movement Bertolt Brecht was a Marxist (communist) and much of his work conveyed his disillusionment with capitalist middle class society - In the field of cinema Berlin became a world leader, and the progressive German film industry of the 1920s produced more films in that decade than the rest of Europe combined Literature and architecture - All quiet on the western front (published in 1928) written by Erich Maria Remarque in 1924 - 1920s in Germany — challenge to traditions of architecture and design with the famous Bauhaus School of Architecture - Founded by the architect Walter Gropius in 1919, the Bauhaus School believed that art should work with the new technology and that there should be an emphasis on functional design not only in buildings but also in terms of daily use, such as furniture - This new school of architecture reflected the modernism of the time - There was a rejection of older, more traditional styles of architecture and design, and a search for new form and function as the design model for the future Modern Art - Expressionist painting — the world and reality were interpreted through the perception of the artists, who used new techniques to express feelings and emotions - Significant artist —



Otto Dix - German art reflected the suffering and hardship that many Germans had endured - Painters — Paul Klee, Max Backmann, Heinrich Zille and George Grosz criticized middle-class conservative society in a series of realistic drawings and caricatures - 1920s — Berlin replaced Paris as the world centre of modern art Modernism - Explosion of new ideas and experimentation in cultural life was accompanied by a new way of life for many Germans - They embraced many of the social changes from the US — dress styles, music (jazz), the breaking down of what was considered old fashioned - Brief period of optimism and hope — embrace the modern and new - Some reacted against modernism with its new cultural expressions, its liberation of German women, and its toleration of issues like birth control and homosexuality - Saw the new developments in culture as offensive and creating a degenerate society in Germany - Right wing conservative groups attacked the government for allowing traditional German values to be undermined by modernism - The Catholic Centre Party led a demand for a return to true German values based on family and Sunday worship - Late 1920s censorship was introduced to protect young Germans from exposure to pornography and government spending on the expressive arts began to decrease - When the Nazis came to power in 1933 there was a dramatic end to the free cultural expression and indeed the freedom of the individual - Many artists, musicians, writers, film directors, and scientists (incl. Einstein) moved to the US Science and Technology - The cultural outpouring of the Republic took place against a background of scientific and technological advances - Germany had the most educated population in Europe - Science and technology flourished in the 1920s - German scientists won several

Nobel prizes during the decade - Einstein worked in Germany until 1933 - Advanced in communication and transport - Modern radio system was developed, new roads and railways were built, the motor industry (Mercedes and BMW development) flourished - Germans impressed the world with the development of the first great passenger airship, the Graf Zeppelin — completed in 1928 by the Luftschiffbau Zeppelin company — filled with hydrogen made crossings to the US and South America and once flew around the world Historical debate: on the nature of the Weimar culture of the 1920s - Paul Johnson suggests that this sudden outpouring of cultural expression had been building up since the 19th century - Germans were the best educated people in Europe and ideas had always been highly valued - It was the political system and the rigid class divisions that restrained the full flowering of the creative forces — the war and defeat of German society changed and broke down - New constitution made the republic a more tolerant society, as freedoms were guaranteed and censorship abolished - Society that valued free expression and were able to give full and free expression to their creativity, until the Nazis came to power in 1933 - Peter Gay (Weimar Culture — 1968) suggests something similar — that German society after 1918 provided the opportunity for many who had been ‘ outsiders’ to gain acceptance - Eberhard Kolb (The Weimar Republic — 1988) suggests that there was a great divide between artistic groups and ordinary Germans, and that the new freedoms of cultural expression upset a large number of the population - The cultural freedom of German society also divided German society - Conflict occurred between Germans who embraced innovative cultural change and the great majority who could not - Detlev

Peukert (The Weimar Republic: the crisis of classical modernity — 1987) suggests that Weimar Germany represented a new modernism in many aspects of German life including cultural expression, and the social and political changed of the time this led to different reactions from different groups in German society - Major urban centres promoted and accepted modernism, conservatives and in particular Germans in rural communities rejected it, adding to the division and stress in German society - Much of the cultural and artistic life of the 1920s was the creation of people who held leftist views - The daring and confronting nature of this new style upset many conservatives - They saw Weimar culture as degenerate or superficial and a challenge to Germany's cultural past - To some, particularly on the right, this new, unacceptable culture was a reflection on the republican government that had allowed it to flourish - The Nazis in particular became violently opposed to the modernism of the Weimar era — they would define their own culture for the German people

Questions:

1. Evaluate the view that the Weimar Republic from 1919 to 1933 was a democracy without democrats
2. Assess the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany and its importance in the history of the Weimar Republic.
3. Identify the main elements in German society that supported and opposed the idea of democracy.
4. Assess the importance of the German army in both the formation of the Weimar Republic and in the subsequent ability of the republic to survive challenges to its authority.
5. Identify the major challenges Germany faced in the early years of the Weimar Republic (1918 — 1923) and explain why the republic was able to overcome these challenges.
6. Account for the relative success and stability of the Weimar

Republic from 1924 to the onset of the Great Depression in 1929. 7. Evaluate the view that from 1924 to 1929 Weimar Germany enjoyed not only a period of political and economic stability but also achieved a degree in social reform and creative cultural expression. Chapter 4 — Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party Section 2 — Germany 1929 — 1933: the rise of the Nazi party and failure of the German democracy - the successes and failures of the German democracy - the nature and role of nationalism - the influence of the German army - changes in German society - the nature and impact of Nazism 4. 1 Adolf Hitler — his early life Adolf Hitler's early life - a dominant political figure of German History in the 20th Century - was born in an Austrian town — Braunau on 20th April 1889 - his book Mein Kampf (My Struggle) 1924, suggested that his family was poor and that his boyhood was a time of hardship - actually — came from a middle class family that was comfortable by the standards of their day - father — Alois Hitler, was a customs official with the Austrian Civil Service and was 50+ when Hitler was born - mother — Klara, was a former servant girl who became Alois' third wife - young Hitler had ability but performed poorly at school — he reacted against discipline and the conformity of school life - his teachers described him as ' wilful, arrogant, and bad tempered' - he had difficulty fitting in at school and was lazy - he had a poor relationship with his stern and inflexible father, who could not accept his son's lack of self discipline and his growing interest in art, architecture and music - Alois died in 1903, Klara lost control over her headstrong son - 1905 (15) Hitler left school and two years later applied to the Vienna Academy of the Arts but was rejected - His mother died in 1907 from cancer (47) - 1908 Hitler moved to Vienna and sought again admission

to the Vienna Academy of the arts and was rejected - For some time Hitler had sufficient funds from his inheritance and from an orphan's pension to live in furnished rooms - By 1910, now aged 21, he was almost destitute and forced to live at a shelter for homeless men - Occasionally he made money from sketches of Vienna but he refused to seek a settled job - He remained unemployed and almost unemployable and sank into a lonely, aimless existence - Hitler called this period the most miserable of his life - By 1910 he began to show an interest in politics and spent hours in public libraries reading a variety of topics that excited his interest and engaged in political discussion and argument in the workingmen's cafes and coffee houses that he frequented - August Kubizek — ' He was at odds with the world; wherever he looked he saw injustice, hate, enmity. Nothing was free from criticism, nothing found favour in his eyes' - It was in this world of struggle on the cold back streets of Vienna that Hitler came into contact with the Anti-Semitism that existed in the capital - 1913 — Hitler left Vienna and moved across the border to Munich, the capital of the German state of Bavaria - Lived in Munich until in 1914 when WW1 broke out he sought to permission to join the German army even though he was not a German citizen - His request was granted in August of 1914 and he became a member of the 16th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment - Hitler — " I was carried away by enthusiasm, I sank upon my knees and thanked Heaven out of the fullness of my heart for having been permitted to live in such a time" Hitler the soldier - Hitler served throughout the entire WW1 - He was a loyal and conscientious soldier who never complained about the hardship and conditions and never sought leave - For most of the war he was a dispatch runner, and served at

the front line in Flanders (Belgium) and France - He displayed courage under fire in 1914 and was awarded the Iron Cross Second Class ' the proudest day of my life' - October 1916 — he was wounded and had to return to Germany for medical treatment but was keen to return to the front and was back in the fighting line by March 1917 - Hitler identified with the German army and it provided the support and security he had never known, amid death, hardship and the suffering of the trenches he had found a home - ' the war, was the greatest and most unforgettable time of my life' - Hitler was promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal and took part in the Ludendorff offensive of March 1918 - In the closing months of the war he was awarded the Iron Cross First Class ' for personal bravery and general merit' a rare honour for a corporal - When was supreme master of Germany, his Iron Cross was the only military decoration he ever wore - Hitler's war ended in 1918 when he was caught by a gas attack and partially blinded - He was taken back to hospital in Germany to recover and he heard the news that Germany had surrendered - Like so many other brave soldiers, the shock of defeat had a profound impact on him - He fervently believed Germany had been betrayed ' everything went black before my eyes, as I staggered back to my ward and buried my aching head between the blankets and pillow... during these nights my hatred increased, hated for the originators of this dastardly crime' - It was at this point that he decided to become a politician

4. 2 The beginning of the Nazi party The German Workers' Party - After the war Hitler was made a political officer for the army - It was the first steady job he had ever had and one of his duties was to report to the army command in Bavaria on the small political parties that flourished in the state - He

attended a meeting of a small political group called the German Workers' Party in September 1919 - This obscure group had been founded in early 1919 by a Bavarian toolmaker, Anton Drexler - It had a confused political program and only 40 members when Hitler attended one of their meetings in a back room of the Sternecker Brewery in Munich - On that particular evening, the group was discussing the issue of Bavaria breaking away from the rest of Germany - Hitler felt a deep sense of nationalism and was vigorously opposed to the proposal he was stirred to speak and made such an impact that a few days later Drexler invited him to join the party - Hitler became member no. 555 to give the impression that the party had a large membership (numbering began at 500) - 'The party had no offices, no employees, no printed letterhead and not even a rubber stamp to its name. Its entire property consisted of an old briefcase in which the members kept correspondence and a battered cigar box containing the party's funds, a little over seven marks.' - Hitler found a small political party that could become a forum for his own ideas and which he could shape. - Only in a party which, like him was beginning at the bottom had he any prospect of playing a leading part and imposing his ideas. In the established parties there was no room for him, he would be a nobody' — Alan Bullock - He was in charge of publicity and propaganda and from 1919 devoted all his energy to the party, seeking to broaden its appeal - In the first time he spoke (October 1919) he attracted over a hundred people, a few months later 2000 people were crammed into the Hofbrauhaus, a Munich beerhall - His personality, organising ability and brilliant capacity as an orator led to Hitler becoming the dominant figure in the party - The party changed its name to

become the National Socialist German Workers' Party (National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei, NSDAP) or Nazi for short - To give the party a distinct identity, it developed its own set of symbols and emblems, including the swastika, the party colours of red and black, and a distinctive party salute - The party also attracted financial support and was able to establish its own newspaper, the Volkischer Beobachter

The 25 Points - As the Nazi movement took shape it also wished to project itself with a clear purpose or political program - February 1920 — the party published its 25 Point Program, a wide ranging statement of what the Nazi's stood for (see page 65) - By 1923, after having been in existence for only a few years the Nazi party had over 70 000 members and was a significant political force in Bavarian politics - 15 000 members were of the Sturm-Abteilung (SA) The storm-troopers (Sturm-Abteilung) - Feature of German political life in the 1920s and early 30s was the activity of military groups that supported different parties - Most of these groups were made up of men who had military experience in WW1, many were from Freikorps formations - The Nazis were supported by the SA - The Nazi party now had its own private army and its membership grew rapidly - With its extreme right wing views and opposition to both the republic and communism, it attracted support from ex-Freikorps troops - The SA attracted men of all types, many of them thugs and street bullies - They had a distinct brown uniform which was bought from surplus war stock in Austria and also had swastika armbands — they became the very visible face of the Nazi movement - Their aim was to promote the party in rallies and parades and to protect the party leaders from their political opponents - They were to be the 'battering ram' of the



movement - 'not only an instrument for the protection of the movement but also primarily the training school for the coming struggle' — Hitler - Violent street battles between the SA and supporters of other parties was common - October 1922 — the Nazi's participated in a 'German Day' - Over 800 SA members marched through the streets of Coburg under the Nazi banner and provoked a major street battle with their opponents - An early leading figure of the SA was Ernst Rohm, who joined the party and brought considerable army backing to the movement - The SA membership grew and by 1923, the movement was under the command of Hermann Goring - Goring reorganised the SA along military lines and brought some order to the organisation 4. 3

The Munich Beerhall Putsch, 1923 - 1923 — the government in Berlin lost its authority over the state of Bavaria - Furious at the ending of passive resistance in the Ruhr, the right-wing Bavarian government had declared its own state of emergency - Demanded that the Reichswehr (army) soldiers in Bavaria take an oath of loyalty to Bavaria rather than to the Republic - Bavaria was ruled by three men, the Prime Minister — Gustav von Kahr, the commander of the army in Bavaria — General von Lossow, and the Bavarian Chief of Police — Hans von Seissar - Kampfbund (fighting league) was an organisation set up in 1923 and represented the major right wing military groups — led by General von Ludendorff - The Nazi movement was a part of Kampfbund and Hitler was one of the prominent leaders - von Kahr and others were conspiring against Stresemann government in Berlin - by November 1923, despite the rumours, nothing had happened and the tensions between Bavaria and Berlin began to ease - November 1923, when it appeared that the Bavarian government was wavering in its opposition to

the Stresemann government in Berlin, Hitler and elements of the Kampfbund made their move - They wanted to seize control of the government in Bavaria by force, it was hoped that this would trigger a national revolution that would remove the government in Berlin - The hastily planned Putsch took place on 8 November 1923 - Heavily armed SA officers encircled the Burger Brau Keller, a beerhall where von Kahr and other Bavarian leaders were attending a political meeting â