



History

GCSE

History B Source Pack

Germany 1918–1945

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ENQUIRY: WHY DID WEIMAR HAVE SUCH A DIFFICULT START?

- **The state of Germany after World War I,**
- **Versailles and the establishment of the Weimar government including its constitution.**
- **The reasons for and the nature of the problems faced by the Weimar government up to the Ruhr and other 1924 events such as the Munich Putsch.**

“The historian, with every justification, will come to the conclusion that we were very stupid men.”

Source 1 – Harold Nicolson, a British diplomat, talking after the release of the Treaty of Versailles

“We have got through a strange week – the worst week the German people has had to face up to the present. No coal, electric light turned off, the gas power turned down ... and practically no food – there seems to be no more potatoes.”

Source 2 – Extract from a letter written by an Australian woman living in Berlin during the war

VENGEANCE! GERMAN NATION!

Sven Burg Schultze

Today in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles a disgraceful treaty is being signed. Never forget it! On the spot where, in the glorious year of 1871, the German Empire in all its glory began, today German honour is dragged to the grave. Never forget it! There will be vengeance for the shame of 1919.

Source 3 – Front page of the German newspaper – Der Spiegel on the day after the treaty was signed

“At the beginning of the war, England started the war of starvation against Germany and Austria-Hungary. In 1915, England declared her intention of seizing all neutral shops entering or leaving Germany. All goods intended for Germany or exported from there, or owned by Germans would then be seized by the Royal Navy.”

Source 4 – Extract taken from the memoirs of German General Ludendorff

“Strike, stop working, strangle this military dictatorship, fight... for the preservation of the republic, forget all dissension! There is only one way to block the return of Wilhelm II. General strike all along the line! Workers unite!”

Source 5 – Government appeal during the Kapp Putsch

“Suddenly a Hitler man who stood left of me fired a pistol and killed Sergeant Hollweg. Before I could give an order, my people opened fire. At the same time the Hitler people opened fire and for twenty or thirty second a regular fire fight developed.”

Source 6 – taken from the official record of Lieutenant Von Godin on the day of the Munich Putsch

The Bavarian Ministry is removed. I propose that a Bavarian government shall be formed consisting of a Regent and a Prime Minister invested with dictatorial powers. I propose Herr von Kahr as Regent and Herr Pohner as Prime Minister. The government of the November Criminals and the Reich President are declared to be removed. I propose that, until accounts have been finally settled with the November criminals, the direction of policy in the National Government be taken over by me.

Source 7 – Adolf Hitler, in a speech made during the Munich Putsch

Wholesale Price Index

July 1914	1.0
Jan 1919	2.6
July 1919	3.4
Jan 1920	12.6
Jan 1921	14.4
July 1921	14.3
Jan 1922	36.7
July 1922	100.6
Jan 1923	2,785
July 1923	194,000
Nov 1923	726,000,000,000

Source 8 – Wholesale price index in Germany, 1914-1923 – the chart shows the relative cost of an item compared to a starting figure of 1

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

Source 9 – memories of a German writer of 1923

“If anyone will read the complete report of the speech that was made by M Poincare at Dunkirk, they will find that the opening sentences of that speech contained no reference whatever to Reparations. He pointed out that just as England would take every step within her power to protect her frontiers were they threatened by sea so the French are bound to take every step that opportunity offers them to see that their frontiers were protected by land. It is certainly not surprising that they take that view.”

Source 10 – from a speech made in the House of Lords, 20 April 1923



Source 11 – French troops invade the Ruhr, 1923

ENQUIRY: WAS IT ONLY THE WALL STREET CRASH THAT PREVENTED WEIMAR BEING SUCCESSFUL?

- The recovery under Stresemann,
- cultural achievements,
- the later problems caused by the Depression and Wall Street Crash including the political, social and economic crises.

ENQUIRY: HOW FIRMLY WERE NAZI IDEAS AND POLICIES ESTABLISHED BEFORE 1933?

- Nazi policy from Mein Kampf,
- leading personalities,
- beliefs and policies, eg anti-Semitism.

The speculators had learnt that the Reichsbank was now able, if it decided to do so, to put an end to all speculation on the foreign exchange market. The success of the campaign meant an immeasurable increase in the confidence of the public in the stabilization of the mark.

Source 12 – Hjalmar Schacht – then currency commissioner for the Weimar Republic

“Germany is dancing on a volcano. If America calls in their loans, a large section of our economy would collapse.”

Source 13 – Gustav Stresemann in a speech to the Reichstag, 1928

“They say the Apaches of Paris... were descended from the youth that went bad during the war of 1871. Considering difficulties of the last war and the state of war that exists even in peacetime, we could get a species of Apaches in Berlin that would make the Paris ones pale by comparison.”

Source 14 – from the Berliner Tageblatt in 1923 warning of the dangers of youth crime. In 1930, youth gangs in New York numbered between 10 and 16 thousand

“Every fifth child of the German cities is without a bed of its own; it has to live amid poverty and sickness, immorality, dirt and coarseness. Thus millions of people exist in conditions of bitter horror, in half lit dungeons, where six to eight or even fourteen or more human beings are crowded together amid rats and filth.”

Source 15 – Eugen Diesel, a German, describing condition in 1931

“The hustle and bustle of the metropolis (Berlin) is simply breathtaking. Just like on the express train, you don’t have the leisure to follow a thought through to the end or to finish looking at something since your attention is immediately caught up by something else.”

Source 16 – an extract from the writings of a female in Berlin during the 20s

“The parties were bigger... the pace was faster, the shows were broader, the buildings were higher, the morals were looser.”

Source 17 – F. Scott Fitzgerald writing about the 20s in Berlin



Source 18 – the German words are “Our last hope: Hitler” produced in 1932

Support for the Nazi Party had grown due to the country's problems of hyperinflation and the French invasion of the Ruhr. By 1928 Nazism appeared to be a dying cause. Now that Germany's outlook was suddenly bright, the Nazi Party was rapidly withering away. One scarcely heard of Hitler or the Nazis except as a joke.

Source 19 – William Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (1959), William Shirer was an American journalist who lived in Germany from 1926 to 1941

“They spoke, during those infamous November days of 1918, to our people, particularly the German worker, promising a better economic future. Today, 14 years later, they cannot point to a single improvement in any occupation that their politics have brought about.”

Source 20 – Hitler giving a speech in 1932

“He was holding us under a hypnotic spell. I forgot everything but the man; then, glancing around, I saw that his magnetism was holding these thousands as one.”

Source 21 – comments from someone listening to Hitler speaking

ENQUIRY: WHY WERE THE NAZIS ABLE TO ACHIEVE THEIR SUCCESS AT THIS TIME?

- **How the Nazis gained control of Germany – electoral success,**
- **Reichstag Fire,**
- **Enabling Act,**
- **Night of Long Knives,**
- **establishment of control including SS and Gestapo,**
- **propaganda.**

“The people that only a few weeks ago were taken in by the flowery speeches of Papen have now turned against him. With the beginning of Hitler’s campaign and the deployment of our big speakers, one can see that our people are settling all their hopes on National Socialism”

Source 22 – Josef Goebbels, November 1932

“Lies! One more stupid and contemptible than the next! Who took away the civil servants freedom of expression? Who has cut his salary with ever new emergency orders? Who has taken away from him ever security for his future? The social democrats and the centre parties!”

Source 23 – A Nazi election leaflet published in 1932

“No danger at all. We have hired him for our act. In two months time we’ll have pushed Hitler so far into a corner, he’ll be squeaking.”

Source 24 – Words Franz Von Papen supposedly spoke to reassure friends about the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor

“It is early in 1933. One storm trooper says to the other, “have you heard the latest? The Reichstag is on fire!”The other storm trooper hisses, ‘Shhh! Not until tomorrow!’”

Source 25 – A German joke from 1933

“There are now restrictions on personal liberty, on the right of free expression of opinion, including the freedom of the press, on the right of assembly and the right of association.”

Source 26 – Excerpts from Hitler’s 28th February decree

The Reichstag has enacted the following law, which is hereby proclaimed with the assent of the Reichsrat, it having been established that the requirements for a constitutional amendment have been fulfilled:

Article 1

In addition to the procedure prescribed by the constitution, laws of the Reich may also be enacted by the government of the Reich. This includes the laws referred to by Articles 85 Paragraph 2 and Article 87 of the constitution.

Article 2

Laws enacted by the government of the Reich may deviate from the constitution as long as they do not affect the institutions of the Reichstag and the Reichsrat. The rights of the President remain undisturbed.

Article 3

Laws enacted by the Reich government shall be issued by the Chancellor and announced in the Reich Gazette. They shall take effect on the day following the announcement, unless they prescribe a different date. Articles 68 to 77 of the Constitution do not apply to laws enacted by the Reich government.

Article 4

Treaties of the Reich with foreign states, which relate to matters of Reich legislation shall for the duration of the validity of these laws not require the consent of the Reichstag. The Reich government shall adopt the necessary legislation to implement these agreements

Source 27 – Law to Remedy the Distress of the People and the Reich (the Enabling Act)

“We Social Democrats pledge ourselves to the principles of humanity and justice, of freedom and socialism. We greet the persecuted and the oppressed. We greet our friends in the Reich. Your courage and loyalty deserve admiration.”

Source 28 – Otto Wels, leader of the Social Democrats, during the session where the Enabling act was passed

“Through your decisive intervention and your courageous personal commitment you have nipped all the treasonable plots in the bud. You have saved the German nation from serious danger and for this I express to you my deeply felt gratitude and my sincere appreciation.”

Source 29 – Statement from President Hindenburg reacting to the night of the long knives

“People were always coming and saying; ‘why haven’t you hung out a flag for Hitler’s birthday’ and so on... You almost went to jail. It was very dangerous if you didn’t do it... Finally my mother bought a real tiny one.”

Source 30 – A woman speaking in 1993 about the fear created by the Gestapo

“We have always selected the highest and abandoned the lowest. As long as we maintain this principle, the Order (the SS) will remain healthy. After the war, we shall really build up our Order.....it will provide Germany with an elite. This elite will provide leaders to industry, agriculture and politics and the activities of the mind.”

Source 31 – Himmler’s view of the SS – 1943



Source 32 – The Reichstag Fire

ENQUIRY: WHO FARED BEST AND WORST IN NAZI GERMANY?

- **Living in Nazi Germany – different groups such as Jews and other minorities, women and children, families, life during the War, limited resistance.**

Why children are important

When an opponent declares, 'I will not come over to your side,' I calmly say, 'Your child belongs to us already... What are you? You will pass on. Your descendants, however, now stand in the new camp. In a short time they will know nothing else but this new community.'

Source 33 – Hitler, speaking in the 1920s

My system of education is a harsh one. The world will shrink in fear from the youngsters who grow up in my Ordensburg. A violent, masterful, dauntless, cruel younger generation - that is my aim. There must be nothing weak and tender about it. Its eyes must glow once more with the freedom and splendour of the beast of prey.

Source 34 – Hitler, speaking in the 1930s

All subjects - German language, History, Geography, Chemistry and Mathematics - must concentrate on military subjects, the glorification of military service and of German heroes and leaders and the strength of a rebuilt Germany. Chemistry will develop a knowledge of chemical warfare, explosives, etc, while Mathematics will help the young to understand artillery, calculations, ballistics.

Source 35 – A German newspaper describing the new Nazi curriculum

We all felt the same, the same happiness and joy. Things were looking up. I believe no statesman has ever been as loved as Adolf Hitler was then. It's all come flooding back to me. Those were happy times.

Source 36 – Luise Essig, remembers life in Nazi Germany

"I got caught in a mob of about ten thousand hysterics, who jammed the moat in front of Hitler's hotel, shouting: "We want our Leader!"... They looked up at him as if he were a Messiah."

Source 37 – William L. Shirer, an American journalist from September 1935

“All single and married women up to the age of 35, who do not already have four children, must have four children. The fathers should be racially pure German men. It does not matter if these men are married or not. Any family that already has four children must set the husband free for this action.”

Source 38 – Nazi idea from 1943, the law was never enacted

“After November 10th, 1938, those Jews still in Germany and Austria were filled with nightmarish fears about what the future might hold for them. But even someone gifted with the most fertile fantasy could not have imagined anything like the holocaust. And yet, the dam had cracked.”

Source 39 – Werner Weinberg ‘Self Portrait of a Holocaust Survivor’ published 1985

“Speer claims that production in the armament industry is not too badly affected after an enemy air raid. The fact is that workers often stay away from their workbenches for weeks after an attack. Thus, for instance, the Lanz works at Mannheim have been completely open for production for a fortnight, yet only 60 percent of the workforce has thus far returned.”

Source 40 – Josef Goebbels diary, September 1943

“Do you know that our armies have been smashed on the Russian Front? Do you know that millions of soldiers are being sacrificed by the mad Austrian corporal named Hitler, to satisfy his lust for power? Sabotage the war effort organise armed resistance.”

Source 41 – a leaflet published in 1943 by a youth group

“Hitler was drowning in a lake when a young boy saved him. Hitler said, ‘you’ve saved my life; how can I repay you?’ ‘Well’, said the boy ; I think I’d like an expensive funeral with a golden coffin and a magnificent marble gravestone’. Hitler was surprised. He said ‘why do you want such a fantastic funeral? You’re not going to die.’ ‘Oh no?’ remarked the boy. ‘Wait till I get home and tell my dad who I saved from drowning!’”

Source 42 – an anti-Nazi joke from the 30s



Cartoon: David Low cartoon on rearmament 20 March 1935

Source 43 – A David Low cartoon on rearmament



in: The yellow badge. Credit: Fine Art Images / Heritage Images / TopFoto

Source 44 – The Star of David – Nazis made all Jews wear these at all times



Source 45 – Frau Gartrud Scholz Klink , Germany' s perfect Nazi woman , arrived at Croydon Aerodrome by air , to attend the Third International Congress for Social Work in London

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