

POWER AND AUTHORITY
IN THE MODERN WORLD

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AND AUTHORITY

IN THE INVESTIGATING AND INTERPRETING THE SOURCES
MODERN WORLD

JONATHAN
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LOEFFEL

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POWER

AUTHORITY MODERN WORLD

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Power and Authority in the Modern World: Investigating and Interpreting the Sources

explores some of the most engaging topics of Modern History; dictatorships, the origins and consequences of war and the world's attempts to avert conflict.

The book's approach to these topics combines the practice of historians with the needs of senior secondary students. Like the historian, students engage with secondary literature before investigating and interpreting the sources. By taking this approach, students apply the historical concepts of causation, continuity and change, perspectives, significance, and contestability. This approach prepares students to become more than simple observers of the past. They are empowered to understand it and its implications.



Chapters and activities apply historical concepts and skills, including the analysis and use of sources, historical interpretation, historical investigation and research, and explanation and communication.



Historically accurate images, including photographs and artworks, along with diagrams and tables, enhance engagement and present information and interpretations in a variety of ways.



Source studies, which include artwork, photographs, extracts from speeches, laws, personal accounts, and historians' interpretations, feature regularly throughout the textbook. Each source study includes exam-styled questions.



Review activities consolidate student understanding, encourage the synthesis of content, include opportunities for research, and support the application of historical concepts.



Each **chapter ends with activities** that focus on larger historical questions arising from the topic and suggestions for further resources.

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For Emily and Darcy.

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Glossary

Anschluss

(German) union; as in the political union or annexation of Austria with Germany

appeasement

to satisfy a demand; in this context it refers to satisfying German demands in the lead-up to World War II

autocratic

ruled by one leader

authoritarian

a form of dictatorship that relies on more traditional structures of rule

balance of power

the avoidance of a single nation dominating the European continent; preferably a range of near-equal powers that could cooperate to ensure general peace and stability

Bolsheviks

the radical communist movement in Russia led by Vladimir Lenin

bureaucracy

the organisational structures of the state, such as the public service

capitalism

the economic system prevalent in Europe by 1914; individuals are free to own private property (especially large productive assets such as factories and mines) and amass personal wealth

collective security

an approach to international relations attempting to ensure peace by requiring as many nations as possible to contribute to each other's safety

concordat

an agreement between the Vatican and a nation-state

Confessing Church

a religious movement in Nazi Germany opposed to the political interference and unification of all Protestant churches

constitutional monarchy

a political system in which the monarch's power is defined and restricted by the highest laws of the nation (the constitution)

corporatism

the organisation of politics based on large sectors of the community, such as agriculture and manufacturing

coup

a rapid takeover of power usually by a group or party that does not have the support of the majority of the population

cult of personality

an exaggerated and glorified public image used to inspire citizens to support a political leader; they are usually represented as a wise, gifted and generous leader with a special ability to lead the people towards a greater future

cultural revolution

an attempt to dramatically overhaul a nation's traditions and values

Dadism

an experimental modernist art movement that emerged during World War I

dictatorship

a political system in which an individual or group holds power and limits opposition through manipulation and/or coercion

eugenics

the idea that selective breeding could enhance the human species

Fascism/fascism

in capitalised form, referring to the Italian Fascist Party; lower case form denotes a more general description of political movements, such as the Nazi Party, that shared similar characteristics, including extreme nationalism, anti-communism, anti-liberalism, anti-conservatism, the positive evaluation of violence, a militarised style and a leadership cult

Freikorps

(German) right-wing volunteer militia units largely composed of veterans

Der Führer

(German) the leader; in the Nazi Party the term was used for Hitler as the leader of the movement, then became Hitler's official position in Nazi Germany

Führerprinzip

(German) leadership principle; a concept calling for the loyalty of the Nazi Party members to Hitler and designating that his leadership and decisions were free from all legal and moral restrictions

functionalism

in relation to Nazi Germany, the interpretation of the structure of power and authority as an interplay between Hitler, other individuals, and key organisations and institutions

Gauleiter

(German) leader of a region or state in the organisational structure of the Nazi Party

Gestapo

contraction of *Geheime Staatspolizei* (Secret State Police); a major institution, under the control of the SS, in the terror apparatus of the Nazi State

Gleichschaltung

(German) coordination/bringing into line; used to describe the process of the Nazi Party's integration of German society into a single system

great powers

the dominant political powers of a particular historical period

Kenpeitai (Military Police Corps)

a secret police unit of the Japanese army founded in 1881; it had a reputation for extreme brutality, especially in territories occupied by Japan, such as Korea

Kirchenkampf

(German) church struggle; refers broadly to the range of religious conflicts and tensions between Christian churches and the Nazi State

intentionalism

in relation to Nazi Germany, the characterisation of the system of government as Hitler-centred

internationalist

an outlook that aims to bring about a change in the global order rather than focusing on the interests of one specific nation

Lebensraum

(German) living space; the idea of the acquisition of land for German hegemony in Eastern Europe

Marxism

political philosophy developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the 19th century, advocating revolutionary change, more power to the workers and a more equal society in which no individuals or groups could amass wealth and dominate the lives of others

polycratic

ruled by many leaders

Putsch

(German) an attempted overthrow of a government by violence

Reichstag

the lower house of the parliament of the Weimar Republic, representing the people

Reichsleiter

(German) Reich leader; second-highest rank in the Nazi Party organisational structure

reparations

repayments required at the end of a conflict to pay for damage and compensation

repression

the limitation of an individual's right to take part in political and/or social activities

revisionist

seeking to change or amend an established agreement; in this context it applies to the actions of nations seeking to revise the terms of the Paris Peace Conferences

Romani

ethnic minority peoples of Indo-European origin, who traditionally led nomadic lives

secular

beliefs that are not religious

self-determination

a principle that allows groups of people the right to choose their own government and how they relate to the wider world

Schutzstaffel (SS)

(German) Protection Squad; the SS was initially a bodyguard contingent of the SA, but the SS's role broadened considerably from the time of its establishment

Sinti

ethnic minority peoples of Indo-European origin, who traditionally led nomadic lives

Soviet Union

the communist state that replaced the Russian Empire after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917; officially known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and formally established in 1922

sphere of influence

in international affairs, a region over which one nation holds economic or political hegemony

squadristi

the Fascist Party's paramilitary arm; they played an important role in destroying the Fascists' political opponents during the party's rise and Mussolini's regime once in power

Stahlhelm

(German) Steel Helmets; the paramilitary formation associated with the DNVP

structuralism

in relation to Nazi Germany, the interpretation of the structure of power and authority as an interplay between Hitler, other individuals, and key organisations and institutions

Sturmabteilung (SA)

(German) Storm Battalions, also known as 'Brownshirts' because of the colour of their uniform; the paramilitary arm of the Nazi Party

terror

the use of or threat of violence for political purposes

Tokkō (Special Higher Police)

a secret police unit established in Japan in 1911 to monitor political thought and help maintain social stability; originally designed to limit the influence of radical ideas such as communism

totalitarianism

a form of dictatorship featuring single party rule, charismatic leadership, the use of terror and seeking to intervene in everyday life

total war

a conflict in which all of a nation's resources are committed to victory; usually involving reorganisation of the economy and expanded government controls over society

trade unions

organisations established to represent workers, protect working conditions and negotiate pay

tsar

the title taken by Russian rulers in the 19th century, with links back to the term 'Caesar' used in ancient Rome

unilateral

to act independently, particularly in relation to international affairs

urbanisation

the movement of people from village and country to major towns and cities

Volksgemeinschaft

(German) the peoples' community; the racially pure German state imagined by the Nazis

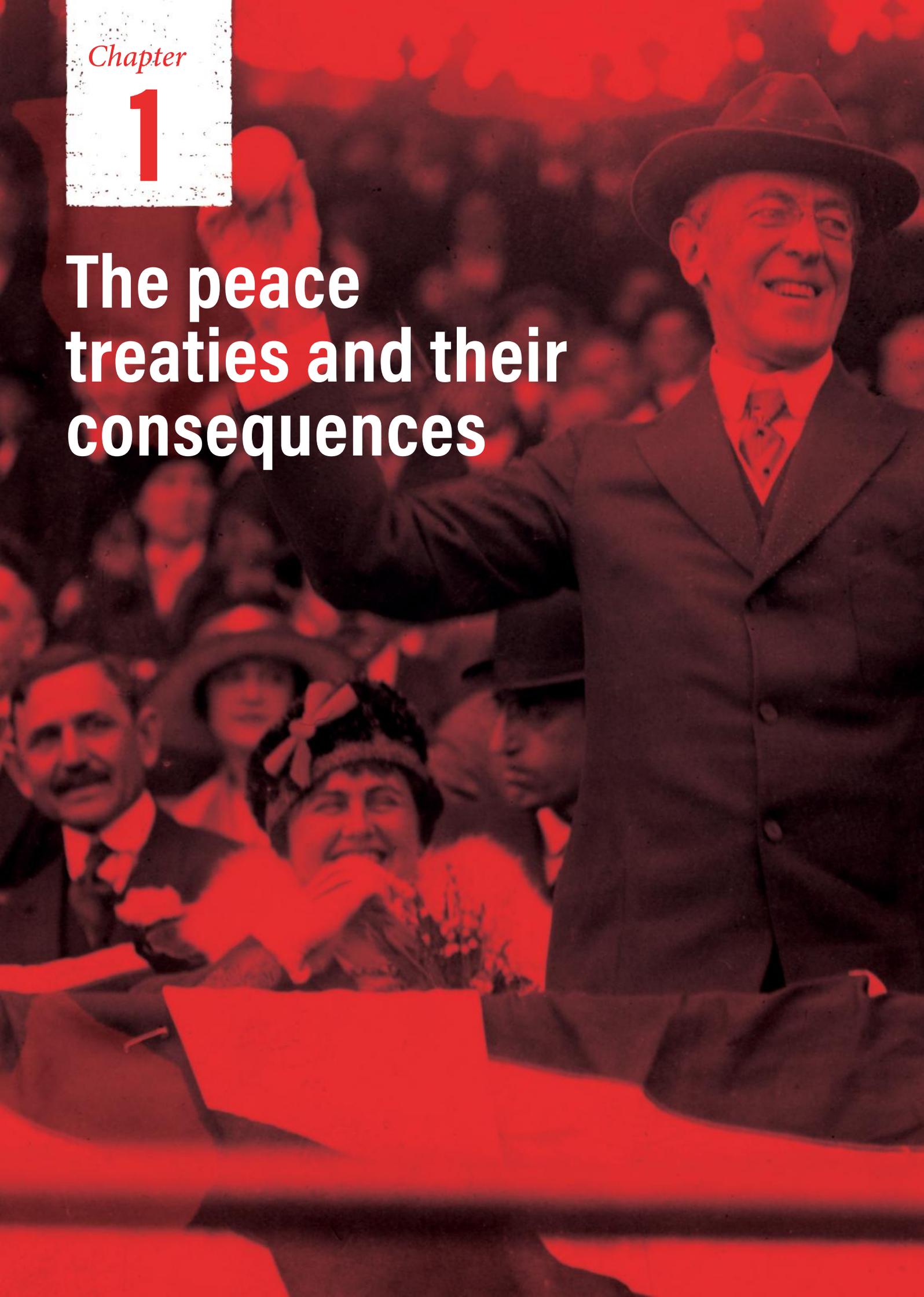
Völkisch movement

nationalist, racist and populist political and cultural movements prevalent in Germany from the late 19th century

Chapter

1

The peace treaties and their consequences



By 1918 it was clear to most observers that World War I had been one of the most destructive conflicts of human history. Up to 11 million people had died fighting in the war, more were left injured and the lives of civilians in many parts of the world had been severely disrupted. World War I had pushed those nations most deeply involved in the fighting to breaking point – some nations, such as Russia, collapsed during the war and others came close. This chapter provides a survey of the major immediate consequences of the peace treaties that marked the end of the conflict. While initially imagined as a way of securing peace, the intermediate and long-term consequences of imposing the conditions of the treaties failed to accomplish this aim.

Timeline 1.1: 1918–23

- 1918**
 - 8 January: US President Woodrow Wilson announced his Fourteen Points for international peace to the US Congress.
 - 3 March: The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed between Bolshevik Russia and Germany and its allies.
 - 11 November: The Armistice was signed, bringing hostilities on the Western Front to a close.
- 1919**
 - 18 January: The Paris Peace Conference commenced.
 - 28 June: The first major treaty, the Treaty of Versailles, was signed. This also included the Covenant of the League of Nations.
 - 10 September: The Treaty of Saint-Germain was signed.
 - 27 November: The Treaty of Neuilly was signed.
- 1920**
 - 16 January: The League of Nations officially began operations.
 - 4 June: The Treaty of Trianon was signed.
 - 10 August: The Treaty of Sèvres was signed.
- 1923**
 - 24 July: The Treaty of Lausanne was signed.



FIGURE 1.1 Women and children emerge from hiding after Allied forces liberate the city of Château-Thierry, France, in July 1918. The impact on the civilian population was considerable and this experience shaped the French approach to negotiation at the Paris Peace Conference.

TABLE 1.1 Mobilised forces, deaths, injuries, missing/prisoners and total casualties of combatant nations in World War I

Country	Total mobilised forces	Killed or died	Wounded	Prisoners or missing	Total casualties
Allies					
Russia	12 000 000	1 700 000	4 950 000	2 500 000	9 150 000
British Empire	8 904 467	908 371	2 090 212	191 652	3 190 235
France	8 410 000	1 357 800	4 266 000	537 000	6 160 800
Italy	5 615 000	650 000	947 000	600 000	2 197 000
United States	4 734 991	116 516	204 002	-----	320 518
Japan	800 000	300	907	3	1210
Romania	750 000	335 706	120 000	80 000	535 706
Serbia	707 343	45 000	133 148	152 958	331 106
Canada	424 000	59 694	172 000	3 800	235 494
Belgium	267 000	13 716	44 686	34 659	93 061
Greece	230 000	5 000	21 000	1 000	27 000
Portugal	100 000	7 222	13 751	12 318	33 291
Montenegro	50 000	3 000	10 000	7 000	20 000
TOTAL	42 612 810	5 211 809	13 003 004	4 124 890	22 165 291
Central Powers					
Germany	11 000 000	1 773 700	4 216 058	1 152 800	7 142 558
Austria-Hungary	7 800 000	1 200 000	3 620 000	2 200 000	7 020 000
Turkey	2 850 000	325 000	400 000	250 000	975 000
Bulgaria	1 200 000	87 500	152 390	27 029	266 919
TOTAL	22 850 000	3 386 200	8 388 448	3 629 829	15 404 477
GRAND TOTAL	65 462 810	8 598 009	21 391 452	7 754 719	37 569 768

When the Allies (including Britain, France, the United States and Italy) emerged victorious from the war, they faced the difficult task of formally bringing the conflict to a close.

Although Germany had been convincingly defeated on the battlefield during 1918, many German military commanders refused to believe this and instead claimed that the army had been 'stabbed in the back' by weak politicians. Nevertheless, Germany and the other defeated nations (including Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Turkey and Bulgaria) agreed to negotiate with the victorious powers in a peace conference due to begin in 1919.

The negotiations at the end of World War I were largely influenced by the ideas of President Woodrow Wilson of the United States. He promoted **self-determination**, the rule of law and peaceful trade and diplomacy that could bring about greater economic prosperity. He also hoped that the nations of the world could work towards **collective security**, in which countries agreed to form alliances that would deter any nation from threatening aggression. The alliances would ensure that if one nation in the agreement

self-determination

a principle that allows groups of people the right to choose their own government and how they relate to the wider world

collective security

an approach to international relations attempting to ensure peace by requiring as many nations as possible to contribute to each other's safety

was threatened, then it would be taken as a threat against all nations in the collective and this would act as a deterrent to any single country trying to take aggressive action. At Wilson's insistence, an international body called the League of Nations was established in 1919 to promote these ideals, but its aims were frustrated throughout the 1920s and 30s (see Chapter 6). As some nations evolved into aggressive, nationalist dictatorships, the League of Nations' ability to peacefully manage the world order was undermined.

The origins of peace

During World War I there had been numerous calls for peace. This was especially the case after 1916, when many combatant nations were becoming exhausted from the brutal and costly fighting.

- In July 1917 the German Reichstag issued a resolution calling for 'peace without annexation'. This was a call for the armies to lay down their weapons and return to their own nations, leaving previous borders as they were before fighting began.
- In August 1917 Pope Benedict XV issued the famous Papal Peace Note. This called for all nations involved in World War I to cease fighting, disarm, withdraw their armies from foreign soil and begin peaceful negotiations to end hostilities.
- On 8 January 1918 the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, announced to the Congress his fourteen-point plan for international cooperation. This set out a vision for the world in which people would be free to establish their own nation-state (national self-determination) and where nation-states could freely expand their economic activity and trade so long as they operated in a peaceful manner. When disputes arose, Wilson wanted to create an international forum for negotiation that would help settle disagreements without the need for war or conflict. On 4 October 1918, Germany approached Wilson to lead peace negotiations based on the ideas set out in the Fourteen Points.

Before November 1918 these calls for peace were unsuccessful. The nations involved in the fighting distrusted each other and many hoped to hold out for as long as possible to ensure that they held greater influence during any negotiations that might arise. There was also some resistance to ending the war without a clear victory because it had been so costly. As a result, in many nations there was a struggle between those who wanted to arrange peace negotiations and those who wanted to continue fighting until absolute victory.

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (1918)

The first major peace treaty bringing an end to hostilities in World War I was signed between **Bolshevik** Russia and its enemies, Germany and Austria-Hungary, in March 1918. These powers had been at war in eastern Europe since 1914 but, by 1918, Bolshevik Russia's economy and its people were suffering severely from the demands of a drawn out and costly war. Russia had collapsed into riot and revolution in March 1917 and then in October 1917 a new communist government led by the radical Bolshevik party seized power. The Bolsheviks had promised to end the war as soon as possible and immediately began negotiating with Germany and Austria-Hungary.

Although the Bolsheviks fought among themselves about the negotiations, they eventually agreed to sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on 3 March 1918. The main conditions of the treaty were:

- that German forces would evacuate Russian territory
- that Russia agreed to give up large parts of its empire, including 32 per cent of its arable land, 75 per cent of its iron and coal resources and about one-third of its population. Most of these territories were in western Russia (otherwise known as 'European Russia')



FIGURE 1.2 President Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924). Wilson's vision is often described as 'liberal internationalism' because he wanted nation-states to exist (rather than empires) and cooperate in peaceful trade and diplomacy to improve the rule of law, economic prosperity and international stability.

Bolsheviks

the radical communist movement in Russia led by Vladimir Lenin

reparations

repayments required at the end of a conflict to pay for damage and compensation

- In a later amendment, Germany forced Bolshevik Russia to pay six billion (German) marks in **reparations**.

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was very harsh, and although it was overturned when Germany surrendered in November 1918, it had already severely damaged the Russian Empire.

Source Study 1.1 The Fourteen Points

Source A: Extracts from Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points speech to the US Congress, 8 January 1918

- I. Open covenants of peace openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.
- II. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas outside territorial waters alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.
- III. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.
- IV. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.
- V. A free, open-minded and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.
- VI. The evacuation of all Russian territory, and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest cooperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy, and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing ...
- VII. Belgium, the whole world will agree must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations ...
- VIII. All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.
- IX. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.
- X. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.
- XI. Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan States to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality ...
- XII. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

XIII. An independent Polish State should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

XIV. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

Transcript of President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points (1918), Our Documents website, accessed 29 March 2021.

Questions

1. Closely examine Wilson's Fourteen Points in Source A. What are some of the main themes?
2. Using Source A and other evidence, describe the world Wilson hoped to create at the end of World War I.

The Paris Peace Conference (1919–20)

The Paris Peace Conference opened on 18 January 1919, just over two months after the Armistice had been signed in November 1918. The delegates to the conference came together at a time when many European nations had been exhausted by four years of brutal war. The conference was founded on a mixture of tension and optimism. Some idealists saw it as a genuine opportunity to mend a broken world, but others saw it as a gathering dominated by old European powers. Both Germany and Bolshevik Russia were excluded from the negotiations – Germany because it was seen as the key aggressor and cause of the war, and Bolshevik Russia because it was ruled by communists (who the British, French, US and Italian leaders feared) and had signed a separate peace with Germany in March 1918.

The fear of communism

The nations that dominated the Paris Peace Conference all shared a general fear of communism and especially the world's only communist power at the time: Russia (later renamed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, but commonly referred to as the **Soviet Union**). At the time, many communists supported radical ideas of overthrowing monarchs and wealthy classes. In Russia this had led to chaos and an extremely violent civil war. In fact, some of the Great Powers were involved in failed attempts to overthrow the new communist government in Russia in 1919–20. The negotiations in Paris were designed to bring a formal end to World War I and limit the influence of communism and Russia.

The perceived threat of communism was heightened by the spread of revolutionary activity in Europe (inspired by the Russian example) in the wake of the war. In Germany, for example, the initial stages of the revolution that led to the collapse of the imperial system had been triggered by soldiers' and sailors' councils. This was followed by the Spartacist uprising in Berlin in January 1919 and the declaration of the Munich *Räterepublik* in April. Similarly, in Hungary the communist leader, Béla Kun, staged a coup d'état and proclaimed the formation of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919. Although it was only short-lived, it highlighted the potential spread of communism while the peace conference was underway.

Soviet Union

the communist state that replaced the Russian Empire after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917; officially known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and formally established in 1922

The negotiations in Paris were mainly conducted by the Council of Ten. This group comprised two representatives each from Britain, France, the United States, Italy and Japan. These included the head of state from each nation (for example, the US President) and their foreign minister. The most important decisions were made by the Council of Four (sometimes referred to as the ‘Big Four’) who were:

- President Woodrow Wilson (United States)
- Prime Minister David Lloyd-George (Britain)
- Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau (France)
- Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando (Italy).

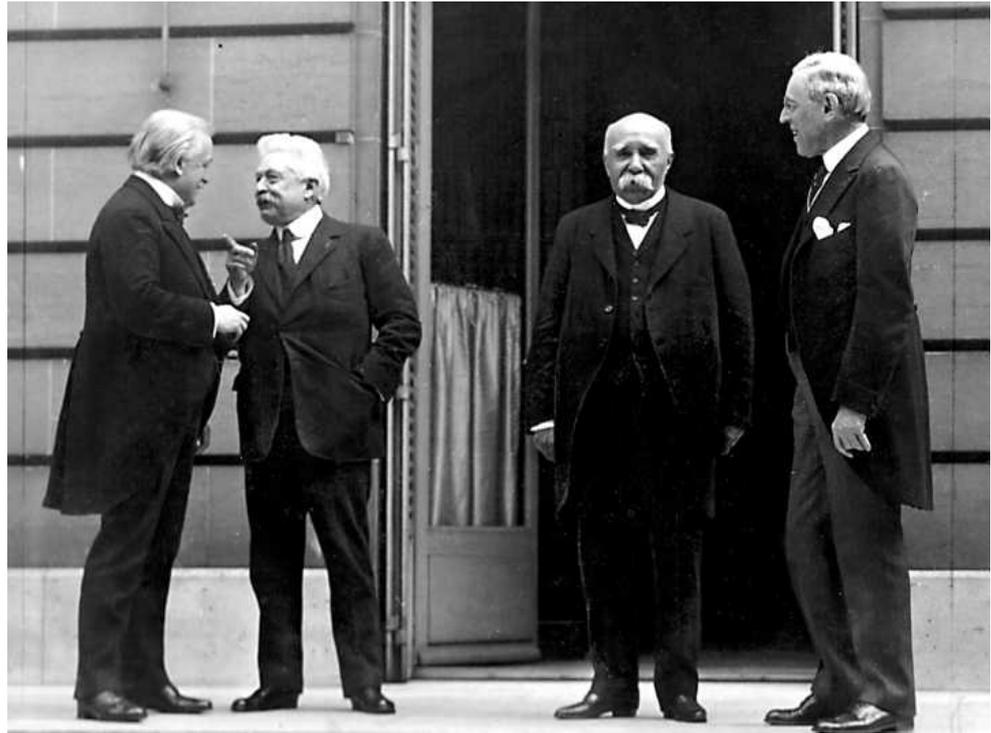


FIGURE 1.3 The Big Four leaders at the Paris Peace Conference. Left to right: David Lloyd-George (Britain), Vittorio Orlando (Italy), Georges Clemenceau (France) and Woodrow Wilson (United States).

Negotiations in Paris were complicated from the beginning. The Big Four each had different aims and priorities, and difficult domestic circumstances to manage. Parts of France had been occupied by Germany during the war and experienced some of the most horrific suffering of any nation, so many citizens wanted vengeance on Germany. Britain, who wanted to ensure peace in Europe, also needed to balance the interests of its Empire with any alliance. Reconciling these considerations made negotiation challenging. For example, Britain needed to balance the interests of Australia, part of its empire, and Japan, a British ally, during the negotiations. Australia opposed Japan’s request for the inclusion of a racial equality clause in the Charter of the League of Nations because they believed it had potential to undermine the White Australia Policy. By backing Australia, Britain contributed to the alienation of the Japanese delegation at the conference.

To make matters more complicated, many promises had also been made during the course of World War I in a series of secret treaties. As the conference developed, these promises were increasingly difficult to fulfill, and bitter resentments emerged from many of the decisions. For example, Italy had been promised territory by Britain, France and Russia as a condition of entering the war against Germany and Austria-Hungary, but this was never actually handed over during the peace negotiations. Italy left the conference frustrated with these developments.

The secret treaties

As World War I was being fought, a number of secret treaties had been negotiated to strengthen alliances and begin planning for the world after the war finished. Some of these agreements created problems during the Paris Peace Conference.

TABLE 1.2 Some of the secret treaties agreed upon during World War I

Treaty	Details
Constantinople Agreement (March 1915)	This was an agreement made between Britain, France and Russia that promised control of Constantinople (the capital of Turkey) and the Dardanelles to Russia at the end of the war.
Treaty of London (April 1915)	The Treaty of London was signed by Britain, France, Russia and Italy. It aimed to bring Italy into the war against Germany and Austria-Hungary by promising new territories for Italy once the war was over. Italy declared war in May 1915, joining Britain, France and Russia.
Sykes-Picot Agreement (May 1916)	An agreement made between Britain and France which outlined their plans to divide territory controlled by Ottoman Turkey after the war.
Treaty of Bucharest (August 1916)	This agreement was similar to the Treaty of London. Britain, France and Russia promised Romania new territory if they joined the war against Austria-Hungary. Romania issued a declaration of war ten days after signing this agreement.

Key features of the Paris treaties

There were five treaties signed as part of the Paris Peace Conference. These were signed in two stages, outlined in Figure 1.4. Each of the treaties marked a formal end to the war between the victorious Allied powers and their main enemies.



FIGURE 1.4 The main treaties to emerge from the Paris Peace Conference

The Treaty of Versailles (28 June 1919)

The first, most important and most controversial treaty was signed between the Allies and Germany on 28 June 1919 at the Palace of Versailles on the outskirts of Paris. This was the most iconic treaty of the entire Paris Peace Conference. Germany was forced to

balance of power

the avoidance of a single nation dominating the European continent; preferably a range of near-equal powers that could cooperate to ensure general peace and stability

sign an agreement that they had no part in negotiating. This led to a sense among many Germans that the treaty was not legitimate, which had significant long-term consequences in Germany's domestic politics. France was particularly keen to limit Germany's power because Germany had invaded France twice in the recent past (first in 1871 and again in 1914). Britain also wanted to limit Germany's strength, but only to ensure a **balance of power** in Europe.

Key clauses of the Treaty of Versailles included the following:

- Article 231 of the treaty (the infamous 'war guilt clause') required Germany to accept complete responsibility for starting World War I
- Germany was forced to give up land amounting to 10–15 per cent of its pre-war territory. The regions of Alsace and Lorraine, which Germany had taken from France in 1871, were returned and the Saar basin, an important coal mining region, was also handed over to France
- the League of Nations took on responsibility of the oversight of the cities of Danzig and Memel
- Germany had to agree to the independence of Czechoslovakia and Austria (both of which were established once the Austro-Hungarian Empire was broken apart)
- Germany lost all of its colonial possessions, most of which were in Africa and the Pacific
- Germany was forced to pay reparations. The value of 132 billion gold marks was determined after the treaty was signed and was revised several times during the 1920s.
- severe restrictions were imposed on the German military: the German army was limited to 100 000 soldiers and its navy was dramatically reduced. Germany was also prevented from building submarines and not permitted to maintain an air force. Even the number and size of the weapons owned by the German army was limited. This destroyed Germany's military power for the foreseeable future and infuriated its military leaders.
- Germany had to accept a demilitarised zone in the Rhineland (the region on Germany's western border with France and Belgium), which would be occupied for 15 years to ensure peace along the French–German border.



FIGURE 1.5 The final signing of the Treaty of Versailles was staged in the Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles on the outskirts of Paris. Majestic and grand, the hall expresses the power and wealth of the French monarchy that had been deposed during the French Revolution.



FIGURE 1.6 Territorial impacts of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany

Responses to the Treaty of Versailles varied. Some believed it was too lenient on Germany after all the damage it had supposedly caused during the war. Others believed it was too harsh and was likely to ruin Germany rather than peacefully restore it. Many German citizens were highly critical and labelled it a *diktat* ('dictated') treaty rather than a genuine agreement. The treaty became a public point of discussion and debate in Germany during the 1920s.

The other treaties

Although they never received the high public profile of the Treaty of Versailles, four other agreements emerged from the negotiations that began in Paris in 1919, most of which shared important similarities with the Treaty of Versailles. For example, each of the treaties required the defeated nations to give up territory, reduce the size of their militaries and pay some form of reparations (although in some cases these were reduced or abandoned after the treaty was signed). The details of these treaties are outlined in Table 1.3.

TABLE 1.3 The four other treaties from the Paris Peace Conference

Treaty name	Country signed with	Summary of main clauses
Saint-Germain 10 September 1919	Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austria was required to give up some land to Poland, Italy and Czechoslovakia. • The Austrian army was limited to 30 000 soldiers. • Initially the intention was that Austria would pay reparations, but the Austrian economy collapsed and it was unable to make financial contributions.
Neuilly 27 November 1919	Bulgaria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulgaria was required to give up land to Greece. • The Bulgarian army was limited to 20 000 soldiers and the Bulgarian Border Guard limited to just 3000. In addition, Bulgaria lost all its aircraft and navy fleet. • Bulgaria was required to pay £100 million in reparations but this was reduced in 1923 and then cancelled in 1932.
Trianon 4 June 1920	Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hungary was required to give up about two-thirds of its land. These territorial losses amounted to nearly 70 per cent of Hungary's pre-war population and important economic resources such as timber, coal and iron industries. • The Hungarian army was limited to 35 000 soldiers and limitations were placed on the kind of weaponry the Hungarian military could produce and stockpile. • As with Austria, the initial plan was to make Hungary pay reparations, but its economy was extremely unstable. Hungary did hand over some resources, but this amounted to a small fraction of what was initially intended.
Sèvres 10 August 1920	Ottoman Empire (Turkey)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The treaty formalised the break-up of the Ottoman Empire. Territory was ceded to Greece, and in the Middle East and North Africa territory was transferred to Britain and France as League of Nation mandates. These territorial losses amounted to over two-thirds of the entire empire. • The Dardanelles Strait became an international maritime zone. • Army was limited to 50 000 men and its navy was restricted to just 13 ships. • The Allies took control of finances, including control of the Ottoman Bank. • Various restrictions placed on foreign policy, including a ban on all economic cooperation with former allies Germany, Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria. • This treaty was annulled after nationalists overthrew the Ottoman Sultan in November 1922. The Treaty of Lausanne replaced the Treaty of Sèvres in July 1923, creating the Republic of Turkey and setting the boundaries of the new nation. The new treaty also removed most of the restrictions on the size of Turkey's army and cancelled the reparations required in the original Treaty of Sèvres. • Although it was originally intended that the Ottoman Empire would pay reparations, these were limited because they had already lost so much territory. Reparations were then completely abandoned when the Treaty of Lausanne replaced Sèvres in 1923.

Source Study 1.2 Responses to the Treaty of Versailles

Source A: Extract from Count von Brockdorff-Rantzaу's letter to the French Prime Minister, Georges Clemenceau

In response to the draft proposals of the Treaty of Versailles (May 1919), the leader of the German delegation at the conference wrote to the French Prime Minister.

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the observations of the German delegation on the draft treaty of peace.

We came to Versailles in the expectation of receiving a peace proposal based on the agreed principles. We were firmly resolved to do everything in our power with a view of fulfilling the grave obligations which we had undertaken. We hoped for the peace of justice which had been promised to us.

We were aghast when we read in documents the demands made upon us, the victorious violence of our enemies. The more deeply we penetrate into the spirit of this treaty, the more convinced we become of the impossibility of carrying it out. The exactions of this treaty are more than the German people can bear.

... the reconstruction of our economic life is at the same time rendered impossible. We must surrender our merchant fleet. We are to renounce all foreign securities.

Extract from Count von Brockdorff-Rantzaу's letter to the French Prime Minister, Georges Clemenceau, Firstworldwar.com website, accessed 27 March 2021.

Source B: Demonstrations protesting the proposed Treaty of Versailles



FIGURE 1.7 Demonstrators gathered outside the Reichstag, Berlin, to protest the proposed terms of the Treaty of Versailles, 15 May 1919.

Source C: Clifford Berryman, 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde', 1919

FIGURE 1.8 An American cartoon offering commentary on the political decisions Germany made when signing the Treaty of Versailles

Questions

1. According to Source A, how did Germany react to the proposal of the Treaty of Versailles in May 1919?
2. Describe the perspective of Source A.
3. What are the values and limitations of Source A and Source B to a historian studying reactions to the Treaty of Versailles in Germany?
4. How would you summarise the main message of Source C?
5. Using Source C, evaluate reactions to the Treaty of Versailles.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In your own words, define 'national self-determination' and 'collective security'.
2. What would you consider to be the three most important ideas in Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points?
3. Summarise the outcomes of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.
4. Explain why the negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference were complicated.
5. Describe the reactions to the Treaty of Versailles.

The collective consequences of the peace treaties

Collectively, the treaties that ended World War I had lasting consequences on Europe and the wider world. These included:

- the end of empires
- territorial changes
- military limitations
- financial challenges
- resentment
- the establishment of the League of Nations
- the ascendance of liberal democracy.

End of empires

One of the most significant consequences of the treaties that ended World War I was that they contributed to the end of some of Europe's most important empires. The Russian Empire had already fallen apart in 1917 but the treaties forcefully broke up the German, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires. For example, when the Austro-Hungarian Empire was dissolved, its former territory became six independent nations: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia. Some of these nations, such as Romania, had already existed prior to the treaties but gained more territory after the agreements were signed.

It is also important to remember that the treaties outlined above also benefited the British and French empires, whose influence increased as a result. For example, Britain took control of territory in Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Palestine, and France took control of territory in Syria and Lebanon. Some of these territories brought with them important natural resources such as oil.

Territorial changes

The treaties signed at the end of World War I had other far-reaching territorial consequences. The new nations that replaced the defeated empires had their own aspirations and developed their own alliances, which sometimes presented new challenges for the larger powers. For example, the newly established Poland became a potential threat to the Soviet Union – partly due to the longstanding tension between the Russian and Polish peoples, and partly because Poland's new leaders were staunchly anti-communist.

In addition, new national borders separated some ethnic groups and there were serious arguments over division of territories. In central and eastern Europe and the Middle East, new borders inflamed old disagreements and contributed to long-term tensions, some of which continued to create problems into the 1920s and 30s. In the Middle East these tensions continue to shape the relations between nations in the region well into the 21st century.

Other nations were frustrated by the territories they acquired. Italy and Japan, for example, felt that they had not been awarded enough territory despite being among the victorious powers during the war. This underpinned important resentments in those nations that became prominent themes of their domestic politics for the next two decades. Some of these resentments will be discussed in more detail further into the chapter.



FIGURE 1.9 Europe in 1914 (before World War I) and 1923 (after the peace treaties)

Military limitations

One major theme of peacemaking in Paris was the need to disarm and reduce the size of some nations’ military capacity. Militarism and the arms race that took place prior to World War I were seen as important contributors to the outbreak of conflict. This was particularly the case with the defeated nations, who were treated as the aggressors in the conflict. One consequence of this was that all the treaties developed from the Paris Peace Conference included requirements for disarmament.

TABLE 1.4 Limitations on the armies of some defeated powers

Nation	Army limited to ...
Germany	100 000
Turkey	50 000
Hungary	35 000
Austria	30 000
Bulgaria	20 000

Financial challenges

Most of the treaties that ended World War I also imposed some form of reparations on the defeated nations. Although many Germans claimed that the amount they were forced to pay in the Treaty of Versailles was too harsh, it should be remembered that Germany had already demanded large payments from Bolshevik Russia in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed in March 1918.

Reparations were a complex subject and became the point of heated debate over the next 10–15 years. Public discussions about reparations were a common feature of international media after the treaties were signed. They were used by some political movements to gain popularity. This was particularly notable in Germany (see Chapter 3). In most cases the amount of reparations were later downgraded or cancelled altogether.

Resentment

The conclusion of World War I fostered resentment in all defeated nations and left a strong desire in those nations to overturn the treaties. These are often referred to as 'revisionist powers' because they sought to revise the treaties.

In Germany the Treaty of Versailles was widely regarded as a national humiliation. The treaty became a powerful rallying point for German nationalists throughout the 1920s and 30s, who claimed that Germany had been treated unfairly by the Allies. Nationalists in Turkey despised the Treaty of Sèvres for stripping the nation of large amounts of land and allowing the former Ottoman Empire to effectively be controlled by Britain and France. The treaty became a major point of tension between the Turkish sultan's government and Turkish nationalist groups following 1920. In Bulgaria the Treaty of Neuilly set off a wave of protests. Government propaganda criticised the treaty and it became known as the 'dictate of Neuilly'. The loss of territory was considered a great national embarrassment.

Some Allies were also frustrated by the outcomes of the Paris Peace Conference. Although Italy was on the winning side, for example, Italian nationalists believed that they had been treated poorly by Britain, France and the United States during the negotiations. One of their main criticisms was that the large quantity of land promised to Italy in the Treaty of London in 1915 was never handed over. The Italian delegation was particularly frustrated by decisions made on the boundaries of South Tyrol, Fiume, Albania and Dalmatia. They believed the decisions had not been settled according to previous promises made by the Allies.

Japan, also an ally of Britain during World War I and a growing power in the Asia-Pacific, was also frustrated by the outcome of the Paris Peace Conference. Some Japanese nationalists, such as Prince Konoe Fumimaro, saw the whole peacemaking process as an attempt to ensure British, French and US supremacy over the world. Others believed that Japan should have been given more territory at the end of the war, especially areas near to Japan that had previously been controlled by Germany.

The League of Nations

By the end of World War I, there had been a long history of thinking about international organisations. Many ideas were set out in the writings of philosophers, politicians and humanitarian groups arguing that world peace could be underpinned by more formalised international cooperation. In summarising the history of these ideas, historian Paul Kennedy has suggested that: 'It comes as no surprise that most of these texts were composed near the end of, or shortly after, a great bloody war'.¹

As the war entered its later stages, discussions in Britain, France and the United States about a new global structure for managing the world order became more energetic. By early 1918 US President Woodrow Wilson had become one of the strongest voices advocating a new set of principles (the Fourteen Points) to ensure world peace. His speech to the US Congress on 8 January 1918 became the focus of new discussions about how to rebuild the world after the war came to an end.

Formal discussions about the structure of a new League of Nations began at the Paris Peace Conference. Delegates from Britain, France and the United States brought various draft ideas, and representatives from smaller nations were also allowed to contribute. These ideas were refined into a single draft, then revised several times before being approved at the Peace Conference on 28 April 1919. One historian has suggested that, ‘The League, as it finally emerged at the end of April, was a complex organisation resulting from a series of compromises.’²

The final Covenant of the League of Nations was included in the Treaty of Versailles signed on 28 June 1919, and the League of Nations officially began operations on 16 January 1920. Although the League was underpinned by high ideals, three of the original 45 members had left within the first two months and the membership continued to change over the next 20 years. A central aim of the League (to promote collective security) was under threat from the beginning because the US Congress refused to join and several other nations were prevented from doing so. The aims and history of the League of Nations will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

The ascendancy of liberal democracy

By breaking apart some of Europe’s old empires and establishing new nations, the treaties that ended World War I also contributed to the growing influence of liberal democracy – especially in western and central Europe. Once all the treaties had been signed, Europe appeared to be a stronghold of liberal democracy.

Source Study 1.3 Consequences of the peace treaties

Source A: An extract from the memoirs of the Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando

... never has a peace left behind it such a wake of resentment and hatred, not only of the defeated [powers] towards the victorious [powers] but of the victorious [powers] towards their victorious allies, and, even among the smaller nations created by the treaties, who are all ferocious toward one another and toward all the states to which they owe everything, beginning with their own existence! As for the League of Nations, after having demonstrated its perfect inability to achieve its essential aims, it ended up by being ridiculous.

V Orlando, *Memorie*, Rizzoli, Milan, 1960, p 449.

Source B: A cartoon published in the German magazine, *Simplicissimus*, 3 June 1919

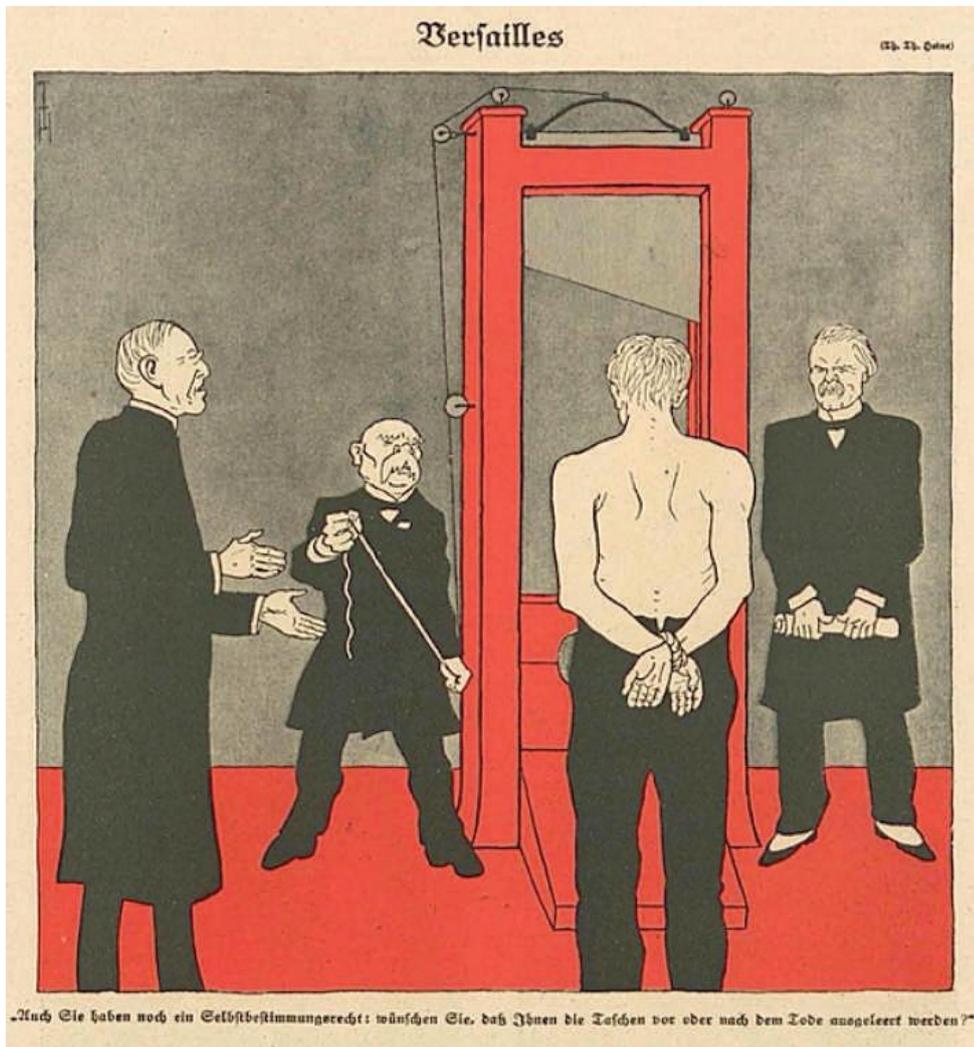


FIGURE 1.10 The caption reads 'The Terms of the Versailles Treaty are Equivalent to Sending Germany to the Guillotine.'

Source C: An extract from Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points speech to the US Congress, 8 January 1918

We entered this war because violations of right had occurred which touched us to the quick and made the life of our own people impossible unless they were corrected and the world secured once for all against their recurrence. What we demand in this war, therefore, is nothing peculiar to ourselves. It is that the world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation which, like our own, wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and fair dealing by the other peoples of the world as against force and selfish aggression. All the peoples of the world are in effect partners in this interest, and for our own part we see very clearly that unless justice be done to others it will not be done to us. The program of the world's peace, therefore, is our program ...

Transcript of President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points (1918), Our Documents website, accessed 29 March 2021.

Questions

1. Account for the perspective of Source A.
2. How might a historian use Source A when studying the attitudes to treaties that ended World War I?
3. Describe what is depicted in Source B.
4. Compare the value of Source A and Source B for a historian studying attitudes to the peace treaties that ended World War I.
5. Using both Sources A and B, outline the resentment of some nations towards the treaties that ended World War I.
6. According to Woodrow Wilson in Source C, why did the United States join World War I?
7. Discuss the value of Source C for a historian studying the foundations of the League of Nations in 1919.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why had attempts at peacemaking failed before 1918?
 2. Closely examine Figure 1.9. List the new nations visible in Europe in 1923.
 3. With specific reference to Figure 1.9, describe the European territorial consequences of the peace treaties that ended World War I.
 4. Using a mind map or other appropriate visual organiser, summarise the key individuals, events and the long- and short-term consequences of the peace treaties negotiated in Paris in 1919 and 1920.
-

Further resources

N Ferguson, *The Pity of War: Explaining World War One*, Basic Books, London, 1999.

R Henig, *The League of Nations*, Haus Publishing, London, 2010.

M MacMillan, *Peacemakers: The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and Its Attempt to End War*, John Murray, London, 2001.

J Tampke, *A Perfidious Distortion of History: The Versailles Treaty and the Success of the Nazis*, Scribe, Melbourne, 2017.

Activities

Going further

Conduct your own research to find three more primary sources that would be valuable to a historian studying the peace treaties that ended World War I and their consequences. The sources should vary in perspective or type.

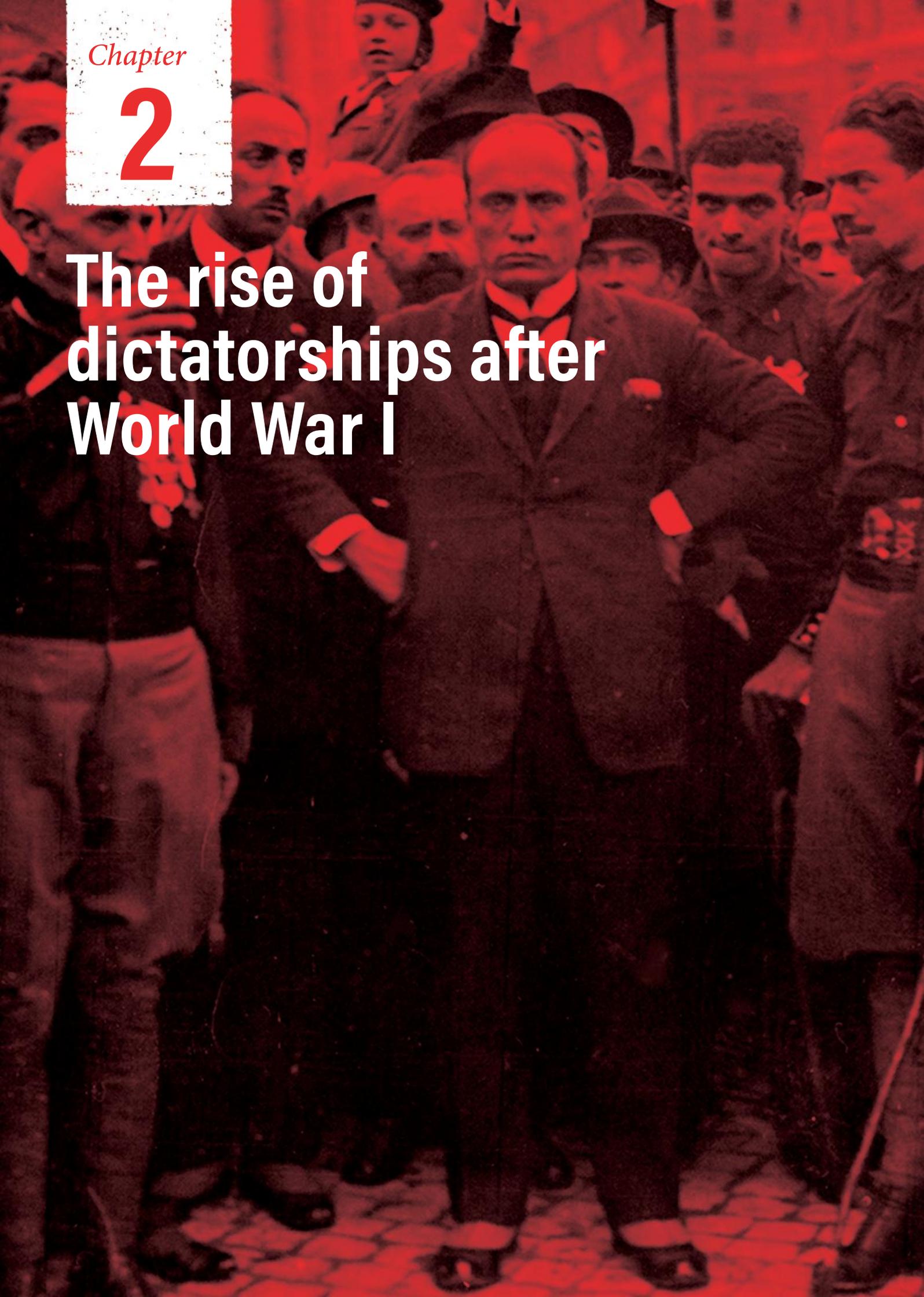
Endnotes

- 1 P Kennedy, *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present and Future of the United Nations*, Random House, New York, 2006, p 3.
- 2 R Henig, *The League of Nations*, Haus Publishing, London, 2010, p 42.

Chapter

2

The rise of dictatorships after World War I



For 20 years after 1919 it was difficult to maintain international stability, despite the effort that had gone into bringing a peaceful end to World War I through the Paris Peace Conference and setting up the League of Nations. The historian Richard Overy has succinctly claimed that 'the reality of the post-war world was a grave disappointment.'¹ Frustrations with the treaties quickly emerged, new nations had to be integrated into the international system and old tensions remained close to the surface. In addition, many countries experienced serious economic challenges after the war and the Great Depression (1929–33) disrupted international trade and increased the popularity of radical political groups that were far less likely to work towards a peaceful world.

A changing political landscape

The period following World War I was a time in which new political ideas became more prominent, especially in Europe. Although liberal democracy seemed to be in the ascendency at the end of the war, signs were already beginning to appear that its future was not so certain. In 1917 the Bolsheviks, Russia's radical communist party, seized power while promising to ignite a worldwide revolution that would overthrow **capitalism** and bring the workers of the world to power. This sent shockwaves around the world as powerful elites feared for their future if communism gained more ground.

Other political movements emerged to challenge democracy. In Italy a new political party led by Benito Mussolini, the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* (National Fascist Party), rapidly increased in popularity by promoting a mixture of nationalist and anti-communist ideas. In 1922 Mussolini gained power and began to assert his authority over Italian society. In Germany the radical nationalist Nazi Party (a truncation of the full name *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*), a group on the margins of German politics for most of the 1920s, became widely popular during the hardships of the Great Depression. Their leader, Adolf Hitler, took power as Germany's Chancellor in 1933 and began to construct an even more powerful government that made extensive use of violence and terror to control German society.

In Asia new governments challenged liberal democracy and threatened to disrupt international stability. From 1932, for example, the military became the dominant force in Japanese politics, steering Japan towards more aggressive and expansionist policies. Although that government never acquired the power that the Bolsheviks, Fascists or Nazis did, it clearly pushed Japan away from liberal democracy.

In short, the period between 1919 and 1939 was marked by major political contest between new movements and between nations whose visions of the world were clearly different. Sheri Berman, an American political scientist, argues that studying dictatorships reveals that there is no 'gradual, liberal, non-violent path to democracy' and that, even when democracy has been achieved, it is rarely stable.²

This chapter will explore how some of these anti-liberal movements came to power and how they governed Russia, Italy and Japan.

capitalism

the economic system prevalent in Europe by 1914; individuals are free to own private property (especially large productive assets such as factories and mines) and amass personal wealth

Timeline 2.1: 1917–37

- 1917
 - 15 March: Tsar Nicholas II abdicated.
 - 6–7 October: The Bolsheviks seized power in Petrograd in the name of the Soviet movement.
- 1918
 - The Bolsheviks changed their name to the 'All-Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)'.
 - 3 March: Russia signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, ending Russia's participation in World War I.
 - 11 November: The Armistice (ceasefire) was signed, closing hostilities on the Western Front.
- 1919
 - 18 January: The Paris Peace Conference opened.
- 1920
 - 10 January: The League of Nations began operating.
- 1922
 - 31 October: Benito Mussolini became the Prime Minister of Italy.
- 1924
 - January: Vladimir Lenin, the Communist Party leader, died after a long illness.
- 1928
 - Joseph Stalin became leader of the Communist Party and implemented radical economic policies.
- 1929
 - October: The Wall Street Crash in the United States set off the Great Depression.
- 1932
 - 15 May: Japanese Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi was assassinated, bringing an end to the rule of political parties in Japan until the end of World War II.
- 1937
 - July: Japan launched a full-scale invasion of China.

Factors enabling the rise of dictators

dictatorship

a political system in which an individual or group holds power and limits opposition through manipulation and/or coercion

The interwar period witnessed the rise of many **dictatorships**. These dictatorships shared some similarities, but each was unique to its own national setting. It is important to recognise that although there are some major factors that acted as catalysts in the rise to power of all of the dictatorships that emerged in the interwar period, there are also factors that are unique to each one, and the nature of the dictatorships does differ.

There are some short-term factors that explain the rise of these dictatorships in the interwar period. These include the role of World War I in destabilising the world and the various economic crises that struck Europe in the 1920s. There were also long-term trends that contributed to the rise of dictatorships and shaped their ideas and structures.



FIGURE 2.1 Some factors contributing to the rise of dictatorships in the interwar period

Social transformations before 1914

In the lead-up to World War I, European society had undergone dramatic social changes that transformed the lives of millions of people. Agricultural and industrial revolutions contributed to a dramatic increase in population and encouraged more people to leave small villages and towns for larger cities where they could find work in factories or other modern industries. The trend towards **urbanisation** ultimately meant that larger groups were living in more densely populated areas where they could be more closely monitored and controlled by governments. New political movements developed (such as **trade unions**) to help organise the workers of these growing cities, and governments became more wealthy and powerful as they increased income from taxing larger populations and built large **bureaucracies** to help manage different aspects of society. Some of the most powerful dictatorships to emerge in the interwar period took over these growing bureaucracies and used them to control the populations they ruled. Some dictatorships also began as new mass political movements inspired by earlier forms of political activity.

urbanisation

the movement of people from village and country to major towns and cities

trade unions

organisations established to represent workers, protect working conditions and negotiate pay

bureaucracy

the organisational structures of the state, such as the public service



FIGURE 2.2 The Industrial Revolution triggered an array of social changes that transformed society, including urbanisation, trade unions, factories and new technologies.

Science and secularism

In the 19th century, many European scientists and philosophers developed powerful new ideas and technologies that challenged traditional patterns of life. Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace presented the theory of natural selection, which underpinned new ideas about the origins and nature of life on Earth; Sigmund Freud encouraged new thinking about human consciousness; and there were calls to move beyond religion as the dominant way of explaining the world and making moral decisions.

Scientists made major new discoveries, including the power of steam, electricity and radio communication. Transport was revolutionised with the invention of steam trains, motor cars and trucks, and communications changed rapidly through the developments in radio and mass media such as film, newspapers and magazines.

There were, however, darker sides to these advances. Theories of **eugenics** were popularised in many parts of Europe and the United States, and these came to underpin a range of racist and discriminatory ideas.

eugenics

the idea that selective breeding could enhance the human species

secular

beliefs that aren't religious

Many of these ideas came together to encourage a sense of great optimism that modern humans, especially Europeans, could master the environment and their world and create utopian societies without religion, disease or unnecessary competition. Many dictators adopted some of these ideas in the interwar period and tried to apply the most modern, **secular** science to construct utopian societies.

Nations and nationalism

As science and secularism became more popular, people began to look beyond religion and other traditions to form their identity. One of the most powerful ideas to shape many modern European nations was nationalism. This was the belief that distinct ethnic, linguistic or cultural groups had the right to form their own nations. It often led to a strong sense of national pride and even competition between nations, as governments used a sense of nationhood to bind their citizens together.

During the French Revolution (beginning in 1789) and the rule of Napoleon Bonaparte (1799–1815), modern nationalism became a prominent feature of French politics. People rallied around the idea of 'liberty, equality and fraternity' and developed a stronger sense of a national community bound together by common interests and rights. Ethnicity became one of the most important ways of defining nations but it also led to some extreme cultural pride and a sense that one or some nations deserved greater territory or influence.

Nationalism was an important theme of many interwar dictatorships. Some, such as those in Italy, Japan and Germany, promoted the rights of their nations above all others and justified expansionist aims as their national 'right'. Some dictators, such as Mussolini in Italy, openly tried to draw on the symbolism of their nation's ancient origins as a way of claiming direct connections with the past and idealising their nation's heritage.

Cultural crisis

Despite the scientific and industrial accomplishments of European nations in the 18th and 19th centuries, by 1900 many people had become concerned that Europe was in crisis. The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, for example, claimed that Christian Europe had become decadent and soft and needed great men (*Übermensch*) to rescue it from decay. The historian Oswald Spengler published a two-volume bestseller, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (*The Decline of the West*), in 1918 and 1922, in which he argued that all civilisations experience cycles from growth to decline. He proposed that Europe had reached the height of its power and influence and was entering a period of decline. By the 1920s, some worried that revolution might sweep across Europe or another major war might break out. These fears were reflected in some art of the era, especially in the 1920s after the horror of World War I.

Many dictatorships during the interwar period openly claimed that they could bring about cultural renewal and rescue their nations from the pessimistic vision captured by people like Oswald Spengler. These dictators presented themselves as Nietzsche's *Übermensch* who could inspire their people to national renewal and bring about the rebirth they allegedly needed through heroic efforts. These ideas were most popular among right-wing dictatorial movements, such as Italian Fascism and German National Socialism.



FIGURE 2.3 German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), whose criticisms of European culture became influential in the 20th century and influenced some of the dictatorships that emerged in the interwar period

World War I

Perhaps the most important event to set up the conditions that enabled dictators to rise in the interwar period was World War I. This was the largest and most brutal war humanity had experienced to that point in time and, despite initial excitement expressed by some in 1914 that it would be a great adventure, it shook many European countries to their core. Approximately 11 million combatants died and more than 20 million were wounded, with many permanently maimed and disfigured.

In many ways, World War I did not create the disillusionment; rather, it intensified and accelerated the trends already discussed. The war became a focal point for the sense of instability and uncertainty that was prominent in the 1920s and 30s. As the historian Ian Kershaw has suggested: ‘Huge turbulence, like a tidal wave after an earthquake, followed the war. The seismic upheavals took five years to subside.’³ For example, the death and destruction caused by the war seemed to confirm for many that Europe was in decline. The war also accelerated the trend in Europe towards creating large, powerful governments that ruled through mass bureaucracies. This established clear examples for some political movements that strong, centralised governments were more efficient at managing modern societies than democracies run by parliaments.



FIGURE 2.4 British women and men working in a munitions factory during 1918. The conflict increased the level of government intervention in the economy and accelerated the growth of bureaucracies to support the war effort.

Unsatisfactory peace settlements

As explained in Chapter 1, the peace treaties that ended World War I were generally unpopular. In some parts of the world they were regarded as highly offensive and many political leaders and movements quickly began to use the dissatisfaction generated by the treaties to boost their own personal popularity.

In Italy, Germany and Japan, in particular, some politicians publicly criticised the treaties and attacked Britain, France and the United States for producing settlements that favoured themselves. The intention to revise these treaties became an important part of many political movements in their rise to power after World War I.

Economic crises

There were several major economic crises during and after World War I that also contributed to the rise of dictatorships. Some were isolated to particular nations, but others were global. Immediately following the war, for example, Italy experienced severe economic hardship, which encouraged the growth of more radical politics and contributed to the rising influence of the Fascist Party, eventually creating a dictatorship in the 1920s and 30s.

In 1929 the Wall Street Crash in the United States set off the Great Depression, causing widespread economic hardship across the world. International trade contracted, financial institutions collapsed, economic production declined, businesses failed and unemployment rates reached unprecedented levels in most developed economies. This crisis, and genuine fear that capitalism had failed or would soon, turned many people towards extreme political ideologies, such as communism, fascism or Nazism, to resolve these problems. Like World War I, these economic crises accelerated the trends and tensions that already existed, rather than creating completely new problems.



FIGURE 2.5 Unemployed Americans queue for free food during the economic depression in the 1930s. The Great Depression triggered social unrest and was commonly perceived as a crisis of capitalism.

The age of dictatorships

By the late 1930s, central and eastern Europe were dominated by authoritarian regimes and dictatorships. Democracy's position in Europe had been severely weakened, although not completely destroyed.

Democracies remained in power in western and northern Europe. These countries, such as the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, had longer histories as nation states than the newer countries formed in central and eastern Europe after World War I. These established democracies, however, did face challenges. In France, right-wing leagues and fascists threatened the Third Republic in a series of demonstrations in early 1934.

These protests culminated in riots in Paris in which police shot 15 demonstrators. French democracy survived because the political left and liberals cooperated by forming popular front governments.

The authoritarian regimes and dictatorships of the interwar period varied considerably. The character of each regime was also shaped by its particular context and history. Nationalism and conservatism, however, were significant common features. With the exception of the Soviet Union, which was a communist dictatorship, the European dictatorships each shared these characteristics. They focused on the preservation of power of conservative elites, the military and the church, and opposed the increasing political power of the working classes and the threat, imagined or real, of the left-wing movements. Of all these regimes, the conservative military dictatorship of General Franco in Spain (1936–75) lasted the longest.

Italian Fascism signalled the rise of a new type of political nationalism after World War I. Fascism differed from traditional nationalism in a number of significant ways. They were anti-conservative, anti-communist and anti-liberal, and saw themselves as a new type of politics for a new era. Other features included a cult of the leader, the positive evaluation of violence, a militarised aesthetic and extreme nationalism. In some ways the ideas of fascism were similar to communism because, rather than protect the interests of the established elites, fascists called for revolution. Once in power, however, some fascist movements made major compromises with elites, such as wealthy business owners and influential church groups. Fascist parties emerged across Europe in the 1920s and 30s. Major examples included the Nazi Party in Germany, the French *Faisceau* and *Parti Populaire Français*, the Romanian Iron Guard, the British Union of Fascists, the Arrow Cross in Hungary and the Falange in Spain. While few established dictatorships, their influence on interwar politics was significant.



FIGURE 2.6 This map shows how embattled democracies had become by the time World War II broke out in 1939.

TABLE 2.1 Summary of the dictatorships in Europe between 1918 and 1939

Nation	Years in power	Regime
Russia/Soviet Union	1917–91	Communist
Bulgaria	1918–44	Authoritarian
Hungary	1919	Communist
Hungary	1919–44	Authoritarian
Italy	1922–43	Fascist
Spain	1923–30	Authoritarian
Albania	1925–39	Authoritarian
Poland	1926–39	Military authoritarian
Lithuania	1926–40	Authoritarian
Portugal	1926–75	Authoritarian
Yugoslavia	1929–41	Authoritarian
Romania	1930–41	Authoritarian
Austria	1933–38	Authoritarian
Germany	1933–45	Nazi/fascist
Latvia	1934–40	Authoritarian
Estonia	1934–40	Authoritarian
Bulgaria	1934–43	Authoritarian
Greece	1936–41	Military authoritarian
Spain	1936–75	Military authoritarian
Romania	1938–40	Authoritarian

Stephen J. Lee: Authoritarian and totalitarian dictatorships

Because the general definition of the term 'dictatorship' is often so broad, many historians have argued that it is best to think of different types of dictatorship. For example, in *European Dictatorships, 1918–1945*, Stephen J. Lee suggests that there were two main types of dictatorship in the interwar period: 'authoritarian' and 'totalitarian'.⁴ The general features of these are outlined in Table 2.2.

TABLE 2.2 Summary of Stephen J. Lee's description of authoritarian and totalitarian dictatorships

Authoritarian	Totalitarian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power generally used to stabilise society and preserve a more traditional social system. • Anti-democratic but not revolutionary (e.g. protecting wealthier classes or national and religious traditions to ensure society was not disrupted by new ideas). • Did not try to create a completely new mass political movement to reshape society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More powerful regimes. • Tried to use their authority to actively reshape society. • Generally attempted to create a new mass political movement (e.g. a party), promoting a new ideology to lead to revolution and bring about major political, economic and social change. • Tried to gain control of the media and arts to promote their ideology. • Tried to extend control over the entire economy to ensure that every job, product and business served the interests of the nation.

Importantly, Lee also argues that because most dictatorships change over time, they can move back and forth from authoritarian to totalitarian. For example, a dictatorship might begin as authoritarian, become more powerful and ambitious and then turn into a totalitarian regime.

Source Study 2.1 The rise of dictators after World War I

Source A: Extract from Alexis Carrel's best-selling book, *Man, the Unknown*

Eugenics is indispensable for the perpetuation of the strong. A great race must propagate its best elements. However, in the most highly civilized nations reproduction is decreasing and yields inferior products. Women voluntarily deteriorate through alcohol and tobacco. They subject themselves to dangerous dietary regimens in order to obtain a conventional slenderness of their figure. Besides, they refuse to bear children. Such a defection is due to their education, to the progress of feminism, to the growth of short-sighted selfishness ... The free practice of eugenics could lead not only to the development of stronger individuals, but also of strains endowed with more endurance, intelligence, and courage.

A Carrel, *Man, the Unknown*, London, 1935, quoted in Richard Overy, *The Inter-War Crisis*, 3rd Edition, Routledge, Oxford, 2016.

Source B: German army prisoners march through the ruined town of Ypres in Belgium (September 1917)



FIGURE 2.7 German army prisoners marched through the ruined town of Ypres in Belgium, September 1917.

Source C: Extract from Robert Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*

A political space for mass-based nationalist activism, mobilized against both socialism and liberalism, had been only dimly visible in 1914. It became a yawning gap during World War I. That conflict did not so much as create fascism as open up wide cultural, social, and political opportunities for it. Culturally, the war discredited optimistic and progressive views of the future, and cast doubt upon liberal assumptions about natural human harmony. Socially, it spawned armies of restless veterans (and their younger brothers) looking for ways to express their anger and disillusion without heed for old-fashioned law or morality. Politically, it generated economic and social strains that exceeded the capacity of existing institutions – whether liberal or conservative – to resolve. The experience of World War I was the most decisive immediate precondition of fascism.

R Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2004, p 28.

Questions

1. According to Source A, what is the aim of eugenics?
2. Describe the perspective of Source A.
3. Describe what is portrayed in Source B.
4. Why might Source B be valuable to a historian studying the conditions that allowed dictatorships to emerge in the interwar period?
5. Based on the extract from Paxton in Source C, make a list of the specific ways in which World War I affected Italy.
6. Using any two of these sources and other evidence, outline three conditions that enabled the rise of dictators during the interwar period.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Refer to Figure 2.6. Which nations remained democratic between 1919 and 1939?
 2. In one paragraph, summarise the key factors contributing to the rise of dictatorships in the interwar years.
 3. Create a diagram to illustrate the key differences between an authoritarian and a totalitarian dictatorship.
-

The dictatorship of the Soviet Union

The first major dictatorship relevant to this study emerged in Russia during the later stages of World War I. The communist movement seized power in October 1917 and fought a brutal civil war to secure, extend and maintain power in its first four years. What began as a party dictatorship under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin was transformed into the personal dictatorship of his successor, Joseph Stalin, between 1928 and 1941.

Background to dictatorship in Russia

The Romanov dynasty had ruled Russia since the early 17th century. Under its successive **tsars** (later known as emperors and empresses), Russia developed into an enormous and powerful empire. After the defeat of Sweden, Napoleon and the Ottomans, Russia clearly marked itself as one of the great powers. By the middle of the 19th century, Russia controlled territory stretching from Europe to Asia.

Three developments converged to challenge the foundations and power of the mighty Russian Empire, particularly during the second half of the 19th century.

TABLE 2.3 The main threats to the power and stability of the Russian Empire

Development	Changes to the established order
Industrial Revolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A period of major technological advancement, beginning in Britain and western Europe. • Inventions in the areas of technology, production, transport and communications dramatically changed lifestyles and workplaces. • Wealth and military power of advanced nations, such as Britain and Germany, increased leading up to 1900. • The Russian Empire adopted some new technologies and built more factories, but lagged behind many other nations (including some smaller nations, such as Japan).
Revolutionary ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More popular in Europe after the Enlightenment and a major political force in many nations. • Marxism was gaining popularity and workers' movements gathering momentum in countries that were rapidly industrialising and expanding, such as Germany, Britain and France. • Revolutionary ideas gained traction in Russia. • New revolutionary groups in Russia called for radical changes to the Russian Empire – some wanted to overthrow the entire tsarist system.
Nationalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief that ethnic and national groups should be allowed to govern themselves; it emerged as an important political force in the 19th century. • Nationalist believers were prominent in some ethnic groups and some, such as those in Poland and Finland, called for greater freedom from Russian control. • Tensions descended into riots and rebellions, initially squashed by the Russian army. • Nationalism remained a threat to the stability of the Russian Empire into the 20th century.

At the start of the 20th century the Russian Empire had a new and ill-prepared tsar, Nicholas II (ruled 1894–1917), and new voices had emerged calling for change. Moderate groups simply wanted to restrict some of the tsar's autocratic powers and introduce new laws to make Russia a **constitutional monarchy**, similar to the British system. Others, such as the radical Bolshevik Party, were seeking more revolutionary change and a complete overhaul of the tsarist system.

tsar

the title taken by Russian rulers in the 19th century, with links back to the term 'Caesar' used in ancient Rome

Marxism

political philosophy developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the 19th century, advocating revolutionary change, more power to the workers and a more equal society in which no individuals or groups could amass wealth and dominate the lives of others

constitutional monarchy

a political system in which the monarch's power is defined and restricted by the highest laws of the nation (the constitution)



FIGURE 2.8 Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924) became the most influential figure in the Bolshevik Party. He led the Bolsheviks to power and oversaw the first several years of Bolshevik rule.



FIGURE 2.9 Joseph Stalin (1878–1953) was Lenin's ultimate successor. He took the Communist Party dictatorship, established between 1917 and 1924, and turned it into the most powerful personal dictatorship of the 20th century.

The Bolshevik Party

The Bolshevik Party was a Russian Marxist party led by Vladimir Lenin. It began as the radical wing of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP) but broke with the more moderate Menshevik group in 1903 over disagreements about how to bring about change in the Russian Empire.

The Bolsheviks were a minority party with little support until 1917, but during World War I their popularity grew, mainly in the cities and towns where Russia's industries were based. In March 1917 Tsar Nicholas II abdicated the throne and handed power to a weak and increasingly unpopular Provisional Government. Then in October 1917, Lenin and his key ally, Leon Trotsky (1879–1940), led the Bolsheviks and overthrew the Provisional Government. Over the next several years the Bolsheviks fought to extend and maintain their control over most of the former Russian Empire through a brutal civil war and a series of reforms that tried to bring about positive change for many citizens. In 1918 the group changed their name to the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks). Their rule became

increasingly dictatorial and, after Joseph Stalin took power in the late 1920s, developed into the most powerful and arguably the most violent dictatorship of the interwar period.

The Bolsheviks' path to power in Russia

The Bolsheviks' path to power began most obviously with the outbreak of World War I in August 1914. From the beginning, Lenin believed that true communists would not support the war because it would require the workers of the world to fight against each other in a war that did not represent their true interests. This put the Bolsheviks at odds with many other Marxists in Europe, such as those in Germany and Russia who supported the war. In the early stages of the conflict this made the Bolsheviks look more radical, but as the war progressed and became wearisome, their anti-war platform became more popular.

During 1916 and 1917 Russia's war effort against Germany and Austria-Hungary became increasingly desperate. The economy strained as it worked to supply food and resources to millions of soldiers fighting on the fronts and the even larger populations at home. The German army, in particular, was more modernised than the Russian army and multiple Russian military catastrophes inspired new criticisms of Tsar Nicholas II and the ministers who had taken Russia to war. Rumours spread about Nicholas, his wife and questionable advisors such as Rasputin, who had become influential in his court. Strikes and riots began to spread across Russian towns and cities in 1916 and in March 1917 Nicholas II was forced to abdicate the throne.

Nicholas handed power to the Provisional Government but the challenges of ruling an empire that was collapsing under the stress of war quickly proved too much. The government made the crucial error of remaining committed to the war even though many Russians were turning against it. As the Provisional Government's reputation declined, radical parties benefited and a new movement of workers and soldiers emerged called 'soviets' (meaning 'council' in Russian). The largest of these soviet groups were in Petrograd (the capital) and Moscow, and they combined to form a national movement that developed more power and influence than the Provisional Government. Within the soviets, it was the more radical parties that tended to be most popular. By August 1917, for example, the Bolsheviks had become the most influential party in the Petrograd and Moscow soviets, and



FIGURE 2.10 Nicholas II (r. 1894–1917), the last tsar of the Russian Empire. Nicholas abdicated the throne in early 1917 and was then murdered with his family and their servants by communist agents in July 1918.

Lenin was convinced that he now led the most influential party in Russia and the only party that could lead the nation out of its crisis. Lenin, Trotsky and the other Bolshevik leaders promised better living standards for Russians, and an end to the war.

In October 1917 Lenin charged Trotsky with organising the seizure of power in Petrograd to overthrow the Provisional Government. Trotsky's troops struck on the night of 24 October and attacked the Winter Palace where the Provisional Government was headquartered. Lenin then declared a new soviet government called the Council of People's Commissars (*Sovnarkom*). It was a highly controversial decision and many within the soviet movement were unaware that Lenin and the Bolsheviks had planned to take power. Tensions within the soviets increased and some influential parties withdrew their support. This gave the Bolsheviks the dominant position from which they could claim leadership over the soviet movement and over Russia.

Source Study 2.2 Establishing the Russian dictatorship

Source A: Strikes and strikers in the Russian Empire

TABLE 2.4 Strike and strikers in the Russian Empire, August 1914 to December 1916

	Strikes	Strikers
1914	61	31 857
1915	819	397 259
1916	1167	776 064

Source B: An extract from *Empire: The Russian Empire and its Rivals*, by Dominic Lieven

The war destroyed the Russian Empire not because the army was defeated but because the home front collapsed. Before the Revolution of 1917 Russia's military record was no worse than that of its western allies [Britain and France] ... In 1916 Russia's economic and military performance was often spectacular. The Brusilov offensive [1916] inflicted major defeats on the Austrians and Germans ... Meanwhile, against the Ottomans the Russians had done far better than the British, who had been defeated at Gallipoli and in Mesopotamia in 1915. By contrast, the Russian army had defeated the Ottomans in every major engagement ... [the regime's collapse] came partly because of wartime economic sufferings on the home front but above all because of a complete collapse of faith in the tsarist regime among most Russian elites and the Russian urban masses.

D Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and its Rivals*, John Murray, London, 2000, p 286.

Questions

1. What conclusions can be drawn from Source A about the Russian home front by 1916?
2. What are the values and limitations of statistics, such as those presented in Source A, for a historian studying the rise to power of the interwar dictatorship in Russia?
3. How would you summarise the argument put forward by Dominic Lieven in Source B?
4. Using both sources and other evidence, explain how a dictatorship was established in Russia in 1917.

Features of the dictatorship in Russia

The Bolsheviks held only Petrograd and Moscow when they took power in October 1917. Lenin quickly moved to expand control over the rest of the Russian Empire, but it was a brutal process of civil war and terror against opposition. They established a new state called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (also known as the USSR or Soviet Union) in 1922. That same year Lenin became seriously ill and then died in January 1924. After several years of in-fighting, Joseph Stalin emerged as his successor. Stalin dramatically transformed Russia into a major industrial and military power but also expanded the use of terror to construct a powerful personal dictatorship.

Consolidating power

Although the Bolshevik Party took power in the name of the soviet movement, Lenin proved unwilling to share much power with other parties from within the soviets. His government was also opposed by several groups, including former members of the tsarist system and members of the Provisional Government. As Lenin tried to implement some communist reforms, such as better working conditions, tensions mounted in Russia. When the Bolsheviks signed the costly Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 (ending Russia's war with Germany and Austria-Hungary), those who wanted Russia to remain in the war formed large armies and attempted to overthrow the Bolshevik regime. The Bolshevik consolidation of power then progressed in two key stages (see Table 2.5).

TABLE 2.5 The Bolshevik consolidation of power, 1917–24

Stage	Key events
Civil war	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bolsheviks fought a brutal civil war between 1918 and 1921. • They aimed to retain power in Petrograd and extend control over the Russian Empire. • They established the Red Army and a secret police force (the Cheka). • Civil war provided an opportunity to eliminate alternative political parties and major organised opposition. • Winning the civil war established Bolshevik power for the foreseeable future.
New Economic Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil war left the Russian economy in ruins. • The Communist Party introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921 to rebuild and reduce tension. • NEP allowed greater freedom in parts of the economy but not greater political freedom. • NEP decreased opposition to the Bolsheviks but frustrated communists who wanted to bring about rapid change in Russia.

Of all the dictatorships explored in this chapter, the Bolsheviks' consolidation of power was unique. Not only did they seize power (rather than be handed power in a formal transfer of government), but they also extended their control over Russia during a civil war, allowing them to eliminate major threats to their power. They quickly built large and powerful military and secret police forces they could then use to enforce their rule.

Ruling Russia

The interwar dictatorship in Russia moved through two main phases. The first period lasted from 1917 to 1928 and was dominated by the Bolshevik Party. Although Lenin was the most influential figure, there was still some party debate and, after he died in 1924, other leading figures had to fight to see their preferred policies implemented. Still, the party built an extremely powerful secret police force and Red Army, used terror extensively during the civil war, eliminated opposition parties and began to promote their ideals through propaganda and censorship. After 1921 there was very little opportunity for alternative

groups to challenge the Bolshevik Party for control of Russia, even though the party remained paranoid that opposition lay hidden.

The second period of the dictatorship began when Stalin emerged as the leader of the party in 1928. Stalin was convinced that a new major war was looming and that Russia needed to be fully prepared with an expanded economy and a large and modern military. It was also an opportunity to try to realise his ideological vision for the USSR as a classless society founded on a modern, industrial economy. From the late 1920s Stalin took several steps towards these goals including:

- turning away from the NEP and implementing far more radical economic policies
- constructing a **cult of personality** during the 1930s that presented Stalin as the heir to Lenin and an all-knowing leader who could steer Russia toward greatness
- unleashing waves of terror within the party during 1936–38 to eliminate anyone who disagreed with his vision; many leading Communist Party figures were convicted during a series of show trials and executed soon after
- using terror against the broader society to eliminate anyone who might pose a threat should a war break out; between 1936 and 1938 about 1.5 million citizens were arrested
- expanding prison camps in Russia, which became known as ‘gulags’ in 1930. Between 1934 and 1941, for example, 4.84 million people were sentenced to serve in the gulags (though many of these were regular criminals). They became one of the most iconic symbols of Stalin’s ruthless dictatorship.
- making more extensive use of propaganda, such as posters, films and other media. This propaganda promoted the greatness of the USSR and its achievements, but it also tried to communicate values such as healthy living and community responsibility. Under Stalin, the USSR also made significant attempts to convince the world that it was a utopian state. For example, during the 1930s it published a magazine, *The USSR in Construction*, in several major languages. The magazine promoted the rapid economic development of the USSR, the achievements of its people and its cutting-edge technology. The aim was to deflect international criticism of the USSR and convince the world that communism was a superior system.

By the time Russia joined World War II in 1941, Stalin had become far more powerful than Lenin had ever been, and he had also violently eliminated almost all other leading communists who posed a real or imagined threat to his rule. The interwar dictatorship in Russia provides a good reminder that dictatorships are rarely static, rather they evolve over time depending on how they are managed and what major developments take place in the world over the course of their rule.

Economy

When the Bolsheviks took power in 1917 they promised to make life better for the Russian people. Based on their interpretation of Marxism, they wanted to destroy the power and privilege of the wealthy classes and improve the living standards of the workers and peasants. They were also committed to economic planning in which the government guided the economy to prevent individual businesses becoming too wealthy or powerful. In their view, economic planning would create a more stable and productive economy that was run in the interests of everyone, rather than the wealthy few. To do this, the Bolsheviks implemented several important reforms, including:

cult of personality

an exaggerated and glorified public image used to inspire citizens to support a political leader; they are usually represented as a wise, gifted and generous leader with a special ability to lead the people towards a greater future

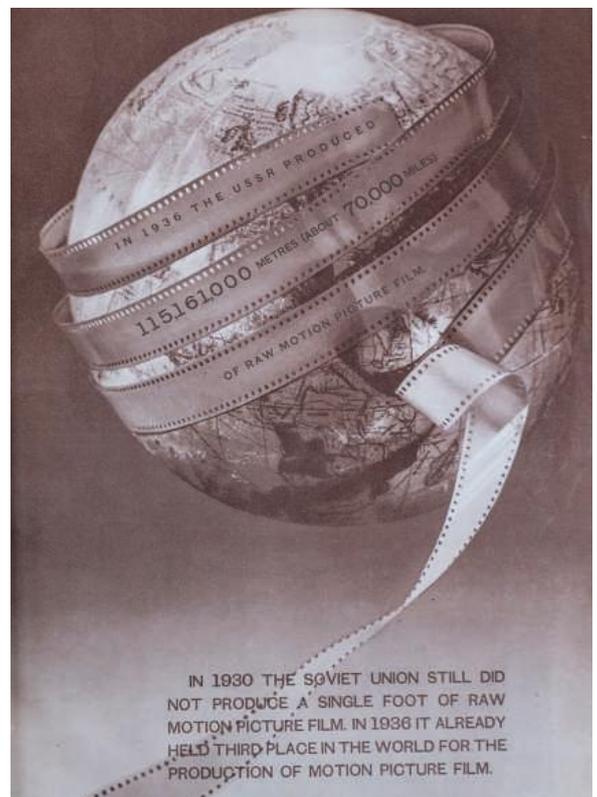


FIGURE 2.11 A page from the English-language version of the propaganda magazine *The USSR in Construction* published during the 1930s. In this edition propagandists boasted about the major developments in the Soviet film industry.

- nationalising all the major banks and industries in Russia so that they controlled the 'commanding heights' of the economy
- establishing *Vesenkha* (Supreme Council of National Economy) to guide economic planning and management and steer Russia towards a communist future. It was given power to confiscate land, machinery and other resources to achieve its goals.

During the period of the NEP (1921–28) some controls over the economy were relaxed, but once Joseph Stalin had emerged as Lenin's successor in 1928, much more intensive restrictions were imposed. Stalin introduced two main economic policies in 1928 that rapidly changed the economy: forced collectivisation of agriculture and Five-Year Plans.

Collectivisation of agriculture involved turning millions of small, private farms into large, state-owned farms. The aim was to boost production by using new technology such as motor-driven tractors and fertilisers while reducing the number of workers required in agriculture. The process was violent, and in some cases involved use of the Red Army and the secret police to put down major rebellions. By 1941, just under 99 per cent of agriculture in Russia had been collectivised. Historians estimate that there were up to 5.5 million deaths caused by famine associated with collectivisation. So brutal was the process in Ukraine, the experiences are considered by many historians to be genocidal, though this is a matter of debate.

The Five-Year Plans began in 1928 and guided the USSR's economy until 1941. The plans set ambitious targets for industries to ensure rapid growth in all areas such as mining, steel production and manufacturing. In reality the plans were chaotic and the life of workers worsened as they worked long hours for low pay. Those who slowed down could be harshly punished and even accused of 'wrecking', which could result in a gulag prison sentence or worse.



FIGURE 2.12 Russian men and women laying railway tracks in Petrograd in 1922. The Bolsheviks, at least initially, promoted the idea of equality between the sexes.

Society and culture

The Bolsheviks immediately began trying to remake Russian society and were committed to a **cultural revolution** as well as a political and economic revolution. Primarily, the Bolsheviks wanted to create a new society and culture with supposedly communist values of collective effort, self-discipline and community-mindedness. They also wanted a secular society free of religion (which many communists believed to be an obstacle to human development) and some Bolsheviks believed that family traditions could be revolutionised. The Bolsheviks used propaganda to promote new values and attacked the Orthodox Church, Russia's most popular religious organisation, by arresting priests and confiscating church property.

In the second phase of the interwar dictatorship in Russia (Stalin's rule), many of these trends continued, but Stalin was also more conservative about social and cultural matters. During the 1920s, for example, the Communist Party had implemented progressive reforms making divorce and abortions easier for women and making the Russian education system more experimental. In the 1930s Stalin reversed these and introduced new laws that made divorce and abortion much more difficult and also pushed the school system in a more traditional direction by focusing on exams and technical skills aimed at preparing people for work in the USSR's expanding industrial system.

Stalin also restricted cultural expression in the Soviet Union out of fear that nationalism may threaten the stability of the regime. Schools had to be run in the Russian language and leading figures of many ethnic minorities were targeted during the terror. Art was also carefully censored under Stalin and all artists had to conform to the ideals of 'socialist realism' (art that promoted the ideals of the revolution and could be understood by everyday people). Artists were regularly arrested and some chose to flee the Soviet Union rather than conform to the regime's demands.

Stalin focused great attention on youth in the Soviet Union. *Komsomol*, the communist youth organisation, provided services and facilities for young people and promoted healthy living. It also provided an opportunity for the dictatorship to indoctrinate youth into communist ideology and many of the dictatorship's most enthusiastic supporters by the late 1930s were young people who had participated in Komsomol.

Stalin's rule did bring about some positive changes in the 1930s but these often only benefited a small group. For example, the government expanded health care and the education systems, and built new cinemas and sporting complexes. For the average citizen, however, life remained extremely hard. Shortages were common, working conditions were often unsafe and the threat of terror became more present, especially in the late 1930s.

The Russian dictatorship and the wider world

Compared to the interwar dictatorships in Italy and Japan, the interwar dictatorship in the Soviet Union was the only dictatorship that possessed a genuinely **internationalist** outlook. Italy and Japan both became more nationalist during the 1930s whereas the USSR continued to look for opportunities to spread communism around the world, although they were not very successful in this pursuit.

The internationalism promoted by the interwar dictatorship in the USSR clashed in important ways with the version promoted by the League of Nations. Where the League of Nations wanted nations to cooperate in international decision-making, the Soviets wanted to destroy global capitalism and unite the workers of the world. The most radical Bolsheviks believed that nations would eventually cease to exist and instead be replaced by a global community of workers fighting for the common good.

Nevertheless, because the Soviet Union was isolated as the only communist power and it had to industrialise, it could not always aggressively push for revolution in other parts of the world. In the 1920s the Soviet Union cooperated with Germany since both were treated as pariah states in Europe. From the mid-1930s the USSR also tried to develop some alliances with France and Britain as a precaution against Nazi Germany. In 1934 the USSR even

cultural revolution

an attempt to dramatically overhaul a nation's traditions and values

internationalist

an outlook that aims to bring about a change in the global order rather than focusing on the interests of one specific nation

joined the League of Nations to try to contribute to collective security, but it could never overcome the fact that major powers, such as Britain and France, regarded it with distrust. As a result, the USSR signed a non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany in 1939.

World War II (1939–45) destroyed the dictatorships in Italy, Germany and Japan. By the end of 1945 only the dictatorship in Russia remained in power. In fact, Stalin emerged from the war in an even more powerful position because he used the victory over Nazism to boost his cult of personality. Stalin remains one of Russia’s most popular political leaders of all time, mainly because he played an important role in defeating Nazi Germany.

Source Study 2.3 Features of the dictatorship in Russia

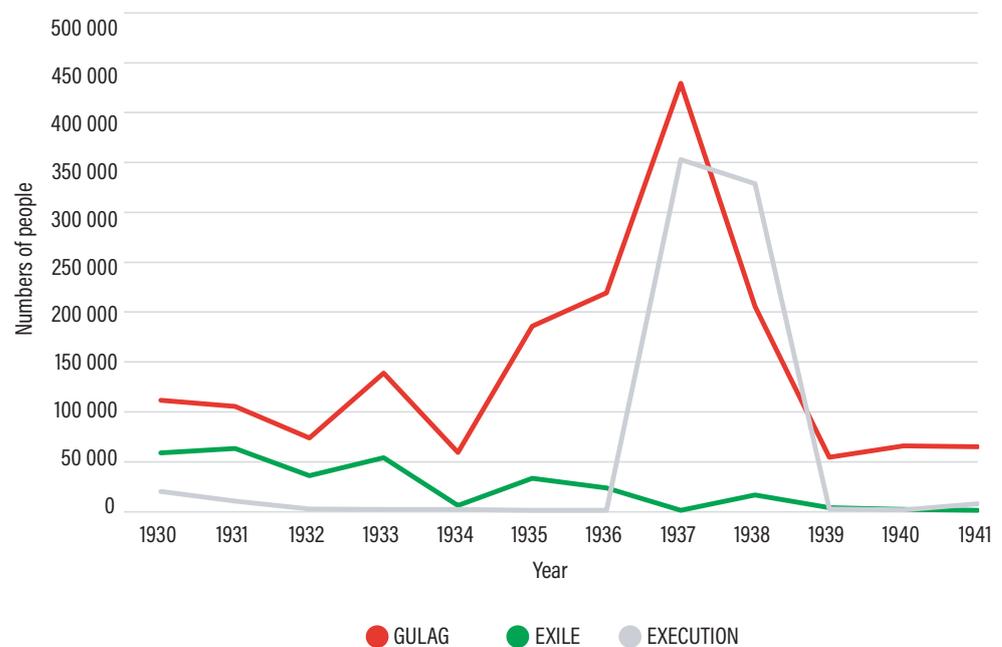
Source A: An extract from a speech made by Stalin to industrial managers in February 1931 during the first Five-Year Plan

It is sometimes asked whether it is not possible to slow down the tempo [of economic transformation] somewhat, to put a check on the movement. No, comrades, it is not possible! The tempo must not be reduced! On the contrary, we must increase it as much as is within our powers and possibilities. This is dictated to us by our obligations to the workers and peasants of the USSR. This is dictated to us by our obligations to the working class of the whole world ...

We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or we shall be crushed.

J Stalin, *The Problems of Leninism*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1954, pp 455–456.

Source B: Terror in the USSR, 1930–41



J Dallimore and Blackman, *Russia and the USSR, 1917–41*, HTANSW, 2020.

FIGURE 2.13 Numbers sent to the gulag, exiled and executed in the USSR, 1930–41

Source C: 'The double-crosser', published in 1930



FIGURE 2.14 Pavel P Sokolov-Skalia, 'The double-crosser', 1930

Source D: 'Thanks to beloved Stalin for our happy childhood', 1936



FIGURE 2.15 V Govorkov, 'Thanks to beloved Stalin for our happy childhood', 1936

Questions

1. What insights does Source A provide into the aims of Stalin's dictatorship in the interwar period?
2. What are the values and limitations of Source B for a historian studying the interwar dictatorship in Russia?
3. Compare the value of Sources C and D for a historian studying the interwar dictatorship in Russia.
4. Using any two of the sources, describe the interwar dictatorship in Russia.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe the difference between the nature of the dictatorship under Lenin and Stalin.
2. Summarise the factors contributing to the establishment of Stalin's form of dictatorship.
3. List the changes implemented during Stalin's Soviet Union leading up to World War II and rank them by significance.
4. Explain the nature of the Soviet Union's relationship with the wider world.

The Italian dictatorship

The second major dictatorship that developed after World War I emerged in Italy. This was led by Benito Mussolini, the Fascist leader who promoted a different vision of modernity and society than that promoted by the communists in Russia.

Background to dictatorship

During the 1860s the Italian states unified into a single independent nation called the Kingdom of Italy. The new nation was technically a constitutional monarchy. In the lead-up to World War I, however, there were clear limits to the Kingdom of Italy's democratic roots. Its constitution was adopted from that of the Kingdom of Sardinia, which had been updated in 1848. This gave the Italian monarch the power to appoint a prime minister if no political party won an absolute majority in elections (which often occurred) and, until 1912, voting rights were restricted to a small portion of the Italian population.

Italy was also deeply divided. During the Industrial Revolution, northern Italy had modernised, developing large urban centres with factories and manufacturing, while the south remained largely agrarian. This created very different cultures in the two regions with the north more secular and the south remaining firmly Roman Catholic.

World War I proved to be a crucial turning point for Italy (see Table 2.6).

TABLE 2.6 The impact of World War I on Italy

Divisions over Italy's involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Italy was divided over whether it should participate in World War I. In 1915 politicians secretly agreed to join Britain, France and Russia against Germany and Austria-Hungary. Italy joined the Allies largely because of the promise in the Treaty of London (1915). According to the treaty, Italy would acquire land from Austria-Hungary after the war (South Tyrol, parts of Dalmatia and Albania).
Disappointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Italy did not make the expected major contribution to the outcome of the war. Italy's war effort was marked by inefficiency and poor military performance. Approximately 650 000 Italians died in the war, and another one million were casualties. Italy did not receive the promised land at the end of the war, and nationalists viewed this as unfair treatment.
Economic and social problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Italy took out large loans from their allies to pay for the war, but they struggled with repayment. At the end of the conflict, the Italian munitions industry collapsed, as did the value of the lira (Italy's currency). Italy's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell by more than 14% in 1919 and another 7.6% in 1920. By 1920 about two million Italians were unemployed.

Various groups promoting solutions to Italy's growing economic and social problems emerged in the period immediately after World War I. One of the first radical movements to gain popularity was led by the nationalist writer, Gabriele D'Annunzio, who gained a following of ex-soldiers and nationalists. In September 1919 D'Annunzio took over Fiume, a city designated to be part of Yugoslavia at the Paris Peace Conference, and proclaimed a regency with himself as *Il Duce* (The Leader). While the regency was overthrown by the Italian military in December 1920, D'Annunzio's political style, which included the use of the black shirt and **corporatism**, were later replicated by Benito Mussolini when he came to power. The political and economic model of corporatism is quite different to the modern business corporation: each corporation (typically including both workers and business owners) organises its own sector of the community, formulates policies and participates in political life as the representatives of that group.

corporatism

the organisation of politics based on large sectors of the community, such as agriculture and manufacturing

Political parties also vied for power following World War I. The largest and most popular party during the economic downturn following the war was that of the Italian socialists. They organised strikes and promoted the rights of Italian workers. In 1921 the Italian socialists split when Antonio Gramsci and other radical communists formed the Italian Communist Party. This division, however, only worked to damage the movement's influence in the longer term.

Other parties included the Catholic Popular Party and the Liberal Party. The most important new political movement was the Fascists, led by Benito Mussolini, who was a former socialist. At first the Fascists promoted radical ideas such as anti-monarchism, anti-clericalism and anti-capitalism. They also promoted their party as an alternative to liberalism and communism. Like D'Annunzio's movement before them, the Fascists also used the *squadristi* (commonly known as the Blackshirts) to intimidate their political opponents.

squadristi

the Fascist Party's paramilitary arm; they played an important role in destroying the Fascists' political opponents during the party's rise and Mussolini's regime once in power



FIGURE 2.16 During his political career Mussolini traversed the political spectrum. After World War I Mussolini drew together the disparate movements that became Italian Fascism.

Benito Mussolini

Benito Mussolini (1883–45), was the dictator of Italy from 1922 to 1943. Mussolini was born in Predappio in Italy in 1883. As he grew up his politics became more aligned with socialism and he eventually became a prominent member of the Italian socialist movement and edited one of their major newspapers. His views radically changed because of World War I and he became an outspoken nationalist. He served in the army during the war and then founded the Fascist movement in early 1919. Mussolini was handed power by the King of Italy in 1922 and he ruled until being overthrown in 1943. Rescued from the Allies by the Germans, Mussolini then led the Salò Republic, a German puppet government in northern Italy, until he was murdered by anti-Fascists in 1945.

The Fascist path to power

Mussolini and the Fascist Party benefited greatly from the social unrest in Italy following World War I. Their popularity increased dramatically after major strikes in Italy during May 1921. Before the protests, the Fascists had about 100 000 members but this increased to 300 000 within about 18 months. They won 35 seats in the Italian parliament in November 1921 and 50 the following year (though this was still not a majority). Mussolini also began to adjust his political message away from radical themes that criticised the monarchy and the Catholic church and began to emphasise a strong nationalist vision which widened the Fascists' audience and appeal.

The ideology of Italian Fascism drew on various influences, including traditional nationalism and non-Marxist socialism, and evolved during the 1920s and 30s as the Fascist Party tried to rule Italy. It was less coherent than the Marxist ideology adapted in the USSR under Lenin and Stalin, but its most important themes included:

- the leadership of a charismatic individual (Mussolini)
- glorification of Italy's ancient past and an emphasis on national rebirth
- open enthusiasm for violence and struggle (even war) as political tools
- rejection of liberal democracy and communism
- corporatist approach to the national economy
- territorial expansionism
- revolutionary nationalism.

Mussolini formally acquired power during a dramatic event known as the March on Rome which took place over 27 and 28 October 1922. Between 17 000 and 26 000 *squadristi* gathered in preparation for a march on the Italian capital to demand the resignation of Prime Minister Luigi Facta. In response, the Prime Minister tried to push King Victor Emmanuel III to impose martial law to shut down the Fascists, but the king refused and Facta resigned in protest, creating a major political crisis. On 30 October 1922, the King then invited Mussolini to form a new government. The next day Mussolini, at the age of 39, became Italy's youngest prime minister.

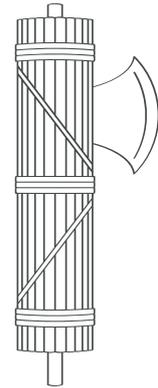


FIGURE 2.17 Fascism derived its name from the Latin term *fasces*, which referred to the bundle of rods, with an axe, that signified authority in ancient Rome.

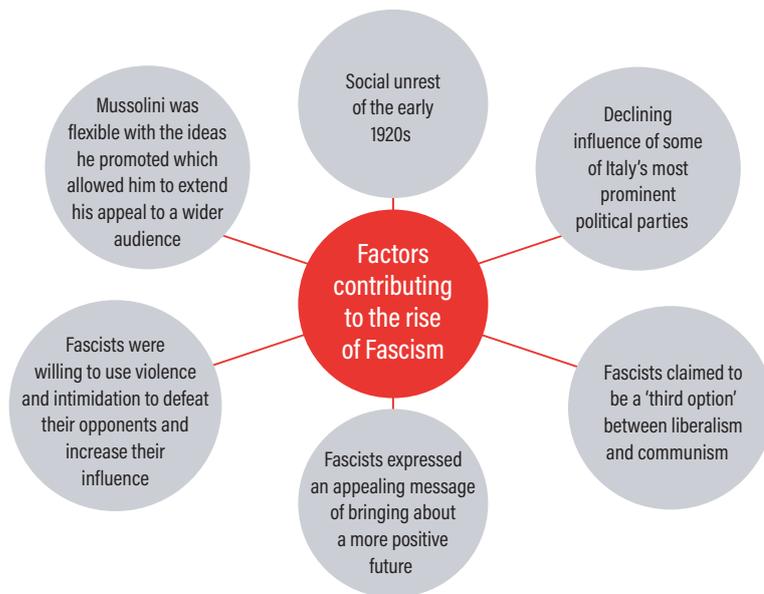


FIGURE 2.18 Factors contributing to the Fascists gaining power in Italy

As in Russia, Germany and Japan, Mussolini and the Fascists built a dictatorship over the course of many years. This was completed by changing laws, destroying political opposition and exploiting the unstable circumstances of the 1920s and 30s.

Source Study 2.4 Establishing the Italian dictatorship

Source A: Industrial disturbances in Italy 1913–20

TABLE 2.7 Urban and agricultural workers involved in industrial action between 1913 and 1920

Year	Urban workers involved in industrial action	Agricultural workers involved in industrial action
1913	385 000	80 000
1919	1 049 000	505 000
1920	1 268 000	1 046 000

Source B: Bruno Palamenghi recalls Mussolini's rise to power

Palamenghi was a soldier who joined the Fascist Party before the March on Rome and recorded the following in his diary in 1924.

Who can forget the state of degeneration to which the masses had been reduced in 1920-1921-1922? There were continuous strikes – the occupations of factories, plants, workshops and land were daily occurrences ... Property was not respected. The post and telegraph services worked according to the whim of the employees. The *barabba* gangs in Piedmont, the *teppa* in Lombardy, pick-pockets in Rome, *camorristi* in Naples, *mafiosi* in Sicily, spread terror in every known town ... and all this because of the weakness of the governments at the time ... Just a few months more of that regime, and this beautiful Italy of ours would have been finished, and would have become worse than Russia ... without the Fascist revolution – without the March on Rome – Italy would have fallen prey to bolshevism, anarchy, bankruptcy, poverty – and we would have become the laughing-stock and joke of the other nations, worse than we were before the war.

Quoted in C Duggan, *Fascist Voices: An Intimate History of Mussolini's Italy*, The Bodley Head, London, 2012, pp 71–72.

Source C: Extract from *Vittorio Emanuele Orlando*, by Spencer di Scala

Several reasons coming together in the post-war world explain the Fascist phenomenon in Europe, but the First World War and its tempestuous aftermath, including the Paris Peace Conference, were major triggers that helped Benito Mussolini overthrow the Liberal State and jump-start Fascism's march through the 20th century. The Italian parliamentary system had faults before the conflict, as did others, but Italy had made major progress toward a fully democratic system ... In short, Italy was a 'democracy in the making' during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the results of the First World War constituted a major shift in the course of the country's history.

S Di Scala, *Vittorio Emanuele Orlando*, Haus Publishing, London, 2010, pp 183–4.

Questions

1. What conclusions about Italian society in the early 1920s could a historian draw from Source A?
 2. Account for the perspective of Source B.
 3. Explain how Source A provides some evidence for the claims made in Source B.
 4. Explain the conditions that enabled the rise of a dictatorship in Italy in the interwar period. In your response, make specific use of Sources A, B and C.
-

Features of the dictatorship in Italy

When Mussolini became prime minister in 1922 his power was limited. He was forced to share power with other political parties and only four of the 14 ministers in Mussolini's first cabinet were members of the Fascist Party, but this number gradually increased. The Fascist Party was also notoriously disorganised and there were severe disagreements about how best to govern Italian society. Mussolini had to extend his power over both the Italian political system and his own party.

Consolidating power

A key development in Mussolini's consolidation of power was the Matteotti Affair of 1924. Giacomo Matteotti was an Italian socialist and outspoken critic of Mussolini who was kidnapped in June 1924 and later found to have been murdered by members of the Fascist

Party. The media escalated the event into a crisis and Mussolini came under widespread criticism. Mussolini took quick action to remove some tainted members of the Fascist Party from office and benefited from the mass walk-out of socialists from parliament who believed that their departure would force the king to bring Mussolini's government down. Mussolini publicly claimed responsibility for the actions of his party and appeared to be the more stable politician in the process. His reputation quickly recovered and he became even more politically powerful.

There were clear limits to Mussolini's control over Italian society. For example, he never controlled important institutions such as the monarchy, the Catholic Church or the army. This is often considered one of the key differences between the dictatorship in Russia and the dictatorship in Italy.

TABLE 2.8 Mussolini's expanding power in Italy from 1924 to 1925

Control over the Fascist Party	Control over Italian politics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before 1924, the Fascist Party was loosely organised. • Mussolini did not have clear control over its members and local groups acted fairly independently of Mussolini in Rome. • After the Matteotti Affair, Mussolini began to tighten his control over the Fascist Party. • Under Mussolini's leadership the Fascist Grand Council in Rome began to expel disloyal members from the regions and a more centralised party structure was enforced. • Approximately 60 000 party members considered the most radical were also purged to ensure no repeat of the Matteotti episode. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 1924, Mussolini also began to tighten his control over Italian politics. • Socialists who walked out of parliament during the Matteotti affair were not allowed to return and many leading figures from rival parties were arrested or forced into exile. • A new law passed in 1925 changed Italy's constitution to make the prime minister (Mussolini) directly responsible to the monarch instead of the parliament, which effectively raised Mussolini above the parliament. • In 1926 Mussolini was given the power to rule by decree.

Exercising power

Once in power, Mussolini worked hard to develop a cult of personality. He enjoyed and used media attention to create an image of himself as a multi-talented, hard-working visionary who was carrying Italy to greatness. Mussolini's dictatorship was both forward-looking and backward-looking at the same time. This characteristic of Italian fascism is apparent in its use of ancient Roman symbols, such as the *fasces* (bundles of rods that signified authority) and terminology, such as legions and centuries, while celebrating the creation of a new Fascist manhood and revolutionary rhetoric. It was also evident in the title he took for himself as leader: *Sua Eccellenza Benito Mussolini, Capo del Governo, Duce del Fascismo e Fondatore dell'Impero* – His Excellency Benito Mussolini, Head of Government, Leader of Fascism and Founder of the Empire.

Mussolini also established a propaganda department in 1934. In a similar manner to the propaganda of the dictatorship in Russia, the types of propaganda produced included posters, photographs, school textbooks, magazines, radio programs and public spectacles. Fascist propaganda emphasised national strength and unity, the benefits of Fascist rule and values such as the importance of family. In some ways the work of the propaganda department was limited by Italy's inferior media network. By the late 1930s Italian citizens only had 1.2 million radios, for example, whereas German citizens boasted 13.7 million, so German



FIGURE 2.19 Mussolini photographed working in the Italian wheat fields in the 1920s. Mussolini carefully constructed his cult of personality using staged photographs such as this one.

radio propaganda had much further reach. Nevertheless, in 1932 the Fascists established Radio Bari to broadcast into North Africa and the Middle East. It aimed to convince its audience of the benefits of Fascism.

In comparison with the communist dictatorship in Russia, there was less censorship of the media and artists in Italy under Mussolini. International travellers still regularly visited Italy and a small range of international newspapers were sold. Nevertheless, Mussolini,

with a background in journalism and newspaper publishing, took a keen interest in the media by providing daily briefings and regular columns. As Mussolini's dictatorship developed, censorship tightened and journalists had to register with an official association and their activity was monitored.

Mussolini used terror to eliminate opposition, but his rule was far less violent than the communist regime in the Soviet Union or the Nazi regime in Germany. There were purges of the Fascist Party, but these rarely resulted in executions as similar actions did under Stalin in the USSR. Mussolini set up a secret police force in 1926 called the Organisation for Vigilance and Repression of Anti-Fascism (OVRA). The OVRA was very active in Italian society but it did not create a large body of political prisoners or executions. Some estimates suggest that during Mussolini's entire rule, only 5000 people were sentenced to prison for political crimes and a further 10 000 exiled.

Importantly, even though Mussolini developed a dominant position in Italy, he relied on many features of the existing

political system to rule. For example, he did not disband many of the traditional Italian bureaucracies, and large landowners continued to play an important role in the political process as they had done for decades.

Economy

Although Mussolini made important decisions as dictator to reshape the Italian economy, he never took complete control of the economy in the way the communists in the USSR did. For example, the Italian Fascists never nationalised industry or collectivised agriculture, nor did they create a sweeping economic plan. Major businesses continued to operate and traditional landowners remained a powerful influence. The independence of Italy's trade unions was, however, undermined in an attempt to ensure that strikes were limited.

The Fascists tried to organise the economy according to corporatist principles. They claimed that this was neither communism nor capitalism but a third alternative to economic organisation. The *Rocco Law* (1926) divided Italy's economy into seven main areas, including industry, agriculture and banking, and set out new rules for both employees and employers. In 1934 this was expanded to 22 major corporations.

Mussolini initiated a range of prestige projects to fit with the message of national rebirth projected by the Fascists. They organised the excavation of the ancient Roman Forum and constructed a large avenue in Rome for parades and spectacles. Other major projects included a campaign to drain the Pontine swamps and establish agricultural lands in their place. At its peak, more than 120 000 people were engaged to build the channels and canals.

Society and culture

Similar trends were evident in the way Mussolini's dictatorship affected Italian society and culture. While Mussolini claimed that his regime wanted to create a 'new man', in many areas the Fascist's social and cultural policies were quite conservative. Even in areas in which they did make a conscious effort to bring about change, their success was usually limited.



FIGURE 2.20 A mosaic paving at the former *Foro Mussolini* (Forum of Mussolini), celebrating *Il Duce*, the Leader, Mussolini.

TABLE 2.9 An outline of Mussolini's approach to religion, women and youth

Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mussolini was critical of religion and the Catholic Church before coming to power, but moved away from harsh public criticism after becoming prime minister. • An important decision of Mussolini's first decade in power was the Lateran Accords (1929), which made Catholicism the official religion of Italy and gave territory to the Vatican. • The Lateran Accords resolved longstanding tensions between the Catholic Church and the Italian government, and demonstrated Mussolini's pragmatism. • This contrasts with the communists in the USSR who openly attacked the Orthodox Church as they attempted to remake society.
Women and family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mussolini introduced conservative laws regarding women and the family, mostly to boost the Italian population – the ultimate aim was to increase the population from 40 million to 60 million people by 1950. • The <i>Wages Law</i> of 1927 meant that women could only earn up to 50 per cent of men's wages (to discourage too much time spent at work). • Adultery became a punishable offence. • Most historians agree that Mussolini's policies regarding women had mixed success, at best. For example, the Italian birth rate actually declined (from 1.17 million births to just over 960 000) between 1922 and 1936.
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 1926 the Fascists organised several youth groups into the <i>Opera Nazionale Balilla</i> (ONB). Like the Komsomol in the USSR, the ONB organisations promoted healthy living through exercise and tried to instil Fascist values from an early age. • About 60 per cent of Italian youths participated in these organisations. • ONB organisations were more popular in towns and cities than in the country.

One of the clearest attempts made by Mussolini's regime to mobilise Italian society was the *Dopolavoro* (OND). This was initially established in 1925 and was designed to organise and promote a range of social and cultural activities to involve the entire population. These activities were related to work, sport, recreation and services such as libraries. By 1940, about 20 million Italians were involved in activities organised by the *Dopolavoro*.

A radical turn?

Historians generally agree that Mussolini's dictatorship evolved. After being handed power in 1922 he began to rule cautiously but became willing to implement more radical policies from the mid-1920s onwards. He became more aggressive after the Great Depression and as he moved closer to an alliance with the Nazi Party in Germany during the mid-1930s.

The clearest example of this so-called radical turn was a set of new race laws that were implemented and based on the *Manifesto of Race* (*Manifesto della razza*) in July 1938. Anti-Semitism was a relatively minor problem in Italy during the 1920s and early 1930s; Mussolini had publicly defended Italy's Jewish population on various occasions and Jews were disproportionately represented in the Fascist Party. However, the new laws marked a clear change in policy. Foreign-born Jews who became Italian citizens after 1919 had their citizenship revoked and bans were introduced on hiring Jewish people in the civil service and military. Jewish writers and artists became targets of the regime, causing about 6000 Jewish citizens to flee Italy. These anti-Semitic policies were generally unpopular and widely seen as falling into line with the increasingly influential Nazi variety of fascism.



FIGURE 2.21 A sculpture of a boxer at the *Foro Mussolini*, now *Foro Italico*. Built between 1928 and 1938, the sculptures of athletes evoked the revival of the style of ancient Rome, a theme common in Italian Fascist rhetoric.



FIGURE 2.22 Mussolini (left) pictured with the dictator of Nazi Germany, Adolf Hitler, in Munich, Germany, 1940. As the alliance between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany drew closer, Mussolini began to experiment with more radical policies such as the new race laws implemented in the late 1930s.

The Italian dictatorship and the wider world

Under Mussolini, Italy pursued a foreign policy of expansion. This built on longstanding aims of the Italian government, but it was also an expression of one of the core ideals of Mussolini's dictatorship: to 'restore' the power and prestige of Italy and to build an Italian empire around the Mediterranean.

Historically, Italian governments wanted to expand their influence into territory around Italy and North Africa (to Italy's south). These areas were considered part of Italy's *Spazio Vitale* ('living space'). Many Italians also remained extremely critical of the small amount of land Italy was given after World War I and the government sought to redress this through territorial expansion. Mussolini often referred to the historic conquests of the Roman Empire and aimed to restore some of that 'greatness' to Italy in the 1920s and 30s. Italy's territorial expansion under Mussolini was motivated by a desire to rejuvenate the Fascist revolution in Italy. By the mid-1930s the revolution was beginning to stagnate and Mussolini tried to use territorial expansion as a way of generating renewed enthusiasm for Fascist rule.

Key developments in Italy's foreign policy under Mussolini included:

- sponsorship of numerous fascist movements around the world, including the early Nazi Party in Germany and the British Union of Fascists
- the invasion of Ethiopia (Abyssinia) in October 1935
- intervention in the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) in support of the right-wing nationalist forces led by General Francisco Franco
- a growing alliance with Nazi Germany during the 1930s.

Mussolini tried to pursue close relations with Germany from the 1920s with the aim of isolating France. Once Hitler and the Nazis came to power in the early 1930s, Mussolini made greater efforts to befriend Germany and his policies were clearly influenced by many of Hitler's ideas. Italian-German relations were sometimes unstable but they moved closer together during the mid- to late-1930s and were formalised in May 1939 with the Pact of Steel and again in September 1940 when Italy, Germany and Japan signed the Tripartite Pact.

International opinion of Italy at the time was quite critical and very few observers believed that Italy would make a good ally if war broke out – even Hitler was of this general opinion. Nevertheless, Italy joined Germany in World War II on 10 June 1940.

Source Study 2.5 Features of the Italian dictatorship

Source A: Extract from Mussolini's *Fascism: Doctrine and Institutions* (1935)

Anti-individualistic, the Fascist conception of life stresses the importance of the State and accepts the individual only insofar as his interests coincide with the State ... The Fascist conception of the State is all-embracing; outside of it no human or spiritual values can exist ... thus understood, Fascism is totalitarian.

B Mussolini, *Fascism: Doctrine and Institutions*, Howard Vertig, New York, 1935, p 4.

Source B: A photograph of Mussolini rewarding a member of Balilla (year unknown)



FIGURE 2.23

Source C: An extract from the creed of the Balilla (the Fascist youth organisation for 8–13 year olds)

I believe in Rome the Eternal, the mother of my country, and in Italy, her eldest daughter ... who suffered through the barbarian invasions, was crucified and buried, who descended to the grave, and was raised from the dead in the nineteenth century, who ascended into heaven in her glory in 1918 and 1922 and who is seated on the right hand of her mother Rome ... I believe in the genius of Mussolini, in our Holy Father Fascism ... and in the resurrection of the Empire.

C Leeds, *Italy under Mussolini*, Wayland, London, 1972, p 63.

Source D: The first edition of *Fascism: Facts about Fascist Italy*

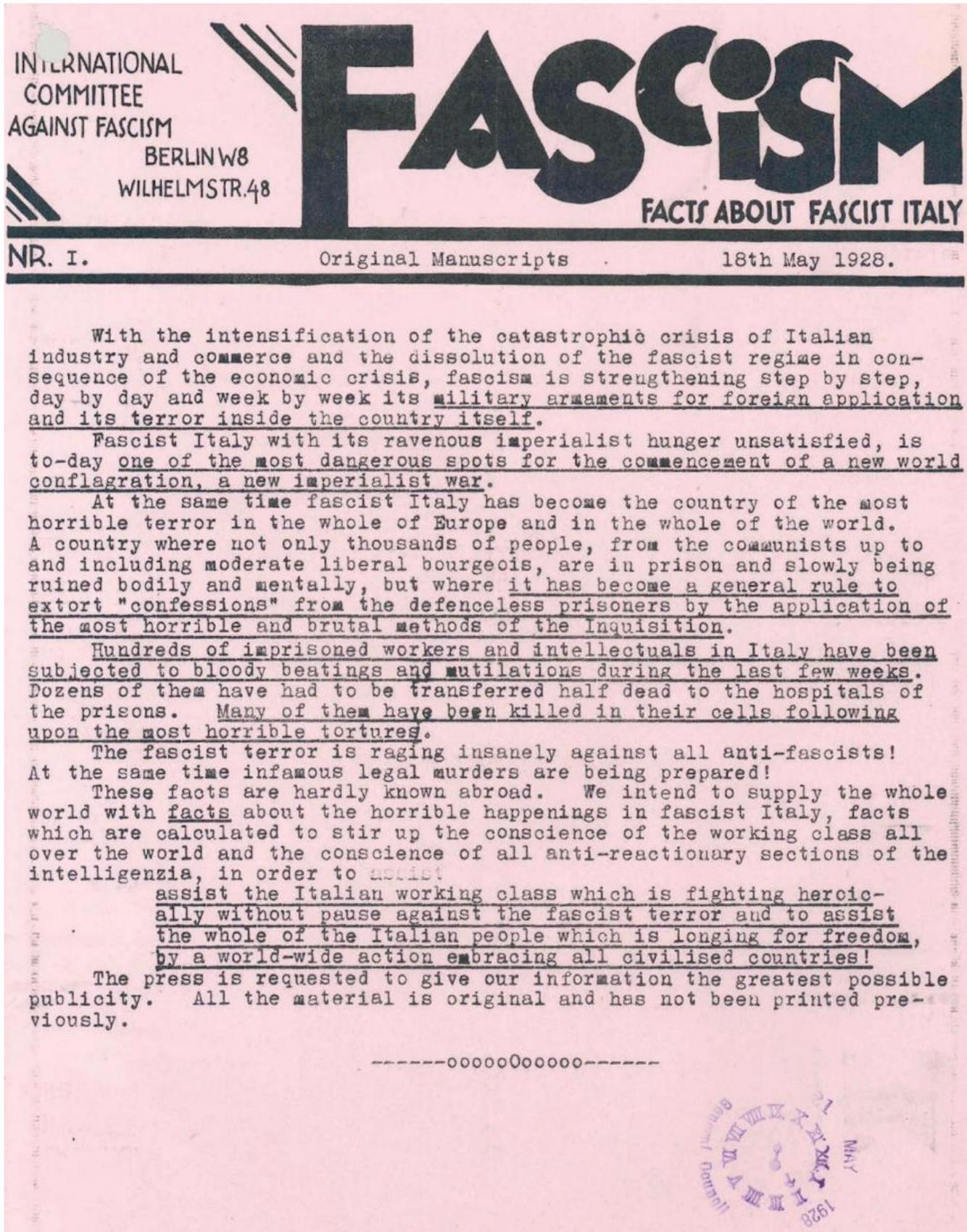


FIGURE 2.24 The first edition of *Fascism: Facts about Fascist Italy* was published by the International Committee Against Fascism, based in Berlin, in May 1928.

Source E: Extract from a 1929 speech by Francesco Nitti

Soon after the speech, Nitti, an outspoken critic of Mussolini, was forced to leave Italy but returned after World War II.

The ignoble phenomenon of a dictatorship is a shameful blot on European civilization. Reactionary minds, which are indignant at red dictatorships, have only sympathy with 'white' dictatorships, which are equally, if not more bloodthirsty, no less brutal and unjustified by any ideal, even a false one.

The Fascist government abolished in Italy every safeguard of the individual and every liberty. No free man can live in Italy, and an immoral law prevents Italians from going to a foreign country on pain of punishment. Italy is a prison where life has become intolerable. Everything is artificial – artificial finance – artificial exchange – artificial public economy – artificial order – artificial calm.

Without a free parliament, a free press, a free opinion and a true democracy, there will never be peace.

F Nitti, Speech, 1929, <https://spartacus-educational.com/2WWnitti.htm>, accessed 28 April 2021.

Questions

1. According to Mussolini in the extract provided in Source A, what is a key aim of Fascism?
2. Closely examine Source B.
 - a. Describe what is depicted.
 - b. How might a historian use this source when studying the interwar dictatorship in Italy?
3. What ideas are promoted in the extract of the creed of Balilla provided in Source C?
4. Closely examine Source D.
 - a. What impression of Fascist Italy does this document provide?
 - b. What problems might a historian have with using this source as evidence of the nature of the interwar dictatorship in Italy?
5. Assess the value of Source E to a historian studying the interwar dictatorship in Italy.
6. Using any three of the sources from this section, describe the features of the dictatorship that emerged in Italy after World War I.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Identify three factors contributing to the Fascist seizure of power in Italy.
 2. Prepare an annotated timeline of the establishment of the Fascist dictatorship in Italy.
 3. Evaluate Mussolini as a political leader.
 4. Describe four impacts of Mussolini's dictatorship on Italian society.
-

The Japanese dictatorship

The regime that emerged in Japan in the 1930s is more difficult to categorise than the Russian and Italian dictatorships already explored. Where both of the European dictatorships were overseen by powerful parties led by prominent individuals, the Japanese dictatorship was overseen by the military and there was no single leader in power for an extended period. Because of these differences, some historians would even question whether it is useful to call the Japanese regime of the 1930s a dictatorship. Using the terms of Stephen J. Lee introduced earlier, the Japanese regime could not be considered 'totalitarian' but 'authoritarian' at best.

Background to dictatorship in Japan

The history of Japan in the 19th and 20th centuries includes many remarkable achievements. Before 1868 Japan had not begun to rapidly modernise as many of the European nations had. During the period that followed (generally described as the Meiji period), Japan's economy underwent dramatic change and by the beginning of the 20th century Japan had become one of the world's great powers. This economic expansion increased Japan's military capacity, clearly demonstrated in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05 in which the small island nation of Japan became the first Asian power to defeat a European empire in the modern era.



FIGURE 2.25 Japan in the 19th and 20th centuries

Taishō period (1912–26)

The Meiji period ended when a new emperor, Taishō, took the throne in 1912. During his rule Japan acquired new territories through conquest and diplomacy. In the Taishō period Japan was also involved in World War I as an ally of Britain, but the period following the war included several major crises.

- In 1918 a series of 'rice riots' broke out, involving more than one million people. The price of rice rapidly increased and strained many people's standard of living. In some areas, government troops had to be used to put down the riots.
- In Japanese-controlled Korea, demonstrations for independence broke out in 1919 and led to several attempted uprisings.
- In September 1923 the Great Kantō Earthquake struck Japan, killing more than 100 000 people and causing severe damage in Tokyo and other cities, mainly from the fires that broke out. Rumours spread that the fires had been deliberately started by Koreans and a wave of violence followed. Korean people living in Japan were targeted in a series of 'pogroms', killing between 2500 and 6000 people.

- Communist ideas also became popular in parts of Japan, especially following the Russian Revolution of 1917 – the Japanese Communist Party was officially established in 1922. The Japanese government implemented the Peace Preservation Law in 1925, restricting public discussion of political issues with the specific aim to limit the influence of communist ideas in Japan. According to economic historian Takafusa Nakamura, this law was ‘consistently used until the end of World War II to suppress left-wing political activity [in Japan]’.⁵
- The peace settlements that ended World War I also left many Japanese leaders unsatisfied. Japan wanted to take over Germany’s former possessions in Shandong (China) but was denied and only given control over some of Germany’s former possessions in the Pacific islands.
- Japan was humiliated again at the Washington Naval Conference in 1921–22 when Britain and the United States (Japan’s allies during the war) forced Japanese diplomats to accept strict limitations on the size of Japan’s naval fleet. Under the new arrangements, Japan was only allowed to build 60 per cent of the naval capacity of Britain and the United States. If, for example, Britain had 10 battleships and the United States also had 10, Japan was only allowed to maintain six.

The Japanese political system remained unstable because the constitution divided power between several influential groups including the Emperor, the Diet (parliament) and military leaders who remained mostly independent from the government. At the same time, some advances towards greater democracy in Japan were made during the Taishō period. The political parties increased their influence and most of the Japanese governments in power between 1918 and 1932 were led by members of the most influential political parties. In response to long-term public pressure, a new universal suffrage law was introduced in 1925 which increased the voting population by 400 per cent.

Shōwa period (1926–89)

A new period of Japanese history began when Emperor Hirohito (Emperor Shōwa) took the throne in 1926. Many of the same trends that emerged during the Taishō period carried over into the Shōwa period. Japan continued to experiment with democracy and many politicians also tried to find ways to bring Japan into the international system. The Great Depression struck Japan particularly hard, however, and presented major challenges for the government (see below). Tensions grew and radical ideas became more popular. There were also several political assassinations (and more unsuccessful attempts) and a failed army **coup** in March 1931 indicating a growing crisis in Japanese politics.

During the Shōwa period, a range of security concerns contributed to challenges faced by Japanese governments, including:

- a second naval conference convened in London in 1930 frustrated some Japanese politicians and military leaders who wanted to increase Japan’s capacity to build vessels
- concern from many Japanese leaders when the nationalist Chiang Kai-Shek took power in China in 1928 and quickly consolidated control across much of the population, that their economic interests in China would be threatened and that Japan itself may become endangered by a united China under the leadership of aggressive nationalists
- in 1928 Stalin launched the all-out drive to modernise the Soviet Union’s economy. This worried Japanese observers who knew that growing economic power would be matched by an increase in the USSR’s military might.

Path to power

Amid this atmosphere of crisis and insecurity, three specific factors destroyed Japan’s slow move towards democracy: the Great Depression, the Manchurian Incident and right-wing terrorism.

coup

a rapid takeover of power usually by a group or party that does not have the support of the majority of the population



FIGURE 2.26 Emperor Hirohito (Emperor Shōwa) photographed during World War II. Hirohito ruled Japan from 1926 to 1989. He came to power as Japanese democracy was destroyed by militarist influences in the late 1920s and 1930s and led Japan through World War II.

TABLE 2.10 The destruction of Japan's brief experiment with democracy

The Great Depression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the Wall Street Crash in 1929, Japanese exports to the United States collapsed by 40 per cent and gross national product fell by 18 per cent; 40 per cent of the Japanese workforce was unemployed by 1932. • One traditionally successful silk-producing region that had previously made an average of about one million yen in profits each year only earned 200 000 yen in 1932. • Many political parties and politicians who had advocated moderate policies lost influence as more radical ideas gained popularity.
The Manchurian Incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After a long history of Japanese economic activity in the Chinese region of Manchuria, open hostilities broke out on 18 September 1931. • After part of the Japanese-owned South Manchurian Railway line was blown up, Japan's military force responsible for security in the region, the Kwantung Army, occupied the city of Mukden without direct approval from the government in Tokyo. They used the crisis to expand the military presence in Manchuria and clashed with Chinese forces. • A later inquiry by the League of Nations accused Japan of unnecessary aggression and Japan responded by leaving the League of Nations in March 1933.
Right-wing terrorism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As tensions and instability in Japan mounted, frustrated groups began to turn towards open violence. As early as 1921, Japanese Prime Minister Hara Takahashi was assassinated, but towards the late 1920s and into the 1930s these kinds of acts became more frequent. • There were attempts on the lives of other prime ministers and even Emperor Hirohito in 1932. Extremist groups such as the Black Sea Society, the Cherry Blossom Society and the League of Blood formed and several coups were plotted – some came close to succeeding. • Most importantly, in an event known as the 15 May Incident, Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi was assassinated and this marked an end to the dominant role of political parties in Japanese government until the end of World War II.

Source Study 2.6 Establishing the Japanese dictatorship

Source A: Extract from Prince Konoe Fumimaro's 'Down with Anglo-American Peace Principles', 1918

Konoe was an outspoken critic of the Paris Peace Conference.

Anglo-American pacifism has nothing to do with justice or humanity but is a do-nothing-to-rock-the-boat formula in favour of those trying to maintain the status quo. Yet apologists in this country, intoxicated with the rhetoric of their declarations, take peace as such to be humane; any consideration of our international position ought rather to make people in Japan as well as in Germany, call for breaking up the status quo; but in an excess of enthusiasm for Anglo-American-style peace-making, they greet the League of Nations as though it were tidings from on high, whilst in fact such an attitude amounts to hateful servility, and in the light of justice and humanity it should be seen as the noxious thing it is.

Quoted in I. Nish (ed.), *Anglo-Japanese Alienation: 1919-1952: Papers of the Anglo-Japanese Conference on the History of the Second World War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1982, p 77.

Source B: The value of Japan's exports between 1919 and 1936

T Nakamura and K Odaka (eds), *Economic History of Japan 1914–1955: A Dual Structure*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p 72.

FIGURE 2.27

Questions

1. What ideas does Prince Konoé promote in Source A?
2. How might Source A be useful to a historian studying the dictatorship that emerged in Japan in the interwar period?
3. What does Source B suggest about Japan's economy in the interwar period?
4. With explicit reference to Sources A and B, describe the conditions that enabled the rise of the dictatorship in Japan after World War I.

Features of the dictatorship in Japan

It is difficult to define a precise date or moment when Japan became a dictatorship in the interwar period because military power was gradually accrued – it was not seized in a dramatic event as in Russia in 1917 or a formal transfer of power as in Italy in 1922. Nevertheless, historian Stephen Large argues that the assassination of Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi on 15 May 1932 by a group of young naval officers with support from right-wing groups 'brought an end to party government in prewar Japan.'⁶ Even though their aim of provoking a declaration of martial law failed, from 1932 the military's influence within the government increased and five of the next 10 Japanese prime ministers were military leaders from the army or navy. Many of the other prime ministers were sympathetic to nationalist goals and more aggressive foreign policy.

TABLE 2.11 Government leaders in Japan 1932–44. Those shaded in red were high-ranking military officials.

Leader	Year	Background
Saito Makoto	1932–34	Civilian
Okada Keisuke	1934–36	Admiral (navy)
Hirota Koki	1936–37	Civilian
Hayashi Senjuro	1937	General (army)
Konoe Fumimaro	1937–39	Civilian
Hiranuma Kiichiro	1939	Civilian
Abe Nobuyuki	1939–40	General (army)
Yonai Mitsumasa	1940	Admiral (navy)
Konoe Fumimaro	1940–41	Civilian
Hideki Tojo	1941–44	Chief of Staff (army)

Consolidating power

The anti-democratic forces that dominated Japanese politics after 1932 used both domestic and international crises to justify their authoritarian control. They noted the growing tension in China and other parts of the Asia-Pacific as important security risks and pointed to the political environment in Japan as a threat to stability. This gave anti-democratic leaders greater influence among many Japanese elites who were concerned by the prospect of social division, revolution and an attack from an external power (most likely the Soviet Union, a powerful European nation or China). This message was remarkably persuasive and even many previously left-wing politicians and activists threw their support behind calls for greater national unity.

One further event helped the anti-democratic leaders consolidate their power in Japan. On 26 February 1936, approximately 1400 members of an extremist faction in the Japanese Army attempted to take control of Tokyo. They occupied the prime minister's residence and assassinated three officials. Emperor Hirohito was infuriated by the episode and ordered that loyal troops put down the uprising, which took nearly three days. The plot was ultimately foiled and most of its leaders sentenced to death, but it seemed to confirm the alarmist message that Japan's anti-democratic forces had grown and destroyed most of the remaining moderate voices in Japanese politics for the foreseeable future.

Tokkō (Special Higher Police)

a secret police unit established in Japan in 1911 to monitor political thought and help maintain social stability; originally designed to limit the influence of radical ideas such as communism

Kenpeitai (Military Police Corps)

a secret police unit of the Japanese army founded in 1881; it had a reputation for extreme brutality, especially in territories occupied by Japan, such as Korea

Exercising power

Under anti-democratic governments Japanese politics moved clearly to the right. Left-wing politicians, groups and intellectuals continued to be targeted and support for military imperialism increased. As military conflicts in the 1930s intensified, authoritarian rule in Japan was expanded, especially after the full-scale invasion of China in 1937. Military budgets were increased, the **Tokkō (Special Higher Police)** and **Kenpeitai (Military Police Corps)** became more active during the 1930s and Japan began to resemble a society mobilised for war. The Peace Preservation Law (1925) was used by the **Tokkō** to suppress opposition, ultimately leading to about 60–70 000 arrests. Importantly, political parties were not made illegal under anti-democratic rule until 1940, marking a clear difference between the dictatorships in Russia and Japan during the 1920s and 1930s.

Two of the most important individuals facilitating the growth of authoritarian government in Japan during the late 1930s were Konoe Fumimaro, prime minister from 1937 to 1939, and his successor, Hideki Tojo, prime minister from 1941 to 1944. In March 1938, Prime Minister Konoe introduced the *General Mobilization Law* which, according to Takafusa Nakamura:

... gave the government powers to control vast areas of life and business in Japan, from economic activity to working conditions and political debate. Control was to be exercised in all areas through imperial edicts, ministerial ordinances, and directives. The law closely resembled Nazi Germany's Enabling Act ...⁷

It is important to remember that even this law was debated in the Japanese Diet and openly opposed by many critics. In 1940 Konoe then established the New Order movement. The new system finally banned political parties and the government began to take more direct control of many features of Japanese society.

The features of the interwar dictatorship in Japan became most obvious when the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (IRAA) was established in 1940. This was set up with the purpose of helping to coordinate Japan's expanding war effort and began to implement many of the aims of Konoe's New Order. The IRAA finally banned political parties and gave the nationalists from the military even greater influence over Japanese politics.

Economic features

It is important that the interwar dictatorship slowly established in Japan is understood to be a militarist regime. It was led by individuals either from or sympathetic to Japanese nationalists who had an expansionist agenda. Their attempt to limit democracy in Japan was at least partly motivated by their desire to organise Japan effectively for **total war**, especially after the full-scale Japanese invasion of China in mid-1937, and extend Japanese influence in the Asia-Pacific region. Some leading figures were also influenced by the ideas of Italian Fascism and German Nazism.

In Japan, as in Italy, there were no Soviet-style economic plans implemented during the 1930s. From the mid-1930s, however, the government did exert more control over the Japanese economy as it moved closer to larger-scale war. In 1937, for example, the Cabinet Policy Bureau was created to help guide the Japanese economy. Most importantly, Prime Minister Konoe's government introduced the General Mobilisation Law in March 1938. Under this law workers could be assigned to specific industries to help boost war production and up to 75 per cent of government spending could be allocated to military-related industry.

Social and cultural features

Unlike the dictatorships in Russia and Italy, the Japanese interwar dictatorship did not oversee a dramatic or widespread attempt at cultural revolution. Instead, longer-term efforts to promote nationalist values and support for the Emperor were reinforced and extended.



FIGURE 2.28 Prince Konoe Fumimaro (1891–1945). Konoe was prime minister of Japan several times during the 1930s and was an influential figure in Japan's move toward dictatorship.

total war

a conflict in which all of a nation's resources are committed to victory; usually involving reorganisation of the economy and expanded government controls over society

It should be remembered, however, that until about 1940, the anti-democratic government in Japan did not completely stamp out alternative opinions. As the historian Elise Tipton argues: ‘The outbreak of war with China in 1937 accelerated the trend toward suppression policies, but there was still room for [personal] expression until 1940 and even later.’⁸ In short, compared to those living under the dictatorship in Russia, Japanese citizens remained comparatively free throughout most of the interwar period.

TABLE 2.12 Some key effects of the Japanese anti-democratic government’s policies on society

Censorship and propaganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media censorship was tightened and reporting often presented an exaggerated version of Japanese military performance in China. • Propaganda was used extensively and produced by many organisations, not just the government or the military. It included themes such as the military achievements of the Japanese army in China, the supposed benefits of Japanese occupation (in Manchuria), the importance of national unity and, like some of the propaganda from Russia and Italy, the attempt to convince the world that the Japanese political system and culture were to be admired and respected. • A particularly strong attempt was made to convince Americans that Japan was not a brutal imperial power but that they were bringing order to Asia through expansion.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Education also published the <i>Kokutai no hongji</i> (‘Cardinal Principles of the nation polity’) in 1937 which promoted worship of the emperor as a divine figure and national devotion. • These ideas were pushed out through the Japanese education system but were more like a revival of existing traditions rather than new ideas.

The Japanese dictatorship and the wider world

During the 1930s, anti-democratic governments steered Japan towards domination of the Asia-Pacific region. By the end of the 1930s, this vision had damaged Japan’s relationship with a range of foreign powers and placed the nation at real risk of a major war beyond China.

- The invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and then broader China in 1937 drew sharp international criticism.
- Japan left the League of Nations in 1933 but there were still many leading Japanese politicians who wanted to pursue friendly relations with powerful nations such as Britain and the United States to avoid a major war.
- As Japan moved closer to authoritarian rule it also began to move closer to right-wing dictatorships in Europe, including those in Germany and then Italy. This placed Japan in opposition to the Soviet Union. Japan signed a pact with Germany in 1936 that angered Soviet leaders and increased tensions between the two nations. There were several brief clashes between Soviet and Japanese troops during 1939 but they signed a non-aggression pact in 1940 because neither country could afford a major war at that stage.
- Japan also experienced a sharp downturn in its relationship with the United States during 1939 and 1940 as Japan continued to try to expand into the Asia-Pacific and the United States tried to contain them.

Anti-democratic governments in Japan had no master plan to impose their ideology on the world (as the communists did in Russia) but they certainly wanted to dominate the Asia-Pacific. These ambitions created tensions with the League of Nations and other powers that had an interest in the region (such as Britain, China, the Soviet Union and the United States) (see chapter 6).

Source Study 2.7 Features of the Japanese dictatorship

Source A: An extract from ‘Whither Goes Japan? Militarism, Communism, or Liberalism’

At present the militarists dominate the policies of Japan. The chiefs of the army and navy have the constitutional right of direct access to the Emperor, who is the commander-in-chief of the army and navy. Criticism of the military is regarded as lese-majeste [an offensive] against their divine head [the Emperor].

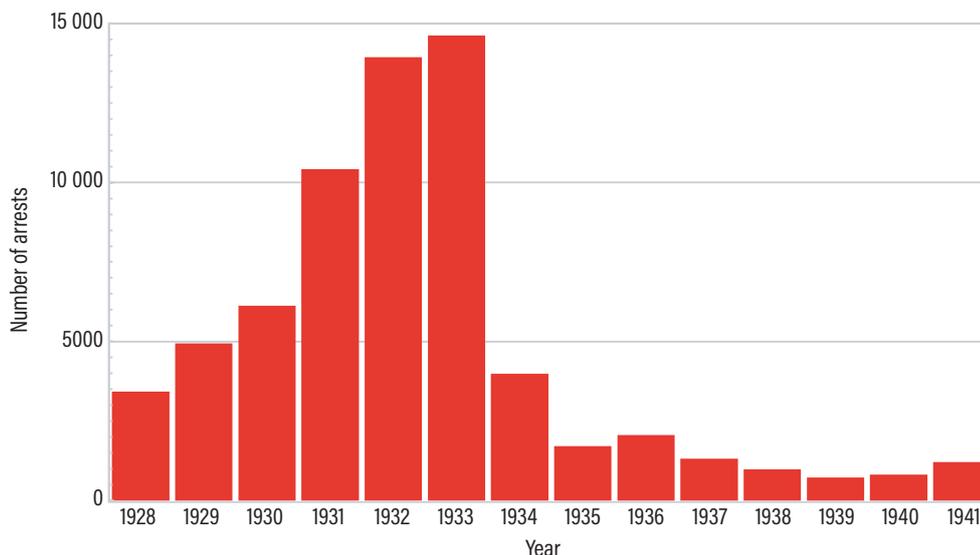
Thus the Premier and the rest of the Cabinet have no real control over ... the [army and navy] Ministers, who may at any time take independent action.

This anomaly in Government accounts for most of the variance between promise and fulfilment on the part of Japan during the last year. The representative of the civil Government of Japan on the League of Nations makes promises on behalf of his Government, which the militarist may ignore ...

The only check on the activities of the militarists lies in the fact that war is an expensive art. The power of the purse still rests with the political parties and they are all sturdy supporters of constitutional government.

Dr EJ Stuckey, ‘Whither Goes Japan? Militarism, Communism, or Liberalism’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, Sydney, 17 September 1932.

Source B: Arrests made by the Japanese *Tokkō* for alleged violations of the *Peace Preservation Law*, 1928–41



Compiled from Elise Tipton's *The Japanese Police State*, Bloomsbury, London, 2013.

*Most of those arrested were not convicted.

FIGURE 2.29

Source C: An extract from the *Kokutai no hongii*, 1937

Loyalty means to revere the emperor as [our] pivot and to follow him implicitly. By implicit obedience is meant casting ourselves aside and serving the emperor intently. To walk this Way of loyalty is the sole Way in which we subjects may 'live' and the fountainhead of all energy. Hence, offering our lives for the sake of the emperor does not mean so-called self-sacrifice but the casting aside of our little selves to live under his august grace and the enhancing of the genuine life of the people of a state.

From WT de Bary, C Gluck, A Tiedemann, (eds) *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 2nd edn, vol. 2, Columbia University Press, New York, 2005, p 975.

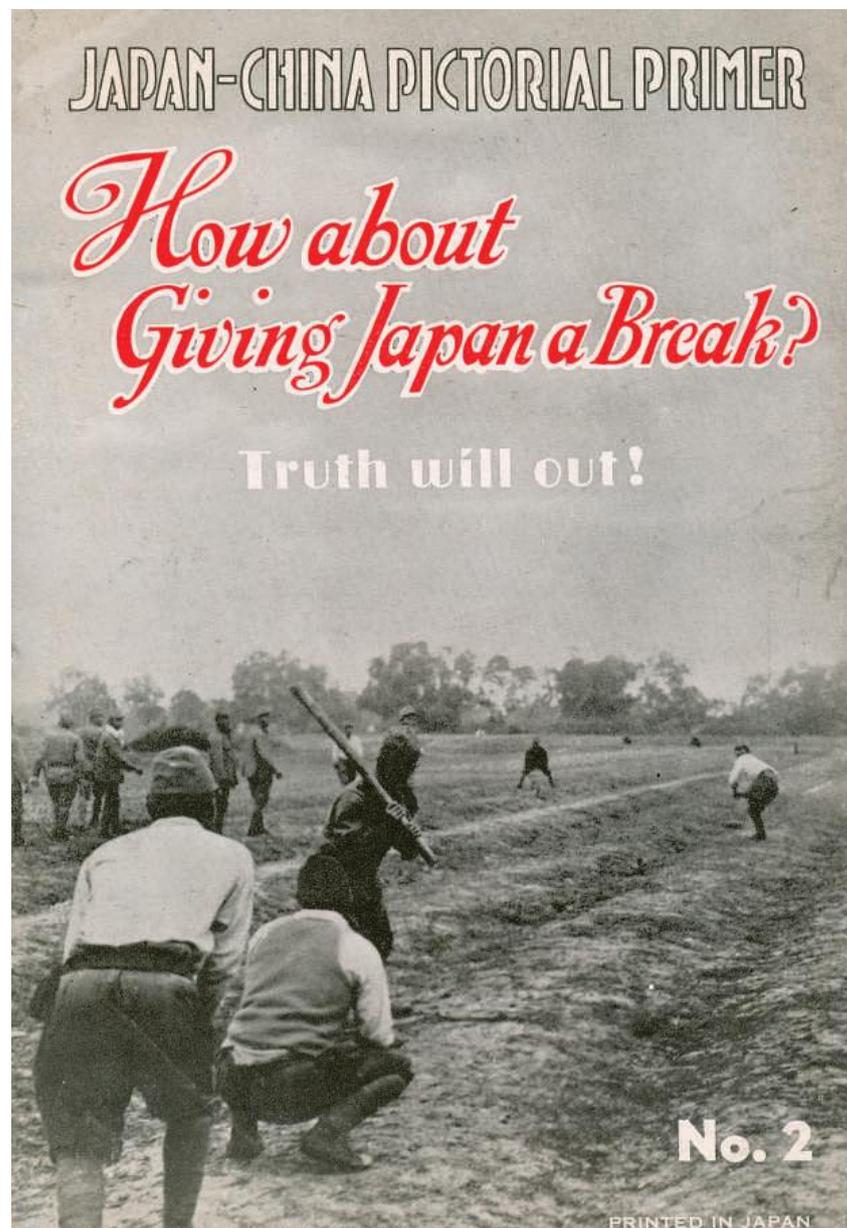
Source D: Cover of the *Japan-China Pictorial Primer*

FIGURE 2.30 *Japan-China Pictorial Primer* was a propaganda magazine aimed at a US audience. This magazine was one of many attempts to convince Americans that Japan's actions in China during the 1930s were peaceful and constructive as criticism of Japan began to grow in the United States and the wider world. It tried to present Japan's actions as bringing civilisation and stability to Asia.

Source E: An extract from *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History*

Despite the efforts of the government to mobilize the spiritual and economic resources of the country for total war, Japanese people and even business leaders responded half-heartedly in the early years. Attempts to organize everyone into centrally controlled associations similar to those in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy also failed to live up to expectations. The military did not become monolithic as army-navy rivalry continued; nor did it establish uncontested domination as the bureaucracy maintained and extended its administrative control throughout the country. Even party politicians did not disappear.

E Tipton, *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History*, Routledge, London, 2002, p 125.

Questions

1. How does Source A portray the political power of the Japanese military in the 1930s?
2. What is the key message promoted by Source B?
3. Closely examine Source B.
 - a. Briefly summarise what is represented in the table.
 - b. Compare this graph to Source B in Source Study 2.3 (terror statistics for the USSR). How are the sources similar and different?
 - c. What conclusions could a historian draw about the Japanese *Tokkō* from a source such as this?
 - d. What other kinds of sources or evidence would a historian need to find to develop a more thorough interpretation of the *Tokkō* and its role in Japan during the 1930s?
4. How might Source C be useful to a historian studying the interwar dictatorship in Japan?
5. Closely examine Source D.
 - a. Describe what is on the cover of this edition of the magazine (including both the words and images).
 - b. What is the intended message of the cover?
 - c. What is the value of a source such as this for a historian studying the interwar dictatorship in Japan?
6. According to Source E, how successful was the Japanese dictatorship in gaining control over Japanese society and bringing about the changes it sought?
7. Using any three of the sources, outline the main features of the interwar dictatorship in Japan.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In one paragraph, explain which type of dictatorship was established in Japan during the 1930s.
2. Identify and rank three factors that prompted the development of the Japanese dictatorship. Explain your ranking in a single paragraph.
3. Describe the rule of the Japanese dictatorship in the 1930s. How does this compare with other dictatorships that you have studied in this chapter?

Further resources

J Dallimore and L Blackman, *Russia and the USSR, 1917–41*, HTANSW, Annandale, 2020.

S Lee, *The European Dictatorships 1918–1945*, 4th edn, Routledge, New York, 2016.

B Pauley, *Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini: Totalitarianism in the Twentieth Century*, 4th edn, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester, 2015.

K Pyle, *The Making of Modern Japan*, 2nd edn, DC Heath and Company, Lexington, 1996.

Activities

Bringing it together

1. Describe the frustrations that emerged as a result of the peace treaties that ended World War I.
2. Categorise the main conditions that enabled the rise of dictatorships after World War I using the following terms: political, economy, sociocultural.
3. Create a summary table to illustrate the similarities and differences of how the dictatorships in Russia, Italy and Japan gained power.
4. In groups of two or three, select one of the dictatorships in Russia, Italy or Japan that emerged after World War I. Create a presentation that outlines the main features of the dictatorship and find three or four additional sources that would be valuable for a historian studying this regime.
5. Rank the dictatorships in Russia, Italy and Japan in terms of their impact on society. Justify your ranking and make use of evidence from two or three of the sources in this chapter.
6. Compare the features of the dictatorships in Russia, Italy and Japan. In your response, make use of evidence from any three of the sources provided in this chapter.

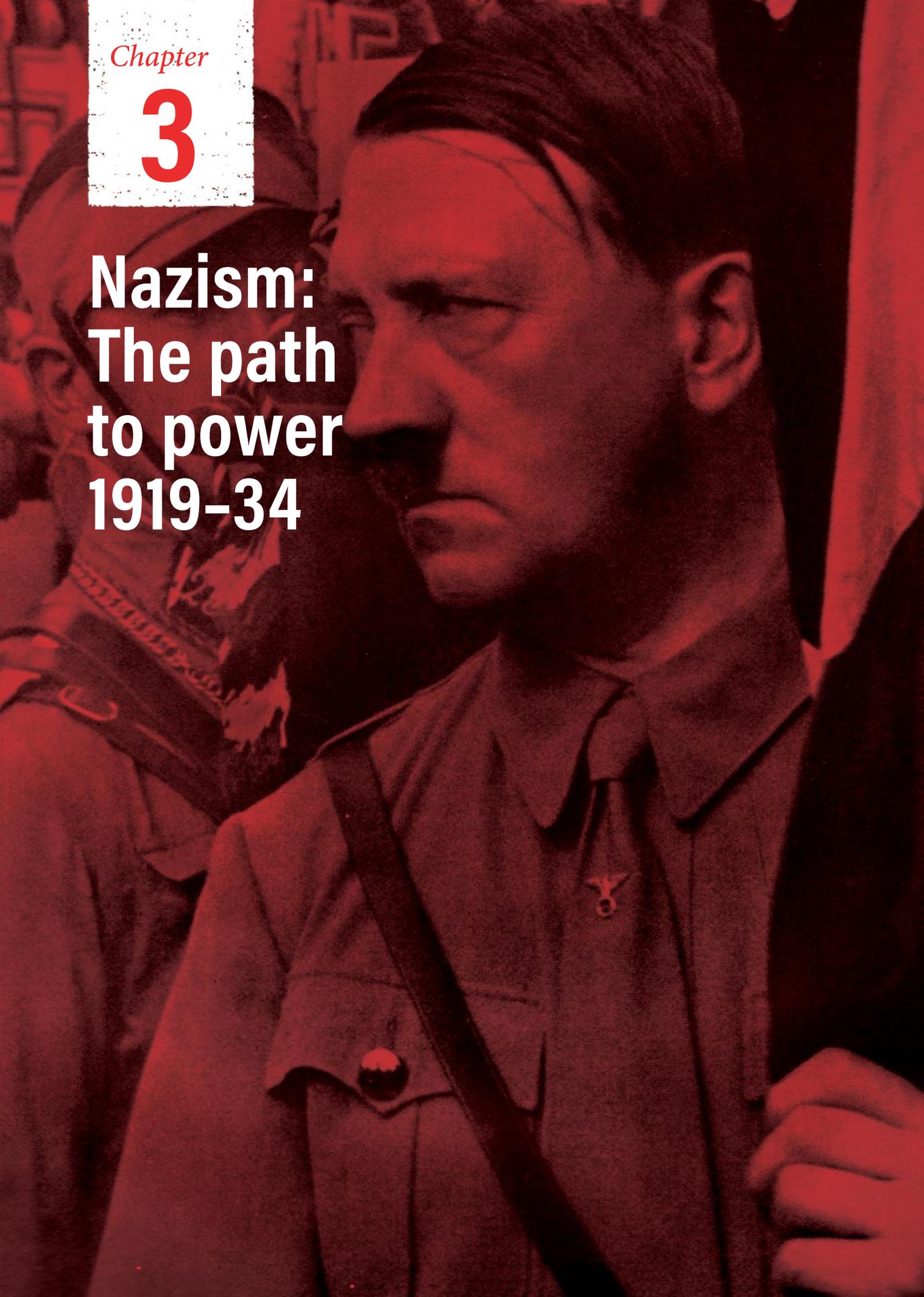
Endnotes

- 1 R Overy, *The Inter-War Crisis*, 3rd edn, Routledge, London, 2017, p 4.
- 2 S Berman, *Democracy and Dictatorship in Europe: From the Ancient Regime to the Present Day*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2019, p 9.
- 3 I Kershaw, *To Hell and Back: Europe 1914–1949*, Penguin, London, 2015, p 93.
- 4 S Lee, *European Dictatorships, 1918–1945*, 4th edn, Routledge, New York, 2017, pp 24–27.
- 5 T Nakamura, *A History of Showa Japan, 1926–1989*, University of Tokyo Press, Tokyo, 1998, p 40.
- 6 S Large, 'Oligarchy, Democracy, and Fascism' in W Tsutsui, (ed.), *A Companion to Japanese History*, Blackwell Publishing, Victoria, 2007, p 165.
- 7 T Nakamura, *A History of Showa Japan, 1926–1989*, University of Tokyo Press, Tokyo, 1998, p 151.
- 8 E Tipton, 'Introduction' in E Tipton (ed.), *Society and the State in Interwar Japan*, Routledge, London, 1997, p 6.

Chapter

3

Nazism: The path to power 1919–34



The regime of National Socialist Germany, the Third Reich, remains the most resonant of the interwar dictatorships. No doubt the dictatorship's status rests on its role in World War II, and its parallel genocidal program, the Holocaust, that killed at least six million European Jews and many others from minority groups. Emerging as one of many movements on the German radical right in 1919, the Nazi Party attained regional and then national notoriety as a challenger to the newly established Weimar Republic during the 1920s. Under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, the movement rejected democracy, communism and conservatism, and advocated the formation of a new racially defined state, the **Volksgemeinschaft**. While sharing ideological and stylistic similarities with Italian Fascism, Nazism's use of terror and its desire to permeate all aspects of German everyday life has led to it being considered a totalitarian dictatorship that shared similarities with its rival, Stalin's Soviet Union.

Volksgemeinschaft

(German) peoples' community; the racially pure German state imagined by the Nazis

Timeline 3.1: Germany 1918–29

- 1918**
 - 3 October: A political moderate, Prince Max von Baden, made German Chancellor.
 - 29 October: Revolution broke out on the German home front.
 - 9 November: Kaiser Wilhelm abdicated as German Emperor and the Weimar Republic was proclaimed. Prince Max von Baden handed over Chancellorship to the leader of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), Friedrich Ebert.
 - 10 November: Ebert–Groener pact was signed, securing the army's support for the new German republic.
 - 11 November: German delegation signed the Armistice, ending war on the Western Front.
 - 1919**
 - 5 January: *Deutsche Arbeiter Partei* (German Workers' Party) established.
 - 5–12 January: Spartacist uprising in Berlin.
 - April–May: Munich Soviet-style republic established.
 - 28 June: Treaty of Versailles signed.
 - 12 September: Adolf Hitler joined the DAP.
 - 1920**
 - 24 February: The DAP renamed the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP).
 - 13 March: Kapp Putsch launched by right-wing forces under Wolfgang Kapp.
 - 1921**
 - May: Reparations bill finalised at £6.6 billion.
 - 1923**
 - 11 January: France and Belgium occupied the Ruhr.
 - September: Period of hyperinflation began; German money became worthless.
 - 8 November: Beer Hall Putsch – Hitler's failed attempt to take over Bavarian government.
 - 1924**
 - August: Dawes Plan signed, renegotiating reparations payments, establishing loans to Germany.
 - 1928**
 - June: Heinrich Müller became Chancellor of 'Grand Coalition' government.
 - 1929**
 - August: Young Plan signed, which lowered reparations payments, but extended them to 1988.
 - 29 October: Wall Street stock market crash in New York triggered the Great Depression.
-

The birth of the Republic

World War I shattered Imperial Germany. As the German Army collapsed on the Western Front in late 1918, a political revolution took place at home. On 3 October 1918, the moderate Prince Max von Baden was made Chancellor and to his surprise was told to immediately begin peace negotiations with the Allies. On 9 November 1918, Field Marshall Hindenburg informed the Kaiser that the German army was no longer responding to orders, prompting the monarch's abdication and flight to Holland. On the same day, von Baden resigned and handed over the Chancellorship to Friedrich Ebert, the leader of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). Unexpectedly, another socialist leader proclaimed a republic. To prevent further revolutionary complications, Ebert secured the support of the army and the traditional elites before signing the Armistice agreement on 11 November.

Ebert's efforts, however, did not secure certainty for the republic. Challenges to the revolution continued until late 1923. Left-wing radicals called for further revolutionary action. In Berlin this culminated in the Spartacist Uprising during 5–12 January 1919. In April 1919 revolutionary socialists established a short-lived Soviet-styled republic in Munich, the capital of Bavaria. The German army, with the support of *Freikorps* volunteers, suppressed both uprisings. In March 1920, journalist Wolfgang Kapp and General Walter von Lüttwitz, with the help of 12 000 *Freikorps* members, attempted a right-wing coup, commonly known as the Kapp **Putsch**. The Putschists had little trouble taking control of government offices in Berlin because the army refused to fire on fellow soldiers. However, they failed when workers and unions launched a general strike.



FIGURE 3.1 Friedrich Ebert, the leader of the Social Democrats and first president of the republic, brokered the support of the military and the *Freikorps* to protect the new state.



FIGURE 3.2 *Freikorps* supporters of the Kapp Putsch in Berlin. *Freikorps* units were typically well armed; in this instance, note the light artillery and that each of the 'volunteers' are equipped with stick grenades.

Other key events amplified political tensions. Among the most significant of these events were:

- the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, which nationalists and conservatives viewed as a betrayal of the nation and described it as a 'stab in the back'
- the communist risings in the Ruhr region following the failed 1920 Kapp Putsch
- the 376 murders of mainly moderate or centrist politicians by right-wing radicals between 1919 and 1923. Victims included Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht (leaders of the Communist Party) in January 1919; Matthias Erzberger, who had signed the Armistice agreement on Germany's behalf; and Walther Rathenau, the Foreign Minister.
- the French occupation of the Rhineland to enforce reparations payments
- the financial crisis triggered by hyperinflation during 1923.

Freikorps

(German) right-wing volunteer militia units largely composed of veterans

Putsch

(German) an attempted overthrow of a government by violence



FIGURE 3.3 The hyperinflation of 1923 rendered German currency valueless. Stories abound of using bank notes to light fires or of requiring a basket of cash to pay for a loaf of bread. The devaluation of currency greatly affected those on fixed incomes or who held savings in bank accounts.

Reichstag

the lower house of the parliament of the Weimar Republic, representing the people

The new republic

During 1919 the new republic transformed from a spontaneous declaration to actuality. Delegates elected to a National Assembly met in the city of Weimar to draft the constitution for the system of government that would replace the monarchy. This constitution was approved in July 1919. Like Australia, it was a federation composed of the various German states. There were two chambers in the parliament: the **Reichstag**, from which the Chancellor and Government were appointed, and the Reichsrat, the upper house representing the German *Länder* (states). The constitution guaranteed a broad range of political rights (such as equality before the law) and freedom of speech, assembly and religion. The voting system was proportional representation, which ensured that small parties and social groups could be represented in the Reichstag. Moreover, all German citizens, including women, had the right to vote. In many respects the Weimar Republic was among the most democratic countries of the time.

Within this structure, the position of the head of state (President) was significant. Directly elected, the President held office for seven-year terms and was also supreme commander of the armed forces, as is the case in the United States. The President also appointed the Chancellor and government, could dissolve the Reichstag, and call elections. Special provisions were included in the constitution to ensure political stability in times of crisis. Article 48 of the constitution granted the President the power to suspend civil rights and use the armed forces to restore order. If needed, the President could also issue laws by decree, without accountability to the Reichstag, and could suspend the constitution.

Despite the adoption of the liberal constitution, the Weimar Republic suffered from a general lack of support among its civil service, judiciary and the military. These institutions were unwilling supporters because they were generally conservative in outlook and favoured the imperial model of the old order. The continuity of the old system has sometimes led historians to suggest that the revolution was only partial.

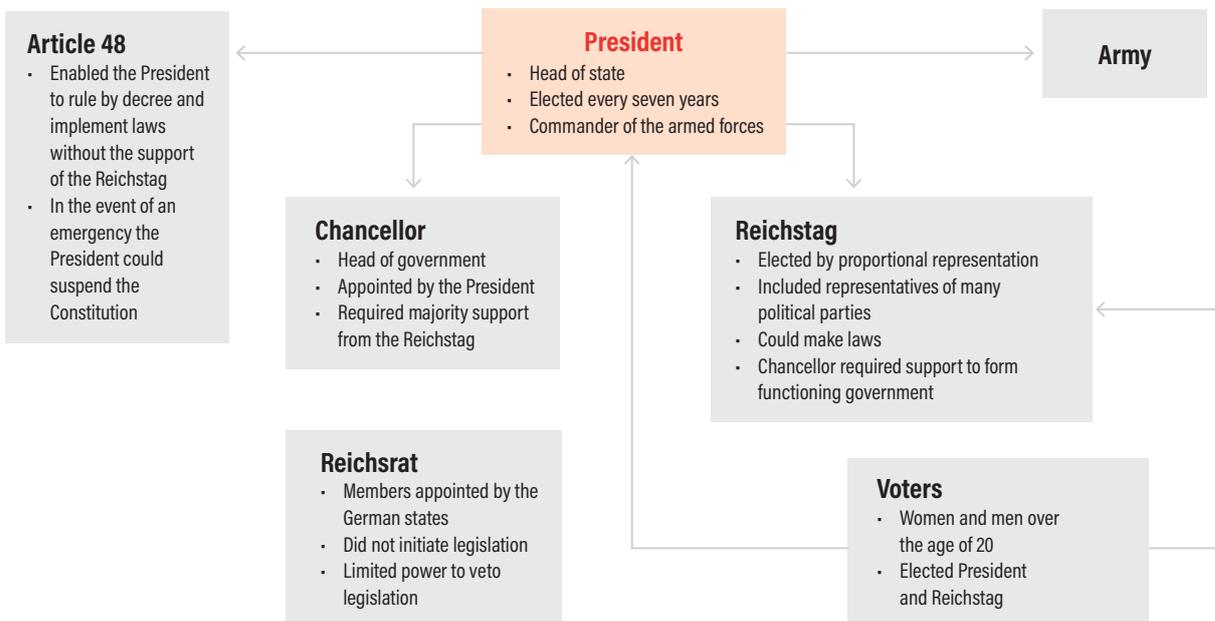


FIGURE 3.4 Key aspects of the Weimar Constitution

Nor did all the parties of the political system support the republican system. For most of its existence the Weimar Republic faced considerable hostility from the political extremes. On the left, the Communist Party (KPD) and the Independent Socialists (USPD) considered the revolution incomplete, merely a step towards a complete transformation of German society. On the right, extreme nationalists (such as the National Socialists) and conservatives (such as the German National People's Party (DNVP)) opposed the Republic, but for different reasons. The DNVP, for example, remained monarchists at heart but recognised the reality of the Republic. The National Socialists wanted neither a republic nor restoration of the old order. Their vision was for a new type of society. Support for the Republic was typically from the middle of the political spectrum. Indeed, most governments (usually coalitions of multiple parties) were formed from the moderate socialist Social Democrats, the liberal German Democratic Party (DDP), and the Catholic Centre Party.

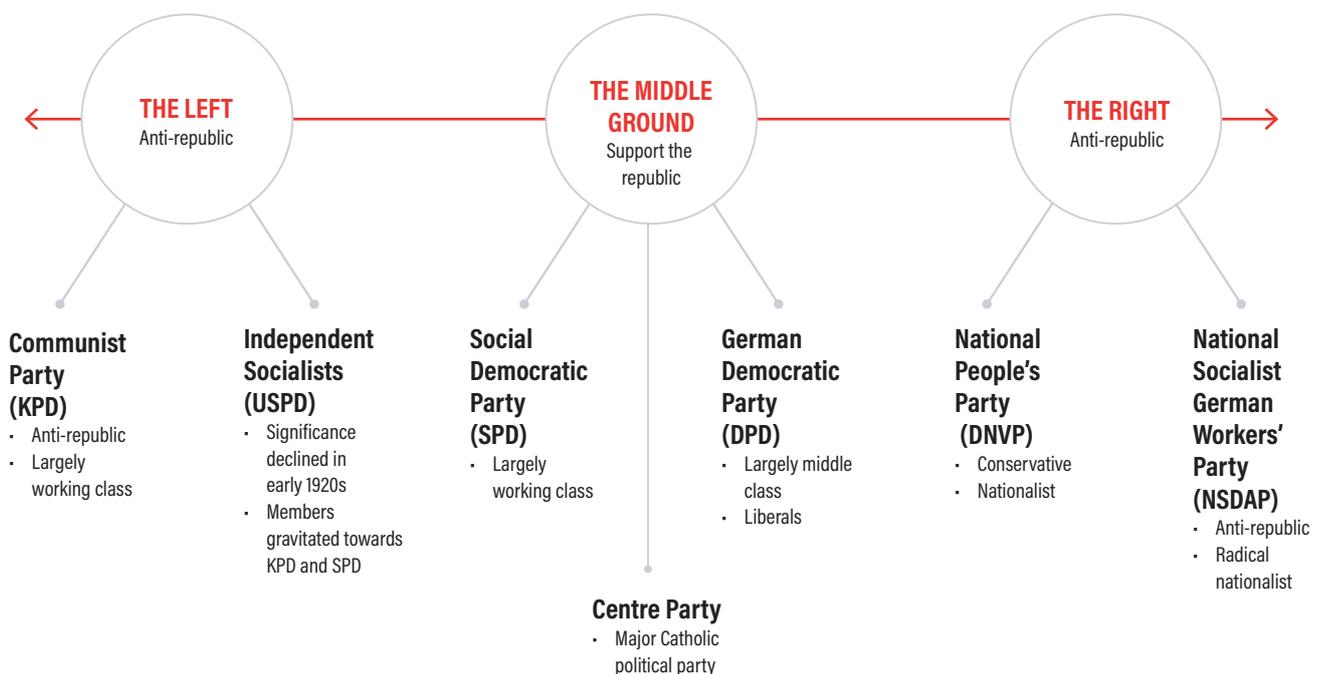


FIGURE 3.5 Weimar Germany political spectrum

Stabilisation of Weimar Germany

The period after the hyperinflation and Hitler's abortive coup (see pages 70–71 for further detail) has been characterised as a stable one for Weimar Germany. At the height of the hyperinflationary crisis in August 1923, DNVP politician Gustav Stresemann was appointed Chancellor. Ruling using Article 48, the government created an interim currency, the Rentenmark, to slow inflation and rebuild confidence. Stresemann also halted the passive resistance against the French occupation of the Ruhr in the hope that the Allies would leave. Stresemann was ousted as Chancellor after 102 days but stayed on as Foreign Minister and continued his policy of trying to work with the Allies, rather than against them. His first achievement was the Dawes Plan, which led to significant changes to the structure of reparations payments. Importantly, the Dawes Plan also made reparations payments secondary to other debt payments, which encouraged investment in Germany.

Stresemann was also able to secure an 800 million Reichsmarks economic aid package from the Allies. In August 1925 the occupation of the Ruhr ended and in October the Locarno Treaty was signed, guaranteeing the French and Belgian borders. The following year, Germany was allowed to join the League of Nations. The German economy did

stabilise during this period but there continued to be underlying problems. Growth was uneven, and in 1926 overall production declined. Unemployment never fell below 1.3 million people and in 1929, just before the Great Depression, this figure still stood at 1.9 million. German agriculture had never completely recovered from World War I, with grain production in the mid-1920s only three-quarters of what it had been in 1913. Many farmers were heavily in debt.

This period of relative stability also featured a rich and dynamic social and cultural life. Modernist art, architecture, theatre, film and literary movements, such as Expressionism and the Bauhaus, flourished. In the cities modern forms of entertainment, including professional spectator sports and cinema, became increasingly popular. New technologies, including radios, telephones and cars, became more common. There were also groups on the left and right advocating for homosexual and women's rights. Women became increasingly prominent in the workplace and some mirrored the style of 'flappers' in the United States. In the country and conservative circles, many of these developments were considered corrupting and decadent influences.

The rise of the Nazi Party

The Nazi Party was established during the political instability and radicalism of the early republic. Initially a movement on the fringes of right-wing politics in the southern German state of Bavaria, in 1923 the party stepped onto the national political stage when it attempted to seize power in a march on Berlin. This effort failed and the movement's key leaders fled or were imprisoned. After the release of the movement's leader, Adolf Hitler, from prison, the party adopted a legal path to power. It reorganised itself to more effectively challenge the established political parties using the electoral system, while building a mass political movement. By the end of the 1920s the Nazi Party had become a key player in German politics.

Foundation

Adolf Hitler, an Austrian by birth, had made Munich his home before World War I. He served for the duration of the war as a regimental runner and never rose above the rank of lance-corporal, although he was awarded the Iron Cross First Class for bravery. In early 1919, he returned to Munich and continued in the army in a political intelligence unit. Interestingly, during the period of Munich's Soviet-styled republic, Hitler appears to have been sympathetic to, if not supportive of, the socialists. On 12 September 1919, Hitler, as a member of the military political intelligence, was ordered by his commanders to report on a group called the German Workers' Party (*Deutsche Arbeiter Partei*, or DAP). The DAP had come to the attention of the military because of its nationalism. This group had been formed in January 1919 by Anton Drexler, a locksmith from Munich. The platform for the DAP was radically nationalist, anti-capitalist and anti-Semitic. In a similar manner to many other groups of the time, it drew influence from the **Völkisch movement**. During one of their meetings, Hitler drew attention to himself by rejecting the suggestion that Bavaria should separate from Germany. Hitler was invited to join the party the following day. He soon became the leader and with his public speaking skills became a draw card for the DAP's gatherings. Hitler's speaking topics were widely supported: hatred for the Versailles Treaty, and anti-democratic, nationalistic, anti-Marxist and anti-Semitic ideas.

Völkisch movement

nationalist, racist and populist political and cultural movements prevalent in Germany from the late 19th century



FIGURE 3.6 Hitler, sitting beneath the cross on the far left, without his iconic moustache, while serving in World War I. War experience shaped the political worldview of Hitler and many of his followers.

Development of the Nazi movement

Speaking at a beer hall before 2000 attendees on 24 February 1920, Hitler announced the change of the party's name to *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* or 'National Socialist German Workers' Party' (NSDAP), and shortened by their critics to the Nazi Party. He also announced the party's 25-point political manifesto, drawn up by the leadership group. The party gained a more public voice with the purchase of its own newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, in December 1920. Hitler created the *Sturmabteilung* (SA), in October 1921 to control crowds at party meetings or assault political opponents. During this early period many key figures in the movement, including Ernst Röhm, Hermann Göring, Hans Frank, Rudolf Hess and Alfred Rosenberg, joined the party. Hitler continued to build the party over the next few years, gaining a reputation as a fiery speaker. Much of the party's iconography, such as the use of the swastika, the brown uniform and the salute, were adopted during this time.

Putschists

In the midst of the hyperinflation, Hitler saw his chance to attempt a takeover of the Bavarian state government. He was certainly aware of Mussolini's 1922 March on Rome, and he had even been dubbed the 'Mussolini of Germany' in early 1923.

Sturmabteilung (SA)

(German) Storm Battalions, also known as 'Brownshirts' because of the colour of their uniform; the paramilitary arm of the Nazi Party



FIGURE 3.7 Painting by Hermann Otto Hoyer, entitled *In the Beginning Was the Word*, c. 1937. Of the key leaders of the Nazi movement (Goebbels, Göring, Hess and Himmler), Hitler was the oldest, only turning 40 in 1929.

Hitler's coup began on the night of 8 November 1923, when he stormed into the beer hall where State Commissioner von Kahr and other Bavarian leaders were holding a meeting. Hitler's plan involved coercing these men into supporting his march on Berlin. Hitler surrounded the beer hall with 600 SA men and ushered von Kahr and the others into a back room. They initially refused to participate, and eventually General Ludendorff, who supported Hitler's movement, was brought to the hall and the men agreed to support Hitler. The meeting was informed of this development to roars of approval. However, after they gave their word to Ludendorff, von Kahr and his associates immediately went back on their promise and tried to stop the putsch. As the Nazis' plan was failing the following day, Hitler agreed to lead a march along with Ludendorff on the Bavarian Defence Ministry. The marchers went unchallenged until they reached the city centre, but there the police blocked the way and shots were fired, killing four police officers and 16 Nazis. Hitler narrowly avoided being shot and suffered a dislocated shoulder – he was whisked away from the fracas and arrested the following day.



FIGURE 3.8 Hitler, Ludendorff and their fellow co-accused on the eve of the 1924 trial that followed the Beer Hall Putsch. After 1923 Ludendorff would chart his own increasingly idiosyncratic political path; the others remained active in the movement. From the left, Ludendorff's son-in-law Heinz Pernet, Dr. Friedrich Weber, a veterinarian and leader of a Freikorps unit, Wilhelm Frick, Hermann Kriebel, General Ludendorff, Hitler, Wilhelm Brückner, Ernst Röhm and Robert Wagner.

After the failed putsch, Hitler, Ludendorff and eight co-defendants were tried for treason. With a sympathetic judge, Hitler accepted full responsibility and turned the trial into a political advertisement for the Nazi Party. Despite being found guilty of treason and the death of four policemen, Hitler was sentenced to only five years' imprisonment, with the chance of parole after nine months. Ludendorff was acquitted. Lodged in Landsberg Prison in relative comfort, Hitler took the opportunity to write his political manifesto, *Mein Kampf*. Due to their increased profile created by the Beer Hall Putsch trial, the banned Nazi Party (operating as the National Socialist Freedom Movement) polled almost two million votes in the German election of May 1924, and gained 32 seats in the Reichstag. After only serving nine months of his sentence, Hitler determined that the goal of the Nazi movement was to win power by legal means – in other words, to win elections. The Nazi Party was re-founded in February 1925, with Hitler as its undisputed leader.

The legal path to power

The decision to fight for power by winning elections meant the party needed to organise nationally to attract members and win votes. One of Hitler's associates, Gregor Strasser, became an important party leader, organising party structures to align with electorates and significantly increasing local party branches in northern Germany. The Nazis also began to campaign constantly, scheduling frequent rallies to promote themselves and their message. Before the 1930 federal election, the police in the state of Prussia estimated that the Nazis were holding approximately 100 political rallies a day across Germany.

The Nazi Party further developed its structure during this period. In April 1925 the **Schutzstaffel (SS)** was created, initially as Hitler's personal bodyguard service. The Hitler Youth was established in 1926. Gregor Strasser also established a network of affiliated Nazi organisations for students, farmers, lawyers, doctors and other professionals. In the same year, Gauleiters (regional leaders answerable only to Hitler) were appointed across Germany. Once the Nazi Party was nationally organised, its membership climbed to more than 100 000 by 1928. However, the Nazis fared poorly in the May 1928 elections, and polled slightly fewer votes for 12 seats. It appeared that they had stabilised as a radical fringe party with no prospects for success. However, the Nazis did begin to gain popularity among certain sections of society. In the German countryside after 1928, Nazi votes began to increase. In state elections, such as in Thuringia in central Germany, the Nazi vote doubled to 11 per cent. This resulted in the Nazis joining in a coalition state government for the first time. The reinvention of the party seemed to be paying off.

Schutzstaffel (SS)

(German) Protection Squad; the SS was initially a bodyguard contingent of the SA, but the SS's role broadened considerably from the time of its establishment

Source Study 3.1 The rise of the Nazi Party

Source A: Extract from Hitler's speech notes, 1920

The Jew brings Democracy and with it stifles Reason
 Democracy = majority decision = Public opinion = Press = Capital = Jew
 German democracy – means persuading the majority with reason
 Jewish democracy – means killing the majority with reason
 Democracy means breaking the nation's resistance
 Democracy Dictatorship of the Proletariat
 Final resistance Class struggle
 The Jew as leech
 Bolshevism
 And present-day Germany? Fight between dictatorship and democracy
 Jew and German

Quoted in R Overly, *The Third Reich: A Chronicle*, Quercus Books, United Kingdom, 2011, p 16.

Source B: Extracts from the Nazi Party's '25 Points', 24 February 1920

1. We demand the union of all Germans in a Great Germany on the basis of the principle of self-determination of all peoples.
2. We demand that the German people have rights equal to those of other nations; and that the Peace Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain shall be abrogated.
3. We demand land and territory (colonies) for the maintenance of our people and the settlement of our surplus population.

4. Only those who are our fellow countrymen can become citizens. Only those who have German blood, regardless of creed, can be our countrymen. Hence no Jew can be a countryman.
...
6. We wage war against the corrupt parliamentary administration.
...
11. That all unearned income, and all income that does not arise from work, be abolished.
13. We demand the nationalization of all trusts.
14. We demand profit-sharing in large industries.

The Program of the NSDAP, Fordham University website, accessed on 15 March 2021.

Source C: *Daily Herald*, 9 March 1923

Danger to maintenance of republic

You have never heard of Hitler – Adolf Hitler? Very likely. Six months ago, you had never heard of Mussolini. But now Mussolini is Premier of Italy, and sits in conference with statesmen whose European reputation was assured long before his name was known even to his own countrymen. Well, a few months ago you would have asked in vain, ‘Who is Hitler?’ Ask today, and anyone in Bavaria will tell you. He’s the German Mussolini ...

This new party was now formally in being – the ‘National Socialists’ it called itself, and Hitler was its acknowledged leader. It held meetings. Those who attended were difficult to classify – a certain proportion of artisans and a very certain proportion of ex-officers, professional men, shopkeepers, minor Government officials, and the ‘bourgeois’ like. Hitler dashed in a motor car from one meeting to another of these meetings. In language that recalled the original posters he talked about the Versailles Treaty of Shame, sneered at the ‘heroes’ of the Revolution, and the ‘statesmen’ of the Republic, castigated Jews and profiteers. His activities extended all over Bavaria.

Daily Herald, Adelaide, 9 March 1923, p 5.

Source D: Extract from Hitler’s speech in his own defence, 1924

Hitler: May it please the Court!

... the Marxist movement is destroying the foundation of all human cultural life. Wherever this movement breaks through, it must destroy human culture. The future of Germany means: destruction of Marxism. [...] We will fight spiritually for one who is willing to fight with the weapons of the spirit; we have the fist for the one who is willing to fight with the fist. When we recognised that the territory of the Ruhr would be lost, our movement arrived at a big point of discord with the bourgeois world. The National Socialist movement recognised clearly that the territory of the Ruhr would be lost if the people would not wake up from its lethargy. World politics are not made with the olive branch, but with the sword. But the Reich too must be governed by National Socialists ...

Quoted in R Stackelberg, SA Winkle (eds), *The Nazi Germany Sourcebook: An Anthology of Texts*, Routledge, Oxford, 2002, p 86.

Source E: Text from a Nazi poster from 1927

At this time, because of his involvement in the Beer Hall Putsch, Hitler was still banned from speaking publicly in many German states.

Who is Adolf Hitler? The man from the people, for the people! The German front soldier who risked his life in 48 battles for Germany!

What does Adolf Hitler want? Freedom and food for every decent working German! The gallows for profiteers, black marketeers and exploiters, regardless of religious faith or race! Why is Adolf Hitler not allowed to speak? Because he is ruthless in uncovering the rulers of the German economy, the international bank Jews and their lackeys, the Democrats, Marxists, Jesuits, and Free Masons! Because he wants to free the workers from the domination of big money! Working Germans! Demand the lifting of the illegal ban on his speaking!

D Mühlberger, *Hitler's Voice: Organisation & Development of the Nazi Party*, Peter Lang, Oxford, 2004, p 139.

Source F: An extract from *Der Angriff*, by Joseph Goebbels

Do not believe that parliament is our goal. We have shown the enemy our nature from the podiums of our mass meetings and in the enormous demonstrations of our brown army. We will show it as well in the leaden [sluggish] atmosphere of parliament. We are coming neither as friend or neutrals. We come as enemies! As a wolf pack attacks the sheep, so come we.

J Goebbels, *Der Angriff: Aufsätze aus der Kampfzeit*, Zentralverlag der NSDAP, Munich, 1935, pp 71–73.

Questions

1. According to Source A, identify who Hitler considered the enemies of Germany in 1920.
2. What value does Source B have for determining the early message of the Nazi Party?
3. Outline the objectives of the key demands of the Nazi Party in the 25-point plan. Use Source B and your own knowledge.
4. Using Sources C and D as evidence, what was the appeal of the early Nazi movement?
5. How does Source D help us understand what the Nazi Party regarded as its political goals?
6. Discuss the reasons for the rise of the Nazi Party to 1930. In your response integrate evidence from Sources E and F and your own knowledge.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Identify the major problems facing Germany after World War I.
2. Explain the significance of the outcomes of the Spartacist Uprising and the Kapp Putsch.
3. Describe the economic and political conditions in Germany between 1919 and 1928.
4. Identify the early successes and failures of the Nazi movement between 1919 and 1925.

Nazi ideology

Nazi ideology is difficult to classify neatly as right or left, and in practice it contains elements of both: the name 'National Socialist' highlights this duality. Some historians of Germany, such as Eberhard Jäckel, author of *Hitler's Weltanschauung*, consider Nazism to be driven exclusively by Hitler's passions and preoccupations. Other historians, such as Roger Griffin and Stanley Payne, consider Nazism to be a particularly German variety of fascism, a political form that was prevalent throughout Europe during the interwar years. Rather than seeing Nazism as neatly left or right, a clearer insight into the nature of the belief system, or the ideology, is to consider it a synthesis of both. Hitler is certainly a key figure in the development of Nazi ideology but he was not the only one to contribute to the development of the movement's ideas.

Nazi ideology draws on a wide variety of 19th and early 20th-century thought, including *Völkisch* thought, social Darwinism, nationalism, racial science, non-Marxist socialism, romanticism and philosophy. The key point of reference is Hitler's political biography

Mein Kampf, published in 1925, which expresses very clearly the central preoccupation of Nazism: race. These ideas were also clearly expressed by Hitler and his followers in speeches, party newspapers and published books.

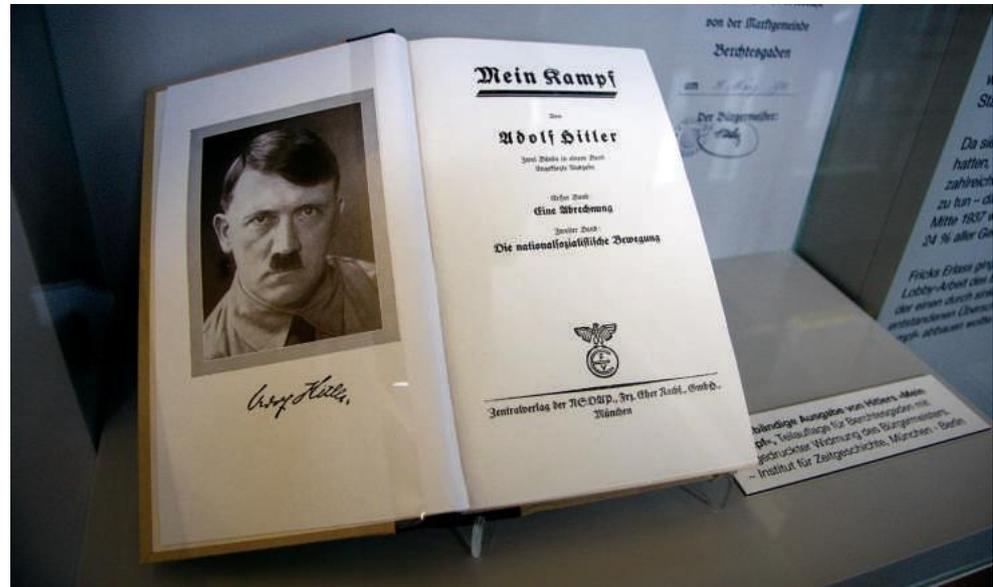


FIGURE 3.9 Hitler's *Mein Kampf* on display in a museum. *Mein Kampf* is a combination of autobiography and political tract, in which Hitler outlines his worldview. It remained relatively constant throughout his political life, but he could also be pragmatic and adjust his plans to suit circumstances.

Nation and race

The central tenet of Nazi ideology was race. All other aspects of Nazi ideology hinge on this preoccupation. Race defined the nation, and it therefore followed that the nation and government should protect and serve the race. Nazism therefore existed to protect and serve the German race, which in their view was the purest embodiment of the Aryan race. The Aryans, and so the Germans, were understood to be the creators of all civilisation and culture. However, the German race was being weakened by interbreeding with others, by urbanisation and by degeneration. The mission of the party was to avert this crisis. To do so required the establishment of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, or People's Community. This national community of Germans excluded all other races, including the Jews, to create a new society in which a racial socialism existed.

Nineteenth-century racial theory

Nazi understandings of race and racial conflict had their origins in the now-discredited understandings of race that emerged in the 19th century. From about the middle of the century, European writers, most influentially the French diplomat Arthur De Gobineau, argued that there was a hierarchy of races, with white Europeans the most creative and beautiful. Within the white European races, Gobineau identified a type, the Aryan race, as the exemplar. In linguistics and the study of the history of languages, Aryan had referred to an ancient cultural-linguistic group, originally from northern India and modern Iran, from which all Indo-European languages originated. Gobineau's use of this cultural-linguistic term to describe a biologically distinct people was a major shift in its application. It is because of the association between the imagined 'Aryan race' and Indo-European culture that the swastika symbol was adopted by *Völkisch* groups and the Nazis. The swastika was a divine symbol of

the ancient Aryan peoples and remains a powerful and positive symbol in modern Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism.

Similarly, the term 'Semite', which referred to the Arabic and Hebrew peoples, was adapted from the history of languages to the 'science' of racism. Hence the term anti-Semitism, meaning opposition to the so-called Jewish race.

This scientific model of human difference was common in Europe during the 19th and early 20th centuries and became increasingly influential during that period. It developed connotations of racial conflict when Charles Darwin's ideas of natural selection and competition were incorporated into a framework of Social Darwinism. Eugenics groups that advocated 'racial hygiene' and the 'civilising' mission of European imperialism were also shaped by these ideas.

The Nazi view was that Jewish people were the opposite of Aryan. Considered by the Nazis to be incapable of creating culture, they believed the Jews to be a parasitic, dangerous and destructive race. Jews were not considered to be German (even if they had been born and raised there) and were not simply believed to be a religious community but a separate race, loyal to themselves and the eternal enemy of the Aryans. In this worldview, all threats or challenges to the nation, such as the Treaty of Versailles or communism, were attributed to the Jews and a manifestation of an ongoing racial conflict. Other races, such as the Slavic peoples, Asian peoples and persons of colour, were generally considered by the Nazis as incapable of creating their own culture and were commonly viewed as agents of the destructive Jew.

Such a conceptualisation of racial superiority, at the time, was not unusual – it underpinned the rationale for European imperialism in the 19th and early 20th centuries. However, the way in which believers of Nazism, particularly when in power, pursued these beliefs was frighteningly radical and destructive. The emphasis on a biologically defined racial nation set Nazism fundamentally at odds with notions of the nation and citizen that underpinned the world views of liberalism and communism. In Nazism the state existed to protect the race; in liberalism the state existed for the citizens; in Marxism the state was an interim vehicle on the journey to a classless society.

From race all things follow

The eclectic nature of Nazi ideology becomes easier to understand when the notion of race and race-nation are recognised as the central theme. Nazi foreign policy revolved around uniting and protecting the German people, and it included concrete aims, such as reversing the Treaty of Versailles, remilitarisation and uniting all ethnic Germans into the *Volksgemeinschaft*, as well as broader and more abstract expressions of desire, such as **Lebensraum**, or 'living space', in eastern Europe. Those who acquiesced to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, for example, were considered traitors to the Volk, or agents of Judaism.

The Nazi movement's opposition to communism and liberal democracy can also be understood through the lens of race. Communism and Marxist varieties of socialism were considered antithetical to the interests of Germany and the pure race. Marxism placed emphasis on an international community of class, rather than a nation of race. That Karl Marx was Jewish was seen to confirm this supposed truth about the Left. Liberal democracy and free market capitalism, in contrast, was rejected because of the emphasis on the rights of the individual, such as equality, association, access to law and property. The emphasis in liberalism and capitalism of the individual were seen to undermine the interests of the nation. This rejection of liberal democracy underpins Nazism's opposition to the Weimar Republic. The rejection of democracy was also expressed in the Nazi Party's organisational culture. Rather than have an elected leader, they advocated for a strong leader with absolute power: a dictatorship. This was known as the *Führerprinzip*, or leadership principle, that called for the loyalty of the Nazi Party members to Hitler and designated that his leadership and decisions were free from all legal and moral restrictions.

Lebensraum

(German) living space; the idea of the acquisition of land for German hegemony in eastern Europe

Factions within the party

While race and the authority of Hitler were central pillars of Nazism, there were significant factional variations. The most notable of these factions was the National Socialist left, associated with the brothers Gregor and Otto Strasser and, for a time, the young Joseph Goebbels. While still racist and firmly pro-Hitler, they placed greater stress on the socialist aspects of Nazism. Gregor Strasser, for example, wrote:

We are socialists. We are enemies, deadly enemies, of today's capitalist economic system with its exploitation of the economically weak, its unfair wage system, its immoral ways of judging the work of human beings in terms of their wealth and their money ...¹



FIGURE 3.10 From left: Josef Wagner, Gregor Strasser, Joseph Goebbels and Viktor Lutze marching in the Ruhr region in 1925.



FIGURE 3.11 Julius Streicher

Strasser also noted his reservations about pro-Aryanism and anti-Semitism. The focus of the Strasserite campaigns was initially to mobilise working class support, particularly in northern Germany. The group was a significant faction until 1926, when Hitler asserted a requirement for greater unity. After that Gregor was responsible for the organisational reforms of the party and became chief of propaganda.

Other figures in the party also focused on specific ideas or theories that related to their particular interest. Alfred Rosenberg, Walther Dárre and Hans Günther placed significantly more stress on racial theory than the Strasser brothers, but even these figures had their own concerns. Günther was more interested in the biological and physiological aspects of race and racial difference, while Dárre discussed in detail the purity of the peasantry and their special relationship with the land. Some, such as Julius Streicher, the editor of the newspaper, *Der Stürmer*, were completely obsessed with anti-Semitism, while the likes of Rudolf Hess were interested in geopolitical theories about *Lebensraum*. Others such as Hermann Göring and Ernst Röhm were more movement and activist-orientated in their outlooks than devoted ideologues.

Interestingly, scholars have noted that these types of National Socialist viewpoints were encouraged by Hitler's style of leadership. For example, McElligott, Kershaw and Kirk argue that:

Hitler's persona, his mythical function, acted as a bond which brought together the fissiparous [separate] factions within party and regime and at the same time both prompted and enabled the initiatives of countless individuals whose actions were sanctioned so long as they were within the framework for the leader's redemptive [redeeming] vision for Germany.²

Source Study 3.2 Nazi ideology

Source A: Extract from *Mein Kampf*, by Adolf Hitler

The German people must be assured the territorial area which is necessary for it to exist on earth ... People of the same blood should be in the same Reich. The German people will have no right to engage in a colonial policy until they shall have brought all their children together in one state. When the territory of the Reich embraces all the Germans and finds itself unable to assure them a livelihood, only then can the moral right arise, from the need of the people, to acquire foreign territory [...] Germany will either become a World Power or will not continue to exist at all [...] The future goal of our foreign policy ought to be an Eastern policy, which have in view the acquisition of such territory as is necessary for our German people.

A Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, originally published 1925, Manheim translation 1943, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, p 542.

Source B: Extract from Otto and Gregor Strasser's *Draft comprehensive program of National Socialism*, 1926

And just as our fight against the form of the capitalist economy is at the same time a fight against the spirit of this capitalist economy, which must be rooted out in its outward expression and in the heart of every individual; so, our fight against the form of society and of the present state is also a life or death struggle against the spirit of this society, this state: against liberalism and false democracy. The spirit of our National Socialist idea has to overpower the spirit of liberalism and false democracy if there is to be a Third Reich at all.

R Stackelberg and SA Winkle, *The Nazi Germany Sourcebook: An Anthology of Texts*, Taylor & Francis, London, 2013, p 88.

Source C: Extract from *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*, by Alfred Rosenberg

Today we see the steady stream from the countryside to the city, deadly for the Volk. The cities swell ever larger, unnerving the Volk and destroying the threads which bind humanity to Nature; they attract adventurers and profiteers of all colours, thereby fostering racial chaos.

A Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Hoheneichen Verlag, München, 1938, p 550.

Source D: Walther Darré

The concept of Blood and Soil gives us the moral right to take back as much land in the East as is necessary to establish a harmony between the body of our Volk and the geopolitical space.

W Darré, quoted in A Bramwell, *Blood and Soil: Walther Darré and Hitler's 'Green Party'*, Kensel Press, Bourne End, 1985, p 40.

Sources E: *The Aryan Family*, by Wolfgang Willrich (1938–39)**FIGURE 3.12****Source F:** Extract from *My Father, My Colonies* by Hans Grimm

For a Volk that is large in number, a Volk forced to live cramped shoulder to shoulder and whose members must each relinquish a portion of their own primeval humanity, and to a no lesser degree, a mysterious portion of God's power, in the interest of the general welfare, the value of a colony will not be determined based on swift evidence and swift victory. It all hinges, rather, on flinging the doors wide open so that young men of the same Volk can pass through them again and again, men seeking to preserve the nature of their Volk; men ill-suited to being squatters illicitly housed amongst foreign peoples but who nevertheless would like to put to the ultimate test which of the forces beyond the general welfare are of divine provenance and which are not; men who, based on the notion of such divine forces, on the very awareness that they exist, preserve the youthfulness of the entire Volk.

H Grimm, *My Father, My Colonies*, Albert Langen/Georg Müller, 1934, quoted in A Rabinbach and S Gilman (eds), *The Third Reich Sourcebook*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2013, pp 177–178.

Questions

1. In Source A, which aspect of National Socialist ideology is Hitler identifying? Explain the significance of this argument.
2. What is it that Source B argues needed to be 'rooted' out of German society?
3. Evaluate the usefulness of Sources A and B as evidence of Nazi ideology.
4. According to Source C, what bond needs to be maintained for the *Vo/k* to retain its humanity? What can result when this is broken?
5. Compare the value of Sources E and F as evidence of the role of race in Nazi ideology.
6. To what extent do Sources A, B, C and D provide evidence of the nature of Nazi ideology?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Identify four key ideas of Nazi ideology.
 2. What is the role of race in Nazi ideology?
 3. To what groups in German society might Nazi ideology appeal?
 4. Draw an annotated political spectrum diagram to illustrate the factions in the Nazi Party.
-

The collapse of Weimar Germany

The Weimar Republic enjoyed a period of relative political and economic stability between 1924 and 1929. However, the impact of the global economic crisis that followed the Wall Street Crash amplified the many tensions and structural weaknesses of the republic. While it is easy to argue the Nazis destroyed the Weimar system, the party was not responsible for its collapse. Rather, the National Socialists emerged as the beneficiary of an earlier failure of democracy when successive governments turned to the President for legitimacy and power.

Timeline 3.2: The collapse of the Weimar Republic

- 1929**
 - August: The Young Plan was signed, lowering reparations payments, but extending them to 1988.
 - 29 October: The Wall Street Crash, leading to economic devastation in Germany.
 - 1930**
 - March: The 'Grand Coalition' of Chancellor Müller collapsed; Heinrich Brüning became the new Chancellor.
 - September: German elections held, Nazi vote dramatically increased to 107 seats.
 - 1931**
 - July: Banking collapsed in Germany; the second-largest bank, The Danat, folded.
 - 1932**
 - March: First round of Presidential elections, von Hindenburg defeated Hitler in the second ballot (held in April).
 - May: Brüning replaced by Franz von Papen as Chancellor.
 - July: Federal elections: Nazi vote increased to 230 seats.
 - September: Von Papen lost a 'no confidence' vote in Reichstag, fresh elections called.
 - November: Federal elections: Nazi vote dropped to 196 seats.
 - November: Von Papen replaced by General von Schleicher as Chancellor.
 - 1933**
 - January: Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany.
-

The impact of the Great Depression and reparations

By 1929 it was clear that there was a crisis emerging in the agriculture sector. Commodity prices were falling, farm incomes were declining and unemployment was rising. The Wall Street stock market crash in October 1929 triggered a greater crisis, the Great Depression, which had a devastating effect on the world economy. In Germany the economic crisis resulted in the recall of loans from the United States, bank closures, collapse of industrial manufacturing, the decline of international trade, and unemployment that reached 30 per cent by 1932. This uncertainty led to a radicalisation of the electorate. Increasingly the German people adopted new solutions to the crisis of capitalism, gravitating to the communists on the left and the Nazis on the right.

In addition, the renegotiation of the reparation payments in 1929, known as the Young Plan, further amplified political tensions. The Young Plan, which substantially reduced the reparations bill, required that repayments take priority over other loans that the German government was paying. This prompted further economic uncertainty. It also led to the formation of the National Opposition (a grouping of right-wing parties including the Nazis), under the leadership of Alfred Hugenberg, the owner of 150 newspapers, a publishing house and film studios, and leader of the conservative German National People's Party.

The National Opposition demanded a referendum be held to reject the Young Plan. In December 1929 the German people voted on the Law against the Enslavement of the German People, which would formally renounce the Treaty of Versailles and make it a criminal offence for German officials to cooperate in collecting reparations. Although it was approved by 94.5 per cent of those who voted, only 14.9 per cent of the eligible electorate turned out, well below the 50 per cent necessary for it to pass. Despite its failure, the campaign significantly boosted the profile of the Nazi Party and by the end of the year, party membership had climbed to 130 000.

TABLE 3.1 Registered unemployed in Germany, 1928–33

Date	Number
September 1928	650 000
September 1929	1 320 000
September 1930	3 000 000
September 1931	4 350 000
September 1932	5 102 000
January 1933	6 100 000

By the winter of 1930/31, unemployment exceeded five million people; a year later it peaked at six million. The social welfare system had been designed to cater for an unemployment rate of only 800 000 people. As a direct result, when a worker was laid off, they could expect to receive relief payments for only a few months. Between 1929 and 1932 industrial production in Germany fell by almost 50 per cent, while real GDP, the total output of the economy, shrank by roughly 25 per cent.

The end of Weimar democracy?

In the wake of the worsening economic crisis and their inability to agree on policy, the Müller government collapsed in March 1930, forcing a new election. In the interim, President von Hindenburg appointed Centre Party politician and academic, Dr Heinrich Brüning, as Chancellor of a minority government. Brüning attempted to address the economic crisis by introducing economic policies designed to reduce inflation, such as reducing government expenditure. This only worsened the economic problems. More

significantly, Brüning needed to rule by Presidential Decree (Article 48) as he did not have a majority in the Reichstag. This marked a turning point in the Weimar Republic's history. It can be argued that the republic ceased to be a democratic state from this time. The government of the day no longer represented the majority, and rule was dependent on the President rather than the Reichstag. When the Reichstag rejected Brüning's economic policies, fresh elections were called in September 1930.



FIGURE 3.13 Horst Wessel, Nazi martyr, led stormtroopers in the streets of Berlin in 1929.

Horst Wessel

Horst Wessel was the leader of an SA unit in Berlin. He was killed by members of the KPD in 1930. Goebbels adopted Wessel as a martyr to the Nazi cause and the song Wessel had written became a popular SA marching song and a German national anthem between 1933 and 1945.

Horst Wessel song

Hoist the flag! The ranks firmly closed!
SA is marching with quiet, steady tread.
Comrades shot by the Red Front and Reactionaries
March in spirit with us in our ranks.

Clear the street for the brown battalions!
Clear the street for the Storm Trooper man!
Millions full of hope look at the Swastika.
The day of freedom and of bread is dawning.

For the last time now roll call is sounded!
We all stand ready for the fight.
Soon Hitler flags will flutter over all streets,
The servitude will soon be over!

Hoist the flag! [Verse 1 repeated.]

RF Holt, *Democracy, Dictatorship, Destruction: Documents of Modern German History 1918-45*, Longman, Melbourne, 1991, p 112-113.

September 1930 election

The September 1930 election was a watershed for the Weimar Republic and the fortunes of the Nazi movement. The Nazis proved adept at campaigning, Hitler electioneered hard, giving public speeches every two to three days. With their emphasis on uniforms and parades the Nazis appealed to a desire for order in a period of great instability. The German electorate, now convinced that the Young Plan was economically destroying Germany, took the Nazi vote from 12 to a staggering 107 seats to become the second-largest party in the country. From this point, Hitler and the Nazi Party, emboldened by their electoral success, grew significantly in terms of membership and support. Several individuals who played



FIGURE 3.14 Hitler in the 1920s. Hitler's image evolved through the 1920s and 30s. As a speaker he was particularly adept at adjusting his message and delivery to his audience.

a prominent role in the Third Reich joined the Nazi Party at this time. In July 1930 Walter Darré, an exponent of the *Blut und Boden* (Blood and Soil) theories joined. Albert Speer, later Hitler's chief architect and Armaments Minister, signed up in January 1931. In June 1931, Reinhard Heydrich, who would play a significant role in developing the SS, security services and anti-Semitic policy, enrolled.

Brüning's policies made the economic situation far worse in Germany. Unable to secure loans or reparations relief, a banking crisis began when Germany's second-largest bank, the Danat-Bank, became insolvent in July 1931. Hitler used this event to remind Germans of the Young Plan and the implications of the Weimar Republic's support for continued payments of reparations. In the midst of this economic crisis on 13 March 1932, there was a presidential election. Although initially reluctant, Hitler decided to run against von Hindenburg. In the election, von Hindenburg received 18 million votes against Hitler's 11 million, with the KPD leader Ernst Thälmann a distant third, gathering only five million votes. With the failure to achieve an overall majority, a runoff election was called for 10 April. Von Hindenburg was re-elected President with an absolute majority of 19 million against Hitler's 13 million and the Communists' three million. The increased support for both the Nazis and Communists led to increased street violence between them. The outcome of this was the view that began to form that the Weimar government had lost control of the situation completely.

TABLE 3.2 Political violence in Weimar Germany

Year	Nazi deaths	Communist deaths
1930	17	44
1931	42	52
1932*	84	75

*Figures only for first six months of the year.

T Childers and E Weiss, 'Voters and Violence: Political Violence and the Limits of National Socialist Mass Mobilization', *German Studies Review*, vol 13, 3 (Oct., 1990), p 490.

TABLE 3.3 Presidential democracy 1930-32

	1930	1931	1932
Use of Article 48	5	44	66
Reichstag Laws passed	98	34	5
Sitting days of the Reichstag	94	42	13



FIGURE 3.15 President von Hindenburg, Germany's wartime military leader and an arch conservative, faced off against Hitler in the 1932 presidential election.

In December 1931 Brüning banned the wearing of all political uniforms in public using an emergency decree. In April 1932 he tried to go even further and ordered that the SA and SS disband altogether. With unemployment officially reaching over six million people, Brüning lost the support of President von Hindenburg and was forced to resign. He was replaced by a member of President von Hindenburg's inner circle, Franz von Papen, who was aligned to the Catholic Centre Party but was not even a member of the Reichstag. Brüning was the victim of political intrigue that began to take place around von Hindenburg.

The President was being advised in his decisions by von Papen, General Schleicher and Otto Meißner and his son, Oskar von Hindenburg. These men shared a hostility towards the Weimar Republic and were conservative and nationalist in their outlook.

What they lacked was popular support. Hitler and the Nazis, they believed, would provide them with legitimacy and votes in the Reichstag without necessarily having to give them any power. Von Papen started to negotiate with the Nazis, firstly for them to support his Chancellorship. In early 1932 they agreed to support him in exchange for von Papen abolishing the ban on uniforms and that he would call for fresh elections for July 1932. The Nazis agreed and the ban was lifted. Von Papen had convinced von Hindenburg that he would be able to control Hitler.

TABLE 3.4 Reichstag election results, 1928-32

	20 May 1928		14 Sept 1930		31 July 1932		6 Nov 1932	
	In %	Seats	In %	Seats	In %	Seats	In %	Seats
Communists KDP	10.6	54	13.1	77	14.6	89	16.9	100
Social Democrats SPD	29.8	153	24.5	143	21.6	133	20.4	121
Centre Party ZP	12.1	62	11.8	68	12.5	75	11.9	70
Bavarian People's Party BVP	3.1	16	3.0	10	3.2	22	3.1	20
Democrats DDP	4.9	24	3.8	20	1.0	4	1.0	2
People's Party DVP	8.7	45	4.5	30	1.2	7	1.9	11
National People's Party DNVP	14.2	73	7.0	41	5.9	37	8.8	52
Nazi Party NSDAP	2.6	12	18.3	107	37.4	230	33.1	196
Others	13.9	51	14.0	72	2.6	11	2.9	12

In July 1932 the Nazis won approximately 37 per cent of the vote at the federal election and a record 230 seats, becoming the largest party in the Reichstag. In the aftermath of this election, Hitler was close to power. In August he met von Papen and von Schleicher, who offered him the position of Vice-Chancellor but Hitler refused, holding out for the Chancellorship. Frustrated, Hitler resolved to bring down the von Papen government. In September 1932 the Nazis supported a Communist Party no-confidence motion against von Papen. As a result, fresh elections were called for the second time that year.

The November 1932 election

The November 1932 election was held in an atmosphere of increasing violence in the streets (see Table 3.2). In the lead-up to the election Hitler flew across Germany, speaking at various rallies. The election was held when the first signs of economic recovery were evident. As a result, the Nazis still came out as the strongest party with 196 seats, but they had also lost 34 seats. It seemed to some on both the inside and outside of the Nazi Party that they were finished because they had lost more than 30 seats. Joseph Goebbels wrote in his diary on 23 December 1932: 'All hope has disappeared ... Nobody gives us credit [money] anymore. We are on our last breath.' The influential *Frankfurter Zeitung* newspaper celebrated the 'disintegration of the NSDAP myth.'



FIGURE 3.16 A Nazi Party election poster from the 1932 Presidential election. The text reads 'Against corruption vote National Socialists, the Hitler movement'. Carefully consider the two figures in the poster. Which social groups do they represent? What is the significance of the flag behind the Nazi swastika banner?



FIGURE 3.17 An election poster from the 1932 election, again featuring a farmer and the use of the evocative red. The caption reads 'We Farmers Muck Out - We Choose List 2 National Socialists'. 'Mucking out' is a term often referring to clearing out or cleaning out a stable or barn. Closely examine the figures at the end of the farmer's pitchfork. What is being represented as muck?

Coming to power

In the aftermath of the November 1932 election, Hitler continued to meet with von Papen and Oskar von Hindenburg. Hitler was offered the Vice-Chancellor position but again refused. Von Papen was forced to resign in December 1932 because of his inability to coerce Hitler into supporting his Chancellorship. To von Papen's surprise, he was replaced by his friend General von Schleicher, who had a plan to utilise the Nazis' popularity but not Hitler. Von Schleicher approached Gregor Strasser, hoping to split the Nazis by offering Strasser the role of Vice-Chancellor. Hitler confronted Strasser when he found out about the plan, and Strasser immediately resigned from the party. The failure of von Schleicher's plan also meant the end of his time as Chancellor.

Von Schleicher was then outplayed by von Papen. Upset that von Schleicher had plotted against him when he was Chancellor, von Papen worked on a plan to make Hitler Chancellor of a nationalist coalition government throughout January 1933. Von Hindenburg, knowing that von Schleicher's Chancellorship was doomed, came to the realisation that another Chancellor without majority support in the Reichstag would not last either. Von Papen therefore worked on trying to bring the Nazis into government, so he could use them to form a right-wing government. After meetings with Alfred Hugenberg (who was initially against negotiating with Hitler), Otto Meißner and

Oskar von Hindenburg, President von Hindenburg was finally brought around to the idea of Hitler as Chancellor in a coalition government. There was significant wrangling over the make-up of the government and Hugenberg insisted on being given control of every economic related post. Eventually, the list of cabinet ministers featured only three Nazis. Hitler did, however, demand that another election be held within six weeks of his appointment, to try to get an outright majority. On 30 January 1933 Adolf Hitler, once convicted of high treason, was made Chancellor of Germany. The Nazis had successfully taken a legal path to power, through a collaboration with conservative and nationalist groups. The Nazis portrayed their victory as a 'national uprising', creating the image that this was a revolution against the 'failed' Weimar system.

Source Study 3.3 The collapse of Weimar democracy

Source A: 'Why I became a National Socialist', by Hermann Fühbach

Hermann Fühbach was a German labourer who was born in 1907, and joined the Nazi Party in 1925. This account was published in 1934.

September 1930 was the most difficult of the election battles for us. We kept going day and night. During the day we distributed leaflets; at night we hung up our posters; in the evening we were ordered to duty at meetings. If we slept much, it was for two hours on the bare floor [...] On the evening of 14 September our reward came – our great victory – our slogan 'Awaken Germany!' had had its effect. 107 National Socialists deputies were elected to the Reichstag. Enthusiasm was high. The Jews were packing their bags, many were already running away ...

So we had to fight on, without flinching. But people were beginning to be afraid of us. The party organisation was banned, and we had to take off our brown shirts. [...] The Communists bludgeoned us down, the police put us in prison, comrades were shot in the back. None of this could stop us; it could only strengthen us in our resolve to bring about the breakthrough of Adolf Hitler's idea among the German Volk. We were firm in our faith that one fine day we would have won our battle for the unity of the Volk. We pushed ever deeper into the ranks of the Communists and the Marxists and brought the best of them over to us. The Centre Party people fought us with particular bitterness; Catholic priests refused church funerals to dead comrades. We were not allowed to enter church in uniform, even though, as National Socialists, our basis is a Christian one.

Yet in spite of all hostility, we advanced slowly but all the more surely. On January 30th 1933, Adolf Hitler created a united German Volk.

A Rabinbach & SL Gilman, *The Third Reich Sourcebook*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2013, p 36.

Source B: Words used in Nazi election leaflets**TABLE 3.5** Frequency of words used in Nazi election leaflets for the German election in September 1930

Volk [people]	83	Jews	37
German	75	Lies	37
SPD	74	Taxes	35
Civil servants	56	Hitler	35
Workers	50	Germany	31
Young Plan	49	Unemployment	27
Centre Party and Bavarian People's Party	45	Political parties	25

SA Gordon, *Hitler, Germans, and the 'Jewish Question'*, Princeton University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1985, p 68.

Source C: An extract from Hitler's speech to the Industry Club in Düsseldorf, 27 January 1932

The more you bring a people back into the sphere of faith, of ideals, the more will it cease to regard material distress as the one and only thing that counts. [...] if the whole nation possessed this idealism, Germany would stand in the eyes of the world otherwise than she stands now! (Audience: loud applause). For our situation in the world in its fatal effects is but the result of our own underestimation of German strength. (Audience: 'Very true!'). [...] Germany [can] take advantage of the political possibilities which, if we look far enough into the future, can place German life once more upon a natural and secure basis—and that means either new living space [Lebensraum] and the development of a great internal market or protection of German economic life against the world [...]. [National Socialists are] intolerant of anyone who sins against the nation and its interests, intolerant of anyone who will not acknowledge its vital interests or who opposes them, intolerant of and pitiless towards anyone who shall attempt once more to destroy or undermine this body politic, and yet ready for friendship and peace with anyone who has a wish for peace and friendship.

(Audience: long and tumultuous applause)

Quoted in J Noakes and G Pridham (eds), *Nazism 1919–1945, Vol. 1, The Rise to Power 1919–1934*, University of Exeter Press, Exeter, 1998, pp 94–95.

Source D: Campaign poster for Hitler by Mjölner

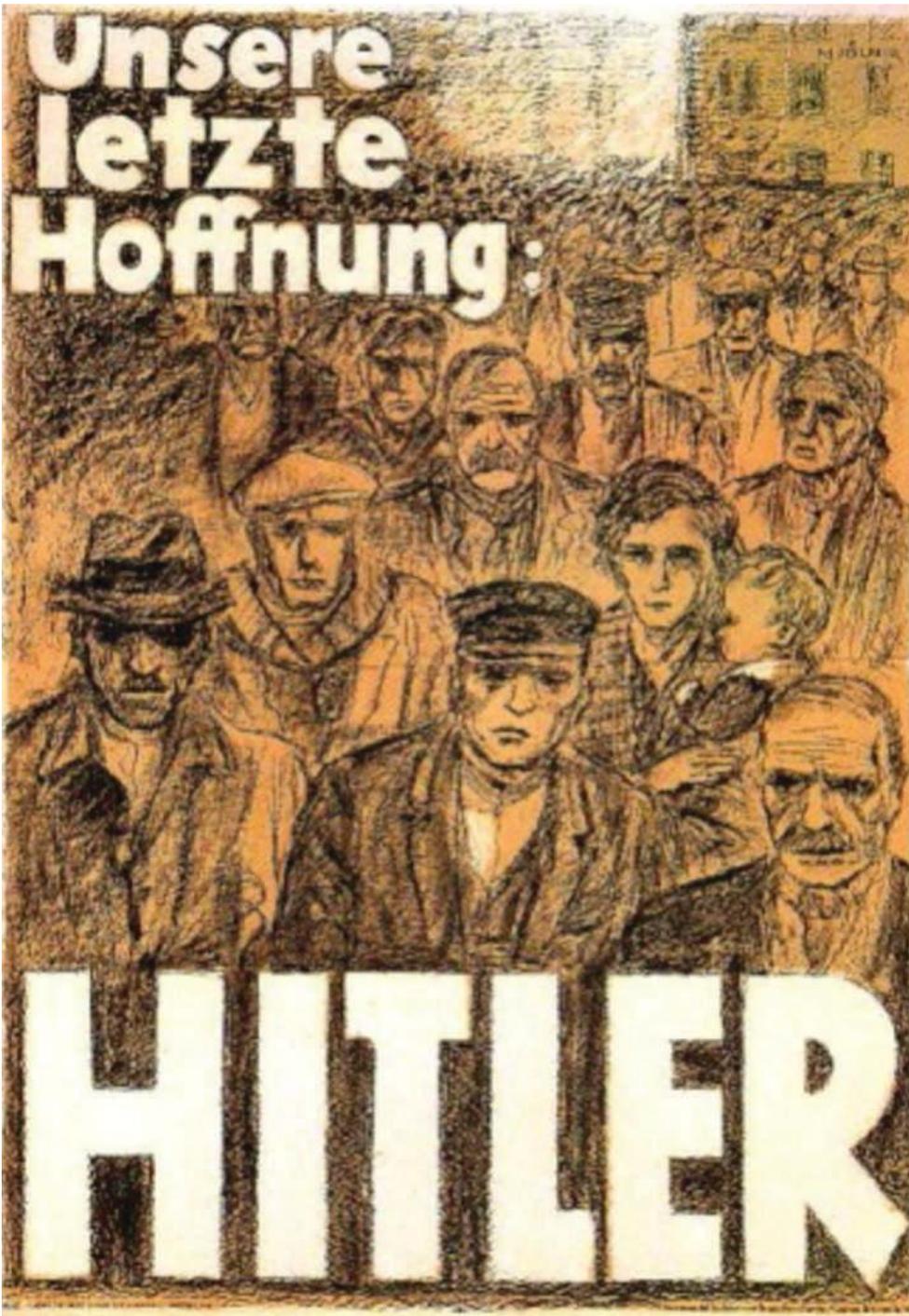


FIGURE 3.18 The text on this election poster from 1932 for Hitler reads: 'Our last hope: Hitler.'

Source E: 1932 Nazi election poster



FIGURE 3.19 The text on this election poster from 1932 translates as: 'Workers who work with the head or the fist vote for the 'frontline' soldier Hitler!' Note the absence of the swastika symbol.

Source F: Hitler's 'Appeal to the German people' radio broadcast, 31 January 1933

Over fourteen years have passed since the unhappy day when, dazzled by promises made by those at home and abroad, the German people forgot its most precious possessions, our past, the Empire, its honour and freedom, and thus lost everything. Since those days of betrayal, the Almighty has withdrawn His blessing from our people. Discord and hatred came among us. With the deepest sorrow millions of the best German men and women from all walks of life saw the unity of the nation founder and disappear in a confusion of politically egotistical opinions, economic interests and ideological conflicts ... The breakdown of the unity of mind and will of our nation at home was followed by the collapse of its political position abroad ... With an unparalleled effort of will and of brute force the Communist method of madness is trying as a last resort to poison and undermine an inwardly shaken and uprooted nation ... Fourteen years of Marxism have undermined Germany. One year of Bolshevism would destroy Germany.

J Noakes and G Pridham (eds), *Nazism 1919–1945, Vol. 1: The Rise to Power, 1919–1934*, University of Exeter Press, Exeter, 1998, p 131.

Source G: Diary entry by Louise Solmitz, 6 February 1933

Louise Solmitz was a schoolteacher in Hamburg. Here she is commenting on the celebration after the appointment of Adolf Hitler as Chancellor.

Torchlight procession of National Socialists and **Stahlhelm!** A wonderfully elevating experience for all of us. Goering [Göring] says the day that Hitler and the nationalist Cabinet was appointed was something like 1914 ... The Socialists and Reds will inevitably have to give in now ...

It was 10 p.m. by the time the first torchlights came, and then 20,000 brown shirts followed one another like waves in the sea, their faces shone with enthusiasm in the light of the torches. 'Three cheers for our Führer, our Chancellor Adolf Hitler ...' They sang 'The Republic is shit' and 'The murderous reds have bloody hands ...'

Now came the Stahlhelm, a grey stream; quieter, more spiritual perhaps. On their beautiful flags, they carried our old colours, black-white-red ... How wonderful and uplifting it is that the quarrels between brothers that once so depressed us have been settled! It should always be like tonight.

J Noakes and G Pridham (eds), *Nazism 1919–1945, Vol. 1: The Rise to Power 1919–1934*, University of Exeter Press, Exeter, 1998, pp 129–31.

Stahlhelm

(German) Steel Helmets; the paramilitary formation associated with the DNVP

Questions

1. Identify the perspective of Source A.
2. What does Source B suggest were the focus topics of the Nazi election campaign in 1930?
3. In Source C, what does Hitler argue will result if people are brought back to belief in 'ideas'? What policies does he outline in his speech?
4. Assess the value of Source C for a historian studying the reasons for the rise of the Nazi Party to power.
5. Compare the value of Sources D and E to a historian studying the reasons for the Nazi Party's electoral success.
6. Evaluate the view that Hitler was key to the rise to power of the Nazis. In your response, integrate evidence from Source D.
7. To what extent does Source D provide evidence of the reasons for the rise of the Nazi Party and Hitler in January 1933?
8. Evaluate the reliability of Source F.
9. Explain the collapse of the Weimar Republic by 1933. In your response, integrate evidence from Sources C, F and G.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Using the election results table (Table 3.4), answer the following questions.
 - a. Which political parties were the most significant in the early Weimar period?
 - b. Which political parties maintained a fairly stable support base through the 1928–32 period?
 - c. Which political parties lost support over the 1928–32 period? Looking at the other parties that improved, where did you think this support went?
 - d. Looking at the rise of the Nazi Party and the fall of the other parties, is there any indication of where the support for the Nazis primarily came from?
2. What was the importance of the Young Plan to the Nazi electoral success after 1930?
3. Describe how the Nazis were particularly effective as election campaigners.
4. Explain the steps that led to Hitler being offered the Chancellorship in January 1933.

The consolidation of power

After Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in January 1933, the Nazis were able to consolidate power through opportunism, terror and the manipulation of the spirit of the law. By the end of 1934, Hitler and the Nazis had been able to transform the highly democratic Weimar Republic into an authoritarian regime that controlled Germany.

In early 1933 Hitler's hold on the power was weak. Hitler was the Chancellor of Germany, but there were only two other Nazis in the cabinet and the hostile President von Hindenburg was still the head of the German state. Hitler also could not do anything that might jeopardise the improvement in the Nazi vote nor the support of his conservative allies, given that there would be new elections in March 1933. The Nazis therefore began to enact legislation against their 'common' enemy, the Communist Party, censoring them and inhibiting their ability to hold public meetings. On 11 February 1933, members of the Nazi Party's paramilitary formation, the SA, began to be sworn in as auxiliary police, with 50 000 sworn in within 10 days in Prussia alone. Hermann Göring enacted a 'shoot to kill' order against 'enemies of the state'. Hitler publicly spoke on radio of his ambition to fix Germany's economy, end unemployment and repair German agriculture. Privately, he told army leaders and the cabinet that German rearmament was his number one priority.

Timeline 3.3: The consolidation of power

- 1933**
- 30 January: Hitler was appointed Chancellor.
 - 11 February: Members of the SA were sworn in as auxiliary police.
 - 27 February: The Reichstag was set on fire.
 - 5 March: Last multi-party election was held.
 - 21 March: Day of Potsdam.
 - 24 March: The *Enabling Act* was passed.
 - 1 April: A blockade of Jewish stores was undertaken.
 - 7 April: The *Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service* was introduced.
 - June: The SS assumed control of the concentration camp system.
 - 1 June: The *Law for the Reduction of Unemployment*: 'The Minister of Finance is empowered to allocate labour treasury notes to the amount of one billion Reichsmarks for the purpose of promoting the national employment ...'
 - 22 June: The Social Democratic Party (SPD) was banned.
 - 28 June: The German Democratic Party (DDP) was dissolved.
 - 30 June: The German People's Party (DVP) was dissolved.

- 5 July: The Catholic Centre Party dissolved itself.
 - July: The concordat between Nazi Germany and the Vatican defined the rights of the Catholic Church in Germany.
 - 14 July: The *Law Against the New Establishment of Political Parties* was issued.
 - The Nazi Party was made the only legal political party in Germany.
 - September: The Reich Chamber of Culture was established under Goebbels.
 - 4 October: The *Editors Law* allowed the government to control the press.
 - 12 November: Reichstag elections: the Nazi Party won every seat.
- 1934**
- 30 January: *Law for the Reconstruction of the Reich* – effectively abolished the German states (*Länder*).
 - 14 February: The Reichsrat, the upper house of the German parliament, was abolished.
 - 24 April: A People's Court, independent of the judicial system, was established to deal with crimes against the state.
 - 30 June: The Night of the Long Knives: the suppression of Röhm and the leadership of the SA.
 - 2 August: President von Hindenburg died.
 - Hitler combined the position of President and Chancellor.
 - The German army swore an oath of allegiance to Hitler as new Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.

Reichstag fire

Barely four weeks into their rule, the Nazis were handed a golden opportunity to secure complete power. On the night of 27 February 1933, a lone Dutch communist, Marius van der Lubbe, managed to set fire to and destroy the German parliament building, the Reichstag. Such a brazen act made it easy for the Nazis to argue that this was the beginning of a communist uprising. As a direct result, 4000 communist leaders were arrested. Van der Lubbe was tried in September, found guilty and executed. Other communists accused of involvement in the fire were acquitted, a decision that annoyed Hitler and made him determined to create a special political court to try cases of treason: the 'People's Court' in April 1934.

The day after the fire Hitler asked von Hindenburg to sign a decree called *On the Protection of the People and State*. Commonly known as the Reichstag Fire Decree, this created a state of emergency and suspended most civil rights, allowing the Nazis to round up many of their political opponents before the March election. The KPD was effectively banned and the SPD press was suppressed. The police had the power to take anyone into protective custody and hold them without charge for an indefinite period. The SA began a reign of terror, arresting and incarcerating their political opponents in makeshift concentration camps that were set up in disused factories and buildings. On 5 March 1933 the last multi-party election was held in Germany.



FIGURE 3.20 The Reichstag ablaze on the night of 27 February 1933. The fire provided the Nazis with opportunity to marginalise their political opponents.

With the KPD unable to take part and political violence running high, the Nazi vote increased to 288 seats in the Reichstag. This still fell short of the majority Hitler needed to govern Germany alone, forcing him to organise another coalition with the Nationalist Party.

On 21 March 1933 the German parliament was formally opened. The Nazis took the opportunity to turn this into a propaganda event. Called the Day of Potsdam, President von Hindenburg officiated, dressed in the uniform of a Prussian Field Marshall, with a military parade and 21-gun salute. Hitler, wearing a suit, took a minor role. However, the handshake welcoming von Hindenburg came to symbolise the acceptance of him as Chancellor. From March, the Horst Wessel Song (see page 82) was designated to be sung at all public events alongside the national anthem. In addition, the German national flag of black, red and gold was banned and replaced by two flags: the Nazi Party swastika flag and the old imperial German flag of black, white and red.

The Enabling Act

On 23 March 1933 Hitler tabled *The Enabling Act* to the Reichstag. This legislation would give the Nazi government complete control to enact laws without the need for the Reichstag or the President's approval. As this was to change the constitution, the vote required a two-thirds majority. With the KPD deputies banned and armed SA and SS men in the chamber, the Catholic Centre Party members voted in favour. To their credit the 94 SPD members voted against the bill. This removed the Reichstag as a source of opposition.

Beginning to enact their anti-Semitic program on 1 April, the Nazis staged a nationwide boycott of Jewish shops. A week later the *Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service* excluded Jews from government work. In addition, the Nazis removed other potential opponents from positions in the civil service and judiciary.

In this period, the Nazis began a process known as **Gleichschaltung**, the Nazification of all aspects of society. The party asserted control over sporting and youth groups, trade unions and regional governments and administration. In Prussia, where Göring was Minister for the Interior, this process had started earlier. In early April, local state government assemblies were removed and a Nazi commissioner, the *Reichsstatthalter*, put in their place. Police chiefs in most cities, unless they were Nazis, were also replaced.

In late March, Himmler had founded the first official concentration camp (KZ) at Dachau. Concentration camps were later established at Oranienburg on 6 April 1933 and Lichtenburg on 13 June 1933. By the end of June 1933, there were over 60 000 SPD and KPD members being held under arrest across Germany.

A remarkable example of the increasing use of terror as an apparatus of state control occurred in July 1933. Former Chancellor Philip Scheidemann, from exile in Paris, said that he believed the Nazis would cause another war. In response, the Nazi newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, reported that five relatives of Scheidemann were taken into custody. His relatives were released two months later after disowning Scheidemann and making a full apology. Relatives of other SPD and KPD politicians who managed to flee overseas were similarly taken into 'protective custody'.

The single-party state

May Day, as a celebration of the working classes, was customarily celebrated on 1 May. In 1933 the Nazis continued the tradition. The following day, all trade union offices were raided and banned. In their place, German workers were integrated into the German Labour Front (DAF), under the leadership of Robert Ley. After the trade unions were broken up, the SPD was officially banned on 22 June 1933. Other parties dissolved themselves over the remainder of June, with the Centre Party being the last to disband itself on 5 July 1933. On 14 July 1933, the Nazis had all political parties, besides the Nazi Party and its associations, officially banned.

Gleichschaltung

(German) coordination/bringing into line; used to describe the process of the Nazi Party's integration of German society into a single system

The mechanisms of state control were extended further during the second half of 1933.

Key elements of this process included:

- the Concordat signed by the Nazis on 20 July 1933 with the Catholic Church, in which the Nazis agreed to respect Catholic rights, while the church agreed to abstain from political activities (see Chapter 5)
- the establishment of the Reich Chamber of Culture, under the leadership of Joseph Goebbels. This department coordinated the arts, including music, film, literature and painting, and the media. It ensured that the creative and communication sectors of German society were brought into line. Control was also established over the press, with legislation, such as the *Editors Law* on 4 October 1933, forbidding non-Aryans from working in journalism.

Towards the end of 1933, Hitler began to fulfil some of the foreign policy promises that were to prove popular with most of the population, as well as his conservative allies. In October 1933, Germany announced its withdrawal from both the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations. By the November elections, the Nazi Party was the sole remaining party and its candidates won all 661 seats in the Reichstag.

Army and Nazi Party

Much of the Army's official cooperation with the Nazis came voluntarily. In early 1934, General von Blomberg, the Minister of War in Hitler's government, introduced (of his own accord) a policy to expel Jews from the armed forces. He also introduced the wearing of the swastika on military uniforms. All of this was done to show the army's 'closeness' to the Nazi movement. The *Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service*, enacted in April 1933, had excluded those Jews who were World War I veterans and it did not apply to the military, so von Blomberg's discharge order was his way of circumventing this.

Night of the Long Knives

As Nazification proceeded it became increasingly obvious that Hitler was going to have to deal with the tensions developing between the SA troops and the traditional German military forces. Large sections of the SA still believed in the 'revolutionary' ideas of the original Nazi Party program. Now that the Nazis were firmly in power, Röhm became associated with talk about a 'second revolution', where he would lead an SA that played a greater role in the Nazi state, possibly becoming the core of a new Nazified armed forces. While Röhm had only made rumblings, his political rivals Himmler and Göring were manufacturing evidence that Röhm was actually planning a coup against Hitler. Moreover, the military were demanding that the threat from the SA be nullified. At a meeting in April 1934, the army high command demanded that Hitler act against Röhm. Hitler, aware that President von Hindenburg's death was imminent, knew it was essential to secure the support of the army. On 17 June 1934 at the University of Marburg, Vice-Chancellor von Papen, encouraged by President von Hindenburg, made a speech critical of the Nazi use of violence and called for an end to rule by terror. He also denounced the idea of a 'second revolution'.



FIGURE 3.21 Ernst Röhm, Chief of Staff of the SA was executed during the Night of the Long Knives. Göring and Himmler played key roles in manipulating the circumstances that culminated in the executions of Röhm, Gregor Strasser and former Chancellor Kurt von Schleicher.



FIGURE 3.22 Soldiers of the German Army patrol the streets of Berlin during the Night of the Long Knives. The elimination of the SA leadership consolidated the Army's support for the Nazi state.

Gestapo

contraction of *Geheime Staatspolizei* (Secret State Police); a major institution, under the control of the SS, in the terror apparatus of the Nazi State

On 30 June 1934 the SA senior leadership, including Röhm, were arrested while staying at a holiday resort. After initially wavering, Hitler finally agreed to have Röhm killed. Around Germany, **Gestapo** and SS execution squads murdered SA leaders and others who were considered threats. Many of those targeted were about settling old scores; for example, Gustav von Kahr, who had doubled-crossed Hitler in the Beer Hall Putsch in 1923 was hacked to death. Gregor Strasser and former Chancellor von Schleicher, were also murdered. At least 50 SA leaders lost their lives. Officially the Nazis admitted that 85 people were killed, although the number may have been as high as 200–300. In the days after, a retrospective law (the *Law on State Self-Defence Measures*) legalised all the murders committed. Two weeks later, in a speech before the Reichstag, Hitler took full responsibility. The Night of the Long Knives ended the calls for the 'second revolution', it appeased the concerns of the German High Command and the ailing President, and furthered the political ambitions of Göring, Himmler and the SS. The SA was completely undermined as a political force and by the following year had been reduced in size by 40 per cent. Finally, the murders also provided a valuable lesson to anyone thinking of defying Hitler's leadership.

Death of President von Hindenburg

On 2 August 1934 President von Hindenburg passed away. Hitler immediately merged the positions of Chancellor and President into one, becoming Führer of Germany. The day after, all soldiers and government officials were made to swear an oath of personal allegiance to Hitler. Von Hindenburg was not forgotten by the Nazis and he was treated to a lavish funeral, presided over by Hitler himself, and for the remainder of the Third Reich his face was on the back of all German coins. Seventeen days after Hitler had assumed the role of Führer, a referendum was held asking the German people to approve the merger of Chancellor and President.

According to the official figures, 89.9 per cent of voters supported Hitler's now constitutionally unlimited powers as head of state, head of government, leader of the party, and supreme commander of the armed forces.

Source Study 3.4 The consolidation of power

Source A: Nazi election poster for the election on 5 March 1933



FIGURE 3.23 The caption reads: 'Marxism is the Guardian Angel of Capitalism. Vote National Socialist: List 1'.

Source B: President von Hindenburg and Hitler shake hands during the 'Day of Potsdam', 21 March 1933



FIGURE 3.24

Source C: The *Enabling Act*, 23 March 1933

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.

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. [...]

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.

The Enabling Act, 23 March 1933, German History in Documents and Images website, accessed 5 April 2021.

Source D: Victor Klemperer on the language of Nazism

Klemperer was a Jewish Professor of Romance Languages who lived in Dresden during the Third Reich. The following is an extract from his diary.

20 April 1933. Yet again a new opportunity for celebration, a new national holiday for the people: Hitler's birthday. The term 'Volk [people] is now as customary in spoken and written language as salt is at the table, everything is spiced with a soupcon of volk: *volksfest* [festival of the people], *volksgenosse* [comrade of the people], *volksgemeinschaft* [community of the people], *volksnah* [one of the people], *volksfremd* [alien to the people], *volksentstammt* [descended from the people]
...

V Klemperer, *Language of the Third Reich: LTI: Lingua Tertii Imperii*, Bloomsbury, London, 2005, p 65.

Source E: An extract from *Reconstruction of a Nation*, by Hermann Göring

It was quite clear to me that I could make little use of the existing system, but would have to make sweeping changes. To begin with, it seemed to me that I had to gain firm control over the regular and political police. Here is where I made the first major personnel changes. Of the 32 chiefs of regular police I removed 22. Hundreds of inspectors and thousands of police sergeants were removed in the following months. New men were brought in, and everywhere they were chosen from the great manpower pool of the SA. It was important to instil a completely new spirit in the police.

R Stackelberg & SA Winkle, *The Nazi Germany Sourcebook: An Anthology of Textbooks*, Taylor & Francis, Oxford, 2013, p 136.

Source F: An extract from Hitler's speech to the Reichstag, 13 July 1934

If anyone reproaches me and asks why I did not resort to the regular courts of justice, then all I can say is this: In this hour I was responsible for the fate of the German people, and thereby I became the supreme judge of the German people! It was no secret that this time the revolution would have to be bloody; when we spoke of it we called it the 'Night of the Long Knives.' Everyone must know for all future time that if he raises his hand to strike the State, then certain death is his lot!

WL Shirer, *Rise and Fall of The Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1990, p 226.

Source G: Law relating to National Emergency Defence Measures, 3 July 1934

The Reich Government has enacted the following law, which is hereby promulgated:

The measures taken on 30 June and 1 and 2 July 1934 to suppress attempts at treason and high treason are legal emergency measures in defence of the state.

Berlin, 3 July 1934

The Reich Chancellor: Adolf Hitler

The Reich Minister of the Interior: Frick

The Reich Minister of Justice: Dr Gürtner

Law relating to National Emergency Defence Measures, 3 July 1934, The Avalon Project website, accessed 5 April 2021.

Questions

1. With whom is the SPD accused of being in partnership in Source A?
2. Using Source B, describe the message Hitler was trying to convey with the Day of Potsdam ceremony in March 1933.
3. What method of the Nazi consolidation of power is being related in Source D?
4. Evaluate the value of Sources B and G for a historian studying the methods used by the Nazis to consolidate power.
5. Evaluate the significance of the German Army to the Nazi consolidation of power. In your response, integrate evidence from Source B.
6. Explain how the Nazis were able to consolidate their power by 1934. In your answer integrate evidence from Sources C, D, E and F and your own knowledge.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain how the Nazis consolidated their power.
 2. Evaluate the significance of the *Enabling Act* in securing Nazi control of Germany.
 3. Define *Gleichschaltung* and explain why the process was significant in the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship in Germany.
 4. Describe the Night of the Long Knives. Why was it important to Hitler, Röhm, Himmler and Göring, and the Army?
-

Conclusion

In a little over a decade, Hitler and the Nazi Party had moved from the margins of right-wing politics in Bavaria to become the largest political party in Germany. While they did not win a majority of votes or seats in the Reichstag, cooperation with conservatives enabled the Nazis to form government and establish a dictatorship. The success of the party stemmed from multiple factors. Its adoption of the legal path to power strategy and restructure in the mid-1920s certainly played a significant role. The preparedness to take risks, and Hitler's messianic vision and its appeal to many Germans, were certainly significant. However, characterisation of the Nazi seizure of power as the destruction of Weimar democracy is simplistic. The reliance on 'rule by decree' during the governments of Brüning and von Papen certainly suggest that democracy had failed before the Nazi ascendancy. This failure of Weimar democracy is better understood to be the result of long-term structural limitations of the republic, such as aspects of the constitution and the partial revolution of 1918–19. The lack of a committed core of support for the republic, once faced with the economic crisis of the Great Depression and the political impasse this created, meant that, at least in spirit, democracy had failed even before the manoeuvring on the Right that led to Hitler's appointment as Chancellor. Once in the position of authority, the Nazis were able to use the powers of office to consolidate their position and marginalise all opposition. In place of democracy, they established one of the most brutal of modern dictatorships.

Further resources

B Carter Hett, *The Death of Democracy*, Penguin, London, 2019.

R Evans, *Coming of the Third Reich*, Penguin, London, 2003.

I Kershaw, *Hitler: Hubris*, Alan Lane, London, 1998.

F McDonough, *Hitler and the Rise of the Nazi Party*, Routledge, Oxford, 2014.

D Peukert, *The Weimar Republic*, Penguin, London, 1993.

T Weber, *Becoming Hitler: The Making of a Nazi*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2017.

V Ullrich, *Hitler: A Biography: Volume 1 Ascent*, Penguin, London, 2016.

Weblinks

German History Documents

<http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org>

Activities

Bringing it together

1. Evaluate the importance of the Beer Hall Putsch as the turning point in the history of the Nazi Party.
2. Rank the points in order of their significance in determining the factors explaining the collapse of the Weimar Republic. Justify your choices with key examples.
 - Germany's loss in World War I and the Treaty of Versailles
 - the Constitution of the Weimar Republic
 - the Great Depression
 - the organisation and structure of the Nazi Party
 - the partial revolution of 1918–19
 - the lack of support for the Weimar Republic.
3. Evaluate Hitler's contribution to the development and leadership of the Nazi Party between 1919 and 1933.
4. Propose an argument, using evidence, that accounts for Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in January 1933. Present your argument as an extended response or detailed essay plan.
5. Create a summary table, that includes columns for title, date, author, purpose and impact, of the five most important primary sources for understanding the Nazi consolidation of power in 1933–4. Rank the sources in terms of significance and explain your choice in one paragraph.
6. Draw a mind map of Nazi ideology. Identify the key elements, such as ideas, individuals, factions, and the relationships between these elements.
7. 'The establishment of the Nazi dictatorship was as much a failure of conservative German politicians as it was for the Weimar Republic.' Evaluate this statement in an extended response.

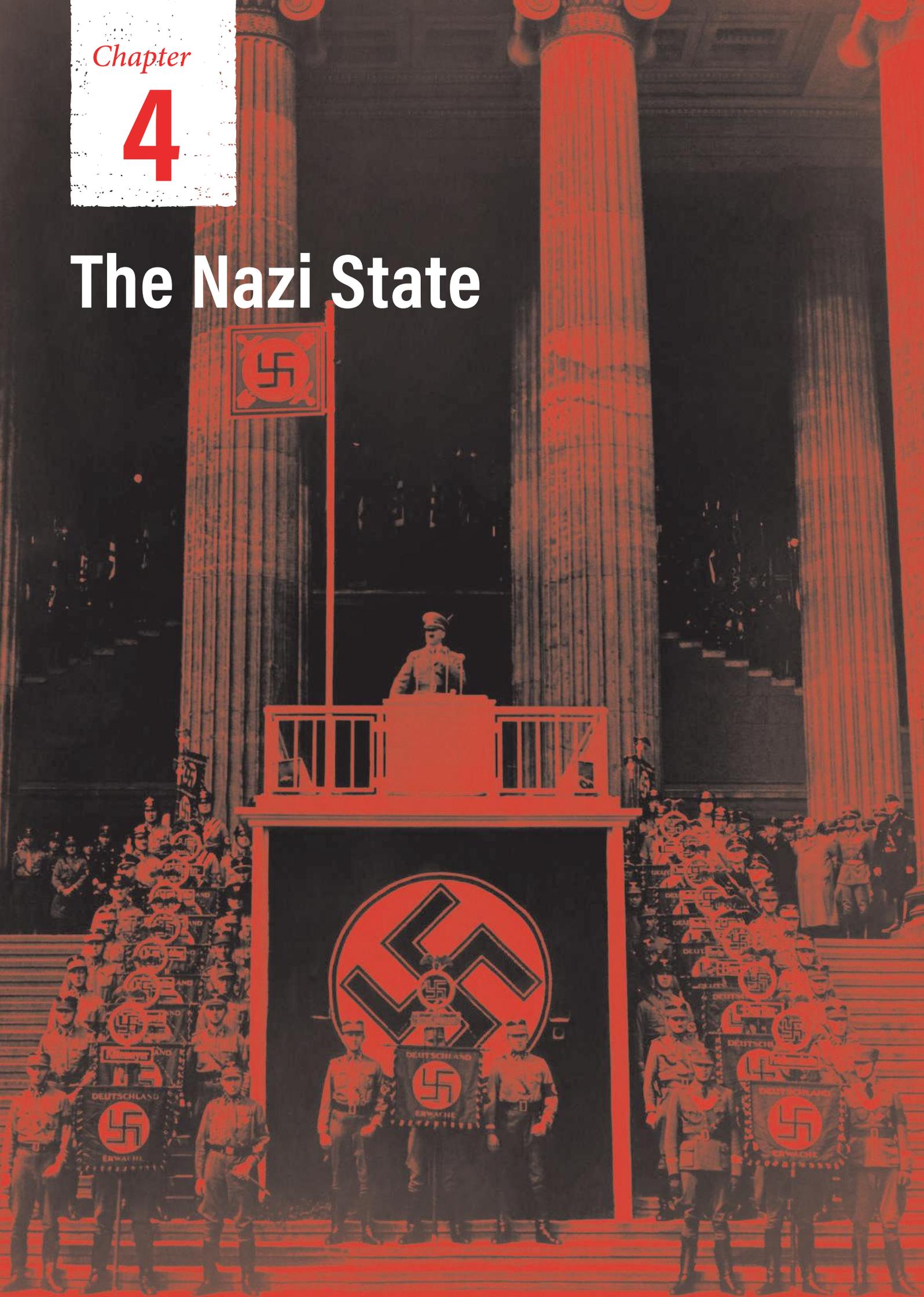
Endnotes

- 1 G Strasser, 'Motherhood and Warriorhood as the key to a National Socialism', in R Griffin, *Fascism: A Reader*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995, p 123.
- 2 A McElligott, I Kershaw and T Kirk, *Working Towards the Führer*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2003, p 6.

Chapter

4

The Nazi State



This chapter examines the nature of National Socialist rule, the roles and responsibilities of key figures in the Nazi State, and the apparatus of social and political control. The chapter will explain how laws, terror and repression, propaganda and the creation of the 'Cult of the Führer' played vital roles in shaping the nature of the Nazi State.

Timeline 4.1: Consolidating the Nazi State 1935–38

- 1935**
 - September: The Nuremberg Laws were passed.
 - The Swastika became the sole official national flag.
 - The *Reich Citizenship Law* and the *Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour* were proclaimed.
 - November: Amendment to the Nuremberg Laws defined the meaning of the term 'Jew.'
- 1936**
 - June: Heinrich Himmler became Chief of the German Police.
- 1937**
 - July: Buchenwald concentration camp was opened, becoming the largest camp in pre-war Germany.
- 1938**
 - January: Unemployment in Germany dropped to one million.
 - November: *Kristallnacht* (The Night of Broken Glass); the Jewish community were fined one billion Reichsmarks.
 - Jews were excluded from theatres, concert halls, cinemas, parks, restaurants and holiday resorts. Jewish children were banned from German schools.
 - December: The Aryanisation of Jewish businesses.

Power and authority in the Third Reich

The National Socialist State was a complex form of government. While Hitler was the leader, he was assisted by willing subordinates. Initially historians and political scientists understood the Third Reich regime to be Hitler-centred. This view, proposed by scholars such as Alan Bullock, Karl Dietrich Bracher and Eberhard Jäckel, argues that Hitler was the source of ideas and that these ideas were implemented under his instruction. This approach, often described as **intentionalism**, concentrated on Hitler's intent and dominated the earliest research in the field and most common assessments. In the broadest sense, this view sees Nazi Germany as an **autocratic** state and that Hitler was master of the Third Reich.

During the 1960s another theory emerged. This interpretation, known as either **functionalism** or **structuralism** because of its emphasis on how the system was organised, characterised Nazi Germany as a **polycratic**. Among the key scholars of this approach are Martin Broszat and Hans Mommsen. Their explanations place greater stress on the importance of other Nazi leaders (such as Goebbels, Göring and Himmler), key organisations (such as the Nazi Party and the SA), and other institutions (such as the public service and the military). These interpretations also note that competition between these groups generated often contradictory decisions and tended to radicalise Nazi policy. According to this account Hitler was a weak dictator.

More recently, historians have come to recognise that the reality of power and authority in the Third Reich rests somewhere between these two extremes. There were areas of policy in which Hitler was deeply engaged and tended to dominate, such as foreign policy, while

intentionalism

in relation to Nazi Germany, the characterisation of the system of government as Hitler-centred

autocratic

ruled by one leader

functionalism structuralism

in relation to Nazi Germany, the interpretation of the structure of power and authority as an interplay between Hitler, other individuals, and key organisations and institutions

polycratic

ruled by many leaders

other areas, such as social policy, did not interest him greatly. Other leaders and institutions also contributed to the development and implementation of policy. Historian Ian Kershaw, for example, argues that Hitler's intentions and big ideas created an environment that provided others with the structures and opportunities to pursue their own initiatives. This interpretation is often characterised as 'working towards the Führer'. Kershaw believes that this reflects the importance of Hitler as a source of ideas and authority but also acknowledges the erosion of the formal apparatus of government and the emergence of multiple and competing authorities. This consensus interpretation is now the dominant approach.

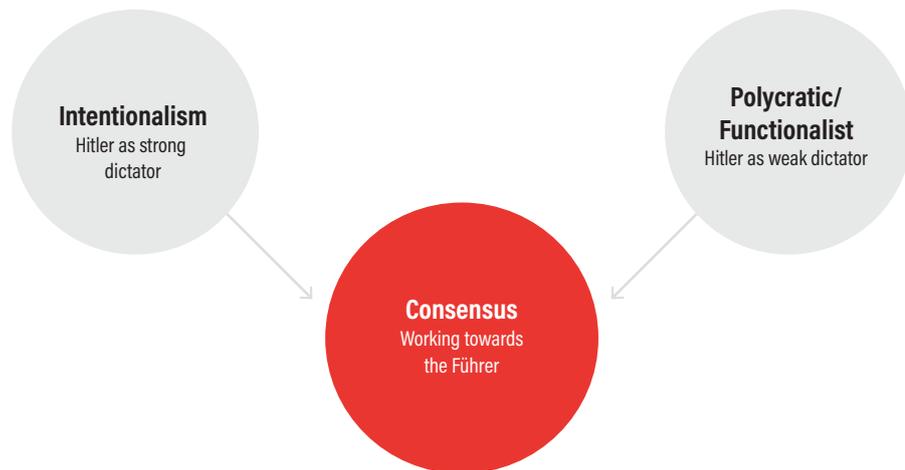


FIGURE 4.1 Interpretations of the National Socialist power and authority

The role of prominent individuals in the Nazi state

Understanding the responsibilities of key figures in the regime contributes significantly to understanding the nature of National Socialist rule. By considering the diverse roles and responsibilities of Hitler, Hermann Göring, Joseph Goebbels, Heinrich Himmler and Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, it is possible to better appreciate the dynamic nature of the system of rule in the Nazi state.

Adolf Hitler

Hitler's role in Nazi Germany was crucial as he provided the focal point for the leadership and ideology that defined Nazi Germany. Other leaders and institutions worked towards Hitler as the Führer.

Hitler was born in Austria in 1889. He had a domineering father and a caring mother and lost both by his mid-20s. He moved to Vienna and after his application to art school was rejected he eventually went to Munich, and then enlisted in the German army at the start of World War I. Hitler served as a runner for his regiment in World War I, where he won the Iron Cross first class for bravery but never rose above the rank of lance corporal. Wounded at the end of World War I, Hitler stayed in the army and returned to Munich, joining a surveillance unit where his job was to report on new political parties.

It was in this capacity that Hitler attended a meeting of the German Workers' Party and soon joined it. After leaving the army he devoted his time to political activity and co-wrote the '25-point programme', founded the SA, and adopted the swastika as the party symbol. In 1923 he took part the Beer Hall Putsch, the attempt to overthrow the Bavarian government. After being jailed for nine months, Hitler reformed the party and focused on gaining power by legal means. After years of little success, the Great Depression gave him the political



FIGURE 4.2: Hitler as the Führer

conditions to draw on the people's disillusionment with the Weimar Republic. His powerful speeches and image of leadership enabled him to capitalise on the failings of the Weimar system. After negotiating with the conservatives in Germany, in January 1933 he was appointed Chancellor of Germany.

The Hitler myth

A crucial part of Hitler's rule was the 'Hitler myth'. The Hitler myth was based on a strong belief in Hitler's charismatic leadership and underpinned the cult of personality in Nazi Germany. The myth was created by the skillful use of propaganda to convey the image of Hitler's 'heroic' leadership of Germany. This leadership had two key elements: Hitler as 'defender' of Germany against its enemies and Hitler as the 'saviour' of Germany. The dual aspects of the myth, largely cultivated by Goebbels as head of the Propaganda Ministry, shaped representations of Hitler in the cultural products of the Third Reich.



FIGURE 4.3 *Es Lebe Deutschland!* ('Long live Germany!'), 1935. Poster by Karl Stauber.

The veneration of Hitler gave the movement a quasi-religious character. Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* portrayed Hitler's arrival at the Nuremberg Rally as that of a deity, firstly arriving by air and then with continuous shots of his car passing thousands of screaming supporters. The cult of the Führer permeated all aspects of society. In the education system, for example, German children learnt of his bravery during World War I. More pervasive was the Hitler greeting, the straight arm salute with the declaration 'Heil Hitler', which symbolically introduced the Führer into social interactions. Upon the death of President von Hindenburg in August 1934, all members of the armed forces and civil authority had to make an oath of personal loyalty to Hitler. The cult of personality was not simply an aspect of propaganda. Senior figures in the party and government declared their faith in Hitler's leadership, genius and vision. Key aspects of the Hitler cult included:

- he had been an anonymous frontline soldier in World War I, therefore he was a man of the people
- he often spoke about 'destiny' and 'providence' guiding his actions, therefore giving the impression that he had a divine mission or was somehow protected
- he was linked to great German leaders such as Frederick the Great, Otto von Bismarck and Field Marshall von Hindenburg
- he had 'saved' Germany from communism in 1933
- he appeared devoted to the German people; he made sure that the German public thought he never married and did not publicly have relations with women. There was no official 'first lady' in Nazi Germany (the public were not aware of his relationship with Eva Braun until after the war).
- after 1933, Hitler's foreign policy successes gave the German people the sense that he really had extraordinary skills and talent.

Significantly, Hitler was not involved in inter-party disputes. Unlike many politicians, Hitler did not engage with the day-to-day bureaucratic routines of government that might undermine his charismatic leadership. A system developed where criticism was directed towards the local party leaders but Hitler himself was immune from condemnation. 'If only the Führer knew' became a common retort. The creation of the cult was made much easier with the general support for Hitler's policies and successes in the 1930s. An SPD in exile report from 1938 noted that, 'Hitler could count on the agreement of the majority of the people on two essential points; 1) he had created jobs, and 2) he had made Germany strong.'

Characterising Hitler's role in the rule of the Third Reich is difficult. Logically Hitler could not have overseen all aspects of rule in a highly developed modern nation like Germany. It was simply not possible for an individual to meaningfully administer such diverse portfolios as railways, rearmament, policing, the arts, education and the economy. Rather, Hitler is understood to have outlined broad ideas. His followers competed to implement what they thought he had envisaged – they 'worked towards the Führer'.

There were, however, aspects of policy that Hitler was particularly interested in. The most significant of these was foreign policy. Hitler's major accomplishments once the regime was established was the dismantling of the Versailles system. As a hands-on Führer, Hitler was central to Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations, the remilitarisation of the Rhineland, German rearmament, the *Anschluss* of Austria, the absorption of Czechoslovakia and events that culminated in the invasion of Poland and the triggering of World War II. These successes reinforced the Hitler myth.

Hermann Göring

Hermann Göring was born in 1893 to an upper-middle-class family. Göring joined the army in 1914 and quickly shifted to the air force, becoming a fighter pilot. After the death of Manfred von Richthofen (the Red Baron), Göring took command of his squadron and was awarded the *Pour le Mérite*, Germany's highest decoration for bravery. After the war Göring briefly studied economics but devoted himself to the Nazi Party after hearing Hitler speak. Involved in the Beer Hall Putsch, Göring was shot in the thigh and became addicted to morphine.



FIGURE 4.4 The flamboyant Hermann Göring played key roles in the consolidation of power, rearmament and economics.

Göring played a crucial role in the consolidation of the dictatorship in 1933 and 1934. Alongside Hitler and Wilhelm Frick, he was one of the three Nazis in the original cabinet and had been President of the Reichstag since 1932. As Minister for the Interior in Prussia, Germany's largest state, he enlisted the SA as auxiliary police and established the Gestapo to deal with the Nazis' political enemies, overseeing the establishment of the apparatus of terror and the suppression of political opponents. Göring's assembly of 'evidence' accusing Ernst Röhm of disloyalty to Hitler also triggered the Night of the Long Knives in 1934, an event that is generally seen as marking the end of the SA's radicalism.

Göring remained important throughout the 1930s and was actively involved in military, foreign policy and economic developments. Appointed Reich Commissioner of Aviation in 1933, he oversaw the establishment of the Luftwaffe (the air force) in contravention of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. In 1935 he was appointed commander of the force that he had established. In 1936 Göring was put in charge of the Four-Year Plan, which was designed to develop Germany's self-sufficiency and increase its armaments. This brought numerous government agencies under his control and greatly expanded his influence. In early 1938 Göring played a leading role in pressuring Austria into accepting the *Anschluss*. Later in the same year he was placed in charge of a Ministerial Council for the Defence of the Reich, which gave him the power to issue decrees without necessarily consulting Hitler. After *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, it was Göring who suggested the Jewish community itself be fined one billion marks for the damage that was caused.

Göring was a popular Nazi; he enjoyed attention, wearing his uniforms, and taking part in public events and festivals. In 1939 his position as Hitler's deputy was confirmed. Göring survived the war but he was arrested by the Allies and placed on trial in front of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg. He was found guilty and sentenced to death, but he beat the hangman by taking poison hours before his execution.

Anschluss

(German) union; as in the political union or annexation of Austria with Germany

Heinrich Himmler

Heinrich Himmler was born in Munich in 1900. As a youth, he enlisted in the army but World War I ended before he reached the front. Himmler studied agriculture and joined the Nazi Party in 1923, acting as the party's standard-bearer in the Beer Hall Putsch. In 1925 he joined the SS and was made its leader in 1929. In 1931, he employed Reinhard Heydrich and later created the SS Race and Settlement Main Office, which was designed to ensure 'racial purity' within the SS.



FIGURE 4.5 Hermann Göring and Heinrich Himmler, Reichsführer SS. Behind Himmler is Reinhard Heydrich, effectively Himmler's deputy, and a key figure in the administration of terror in Nazi Germany.

Himmler played a prominent role in the creation and administration of the National Socialist system of terror and policing. In March 1933 he was made Police Chief of Bavaria and established the first concentration camp at Dachau. In 1934 he took over the Gestapo from Göring, and in June 1936 was made Chief of the German Police. When Himmler joined the SS, its only function was to serve as Hitler's bodyguards. Under Himmler's leadership as Reichsführer SS, the SS expanded its influence. By the time of the Nazi accession to power, the SS had 50 000 members. It soon had security and intelligence departments of the party, taking control of the uniformed and undercover police and developing powerful economic arms to become a 'state within a state'. The SS was considered outside of the control of the state and law, and was loyal only to Hitler. During the war Himmler played a crucial role in Nazi race policies, being directly responsible for the murder squads that undertook killings of Jews and Russians on the Eastern Front and later the Holocaust itself.

In May 1945 Himmler tried to negotiate with the Allies. He went underground and when he was arrested by British troops, took poison and died.

Joseph Goebbels

Joseph Goebbels was born in a small town near Düsseldorf in 1897. A sickly child, he suffered from respiratory weaknesses and a malformed foot. Rejected from the army in World War I, he became a student and earned his PhD in 1921. Goebbels struggled for employment, working as a journalist and a bank clerk. In 1924 he heard about Hitler during the Beer Hall Putsch Trial and joined the Nazi Party. Initially influenced by Gregor Strasser's left-wing faction, Goebbels was won over by Hitler after hearing him speak. In 1926 he was made **Gauleiter** of Berlin, an important assignment, and established the newspaper, *Der Angriff*. He was elected to the Reichstag in 1928.

As Minister for Propaganda and Public Enlightenment, Goebbels' role was integral to the establishment and maintenance of the Nazi power. Where Himmler held the reins of terror, Goebbels oversaw the mechanism of persuasion: German film, radio, theatre, literature, the arts and the press. He was key to the cultivation of the Hitler myth as well as general censorship and propaganda. Goebbels' cultural responsibilities extended to the orchestration of events such as the book burning on 10 May 1933. He was also actively involved in prompting anti-Semitic activities, most notably his role in 'facilitating' *Kristallnacht* in November 1938.

Goebbels remained loyal to Hitler and stayed with him in the Berlin bunker as the Red Army approached in April 1945. Upon Hitler's death he was made Chancellor of Germany but committed suicide the following day.

Gertrud Scholtz-Klink

Gertrud Scholtz-Klink was born on 9 February 1902. She trained as a nurse, married a postal worker in 1920 and they had six children together. Both she and her husband became early members of the Nazi Party. After her husband's death she had to bring up her surviving four children alone. In 1929 Scholtz-Klink became leader of the Nazi women's section in her hometown. She was soon appointed deputy leader of the National Socialist *Frauenschaft* (Women's League) because she proved to be a talented speaker.

Scholtz-Klink is an anomaly in the National Socialist movement. The party was notoriously

Gauleiter

leader of a region or state in the organisational structure of the Nazi Party



FIGURE 4.6 Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, Adolf Hitler, Rudolf Hess, Heinrich Himmler, Wilhelm Frick, Josef Goebbels and Martin Bormann sit during a meeting of the NS *Frauenschaft* at Nuremberg in 1935.

male-centred, advocated widely for the return of women to the domestic sphere, and openly stated that women could not hold positions of power in the party. Nonetheless, Scholtz-Klink was the leader of one of the world's biggest women's movement at the time. With a membership that peaked at around 2.3 million members, the NS *Frauenschaft* managed the lives of women and girls in the Reich. Scholtz-Klink's role was to encourage German women to play their subservient role in the Third Reich as mothers. In 1936 she wrote:

It is therefore our task to awaken once again the sense of the divine, to make the calling to motherhood the way through which the German woman will see her calling to be mother of the nation. She will then not live her life selfishly, but rather in service to her people.¹

In July 1934 Scholtz-Klink was appointed as head of the Women's Bureau in the German Labour Front, with responsibility for persuading women to work. She was also placed in charge of the Nazi Mother Service, which aimed to increase the birth-rate. Despite her significant responsibilities, Scholtz-Klink was regarded more as a figurehead or for propaganda use to show the Third Reich's interest in women. Her views were not considered important and she never sat in cabinet meetings.

Scholtz-Klink survived the war and went into hiding, eventually being arrested by the French occupying authorities in 1948. She served an 18-month prison sentence. Some time after being released, her crimes were reassessed and she was sentenced to another 30 months' imprisonment, a fine and was banned from certain activities for ten years. She continued to be loyal to Nazi ideas and died in 1999.

TABLE 4.1 More key figures of the Third Reich

Name	Positions and responsibilities	Notes
Walther Darré	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minister of Agriculture, 1933–42 Chief of SS Race and Main Settlement Office, 1932–38 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoted 'Blood and Soil' and race theories
Wilhelm Frick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parliamentary leader Minister of the Interior Reichsleiter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 1933–34 drafted <i>Enabling Act</i> and other laws that provided the legal basis for Nazi power, rearmament and racial laws Frick became marginalised after 1936
Rudolf Hess	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Führer, 1933–41 Reichsleiter Minister without Portfolio, 1933–41 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helped organised Nuremberg Rallies Assisted in drafting of Nuremberg Laws After 1941, held under arrest in the United Kingdom
Reinhard Heydrich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director of the Gestapo, 1934–39 Deputy to Himmler 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After 1939, Director of the Reich Security Office and 'Protector' of Bohemia and Moravia Instrumental in the implementation of the Holocaust
Robert Ley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of the German Labour Front (DAF) Reichsleiter Chief of Staff, <i>Reichsorganisationsleiter</i>, 1932–45 <i>Gauleiter</i>, 1925–31 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ran the 'Strength through Joy' (KdF) and the People's Car (VW beetle) programs

Reichsleiter

Reich leader; second-highest rank in the Nazi Party organisational structure

Name	Positions and responsibilities	Notes
Joachim von Ribbentrop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nazi Foreign Minister, 1938–45 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1935 negotiated the Anglo-German Naval Agreement 1936 appointed Ambassador to Britain 1938 appointed Foreign Minister 1939 negotiated Nazi-Soviet Pact
Ernst Röhm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief of Staff of the SA <i>Reichsleiter</i> Minister without Portfolio, 1933–34 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1934 murdered in Night of the Long Knives
Alfred Rosenberg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Reichsleiter</i> Head of the Nazi Party Foreign Affairs office Head of Office for the Supervision of Intellectual and Ideological Education of the NSDAP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Author of <i>The Myth of the 20th Century</i> Editor of the Nazi newspaper, <i>Der Völkischer Beobachter</i>
Bernhard Rust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minister of Science, Education and Culture, 1934–45 <i>Gauleiter</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligned education to Nazi ideological goals
Baldur von Schirach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hitler Youth Leader, 1931–40 <i>Reichsleiter</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During World War II, <i>Gauleiter</i> of Vienna
Albert Speer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Architect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helped create pageantry around the Nuremberg Rallies Increased significance after 1939
Julius Streicher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Gauleiter</i> Member of the Reichstag Editor of <i>Der Stürmer</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helped incite anti-Semitism with his newspaper, <i>Der Stürmer</i>

Source Study 4.1 Power and authority in the Third Reich

Source A: Walther Darré, 1946

When one looks at the basics of things, the force driving this rotating stage is always Hitler himself. He causes [...] the motion that is transferred to figures whose dynamics release other dynamics, but the central figure, Hitler, with his surprising impetuses always remains the actual motor of the rotating stage.

Walther Darré quoted in Volker Ullrich, *Hitler: Volume II: Downfall 1939–45*, Penguin, London, 2020, p 350.

Source B: Werner Willikens, State Secretary of Agriculture, February 1934

Everyone who has the opportunity to observe it knows that the Führer can hardly dictate from above everything which he intends to realise sooner or later. On the contrary, up till now everyone with a post in the new Germany has worked best when he has, so to speak, worked towards the Führer. Very often [...] it has been the case [...] that individuals have simply waited

for orders and instructions. Unfortunately, the same will be true in the future: but in fact, it is the duty of everybody to try to work towards the Führer along the lines he would wish. Anyone who makes mistakes will notice it soon enough. But anyone who really works towards the Führer along his lines and towards his goal will certainly both now and in the future one day have the finest reward in the form of the sudden legal confirmation of his work.

Werner Willikens quoted in I Kershaw, *Hitler 1889-1936: Hubris*, Penguin Books, London, 1999, p 529.

Source C: Ian Kershaw

Individuals seeking material gain through career advancement in party or state bureaucracy, the small businessman aiming to destroy a competitor through a slur on his 'aryan' credentials, or ordinary citizens settling scores with neighbours by denouncing them to the Gestapo were all, in a way, 'working towards the Führer' [...] Time after time, Hitler set the barbaric tone, whether in hate-filled public speeches giving a green light to discriminatory action against Jews and other 'enemies of the state', or in closed addresses to Nazi functionaries or military leaders. [...] There was never any shortage of willing helpers, far from being confined to party activists, ready to 'work towards the Führer' to put the mandate into operation.

I Kershaw, 'Working Towards the Führer': Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship', *Contemporary European History*, 2, no. 2 (July 1993): 117.

Source D: Fritz Wiedemann, Hitler's personal adjutant, 1965

Hitler normally appeared shortly before lunch, quickly read through the newspaper cuttings of Reich Press Chief Otto Dietrich, and then went to lunch. When Hitler stayed at the Obersalzberg [Hitler's holiday house] it was even worse. There he never left his room before two in the afternoon. Then he went to lunch. He spent most afternoons taking a walk. In the evenings, straight after dinner, there were films.

Fritz Wiedemann, quoted in L Rees, *The Nazis: A Warning from History*, Ebury Publishing, London, 2012, p 86.

Source E: Otto Dietrich, Hitler's press secretary, 1955

In the twelve years of his rule in Germany, Hitler produced the biggest confusion in government that has ever existed in a civilised state. I've sometimes secured decisions from him – even ones about important matters – without his ever asking to see the relevant files. He took the view that many things sorted themselves out on their own if one did not interfere.

Otto Dietrich, quoted in M Munn, *Hitler and the Nazi Cult of Celebrity*, Biteback Publishing, London, 2012, p 243.

Questions

1. In Source A, what does Walther Darré see as Hitler's role in the Nazi State?
2. Account for the perspective of Source A.
3. Using Source B, what does Werner Willikens mean when he encourages individuals to 'work towards the Führer'?
4. Assess the value of Sources A and B for a historian studying how government operated in the Third Reich.
5. Evaluate Sources D and E as evidence for the nature of Hitler's rule in Germany, 1933–39.
6. Discuss the role other important figures played in the Third Reich. In your response, integrate evidence from Sources A, B and C.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Use the terms 'autocratic' and 'polycratic' in a paragraph describing the role of Hitler in the Third Reich.
2. Describe the role of women in the leadership of Nazi Germany and in the Nazi Party.
3. *Gauleiter* and *Reichsleiter* were party positions, while Minister was a position in the government. Explain the relationship between party and government in Nazi Germany. How might this have shaped the role of prominent individuals in the Nazi State?

The legal foundations of the dictatorship

Nazism pursued a legal path to power from 1924. This legality underpinned the consolidation of the National Socialist dictatorship and the demolition of the Weimar system. In effect, the institutions of the Republic and democracy, the Reichstag and the rule of law, were used to destroy the republican system. The first years of the regime are characterised by legislation that consolidated the party's political power. After that, laws based on principles of race and social integration, were used to create the new social order, the *Volksgemeinschaft*.

Control of the state

During the consolidation of power laws were enacted that centralised control of government, civil service, justice, and the police into Nazi hands (see Chapter 3 pages 91–95). The *Decree for the Protection of the People and the Reich* (February 1933) initially allowed the Nazis to deal with their political enemies, most notably the German Communist Party. Article 1 of this Act stated:

Sections [...] of the Constitution of the German Reich are suspended until further notice. Therefore, restrictions on personal liberty, on the right of free expression of opinion, including freedom of the press, on the right of assembly and the right of association, and violations of the privacy of postal, telegraphic, and telephonic communications, warrants for house searches, orders for confiscations, as well as restrictions on property, are also permissible beyond the legal limits otherwise prescribed.²

The Nazi state was also able to centralise its power by introducing a series of laws. The *Enabling Act* (March 1933) created unlimited power for the Nazi regime. To show the importance of the *Enabling Act*, it was twice renewed in 1937 and 1939. Further to this, a *Decree for the Defence Against Malicious Attacks Against the Government* was also signed in March 1933. From that point onward, any person found guilty of making or simply passing on a statement which might cause 'serious damage' to the state and government could be given a prison sentence. The *Law for the Reconstruction of the Reich* (January 1934) abolished all German state governments and further centralised Berlin's power. After the death of President von Hindenburg, the *Law on the Head of State of the German Reich* on 1 August 1934 effectively removed all constitutional and legal constraints on Hitler's power by replacing the constitutional role of the state with that of the Führer's 'single will'.

The *Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service* (April 1933) legitimised the removal of those deemed 'unreliable' from the civil administration, including officials, teachers and academics, or the judiciary. The law also prevented Jews, with some exceptions, from working in the civil service. In Prussia alone, 643 Jewish judges were dismissed, while of the 122 Supreme Court judges across Germany, the only one who was a member of the SPD was dismissed for being 'politically suspect'. This politicisation of

the law saw a dramatic thinning of the ranks of lawyers. In Prussia in 1933 there had been 18 038 practising lawyers; by 1935 this number had dropped to only 5424. The People's Court, the *Volksgerichtshof*, was established in April 1934 to deal with cases of treason. In 1937 alone, this court convicted 5255 individuals of high treason.

Racial laws

Laws defining the status of different races reflected Nazism's ideological outlook that placed race at the centre of their worldview. The foremost priority was to create a 'racially pure' society. In July 1933 they created the *Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases* which allowed for the compulsory sterilisation of those deemed 'hereditarily ill'. This law came into effect in 1934 with 62 400 people being sterilised against their will. Three hundred thousand individuals had been sterilised by 1939. The *Marriage Health Law* of October 1935 banned marriages between the 'hereditarily healthy' and those deemed racially unfit. In October 1939 Hitler signed a decree that began the program of euthanising disabled people.

In September 1935 the *Reich Citizenship Law* and the *Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour*, collectively known as the Nuremberg Laws, were introduced. These laws embodied the racial theories underpinning Nazi ideology. According to the *Reich Citizenship Law*, only people of 'German or kindred blood' could be citizens of Germany. A supplementary decree published the next day, established a legal definition of Jewishness on biological grounds. The *Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour* banned marriage and sexual relations between Germans and Jews. Interracial relationships were considered 'race defilement' (*Rassenschande*) and attracted harsh punishments.

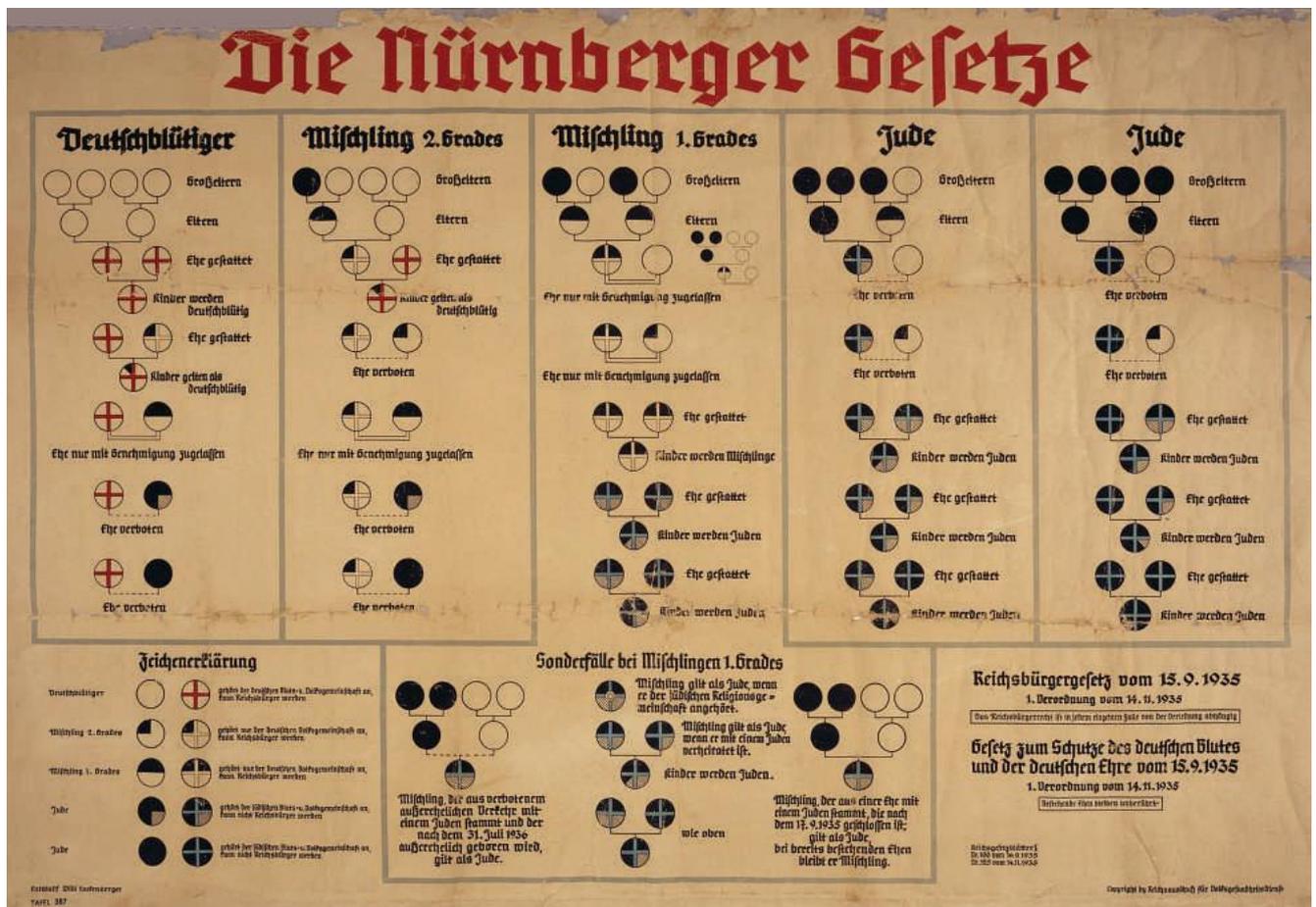


FIGURE 4.7 A poster used to illustrate the racial categories described in the Nuremberg Laws. Use an online dictionary to translate the key terms into English.

Romani and Sinti

ethnic minority peoples of Indo-European origin, who traditionally led nomadic lives

Racialised laws extended to other groups in society, including homosexual people and the **Romani** and **Sinti** peoples. Homosexuality had been illegal during Weimar Germany but in 1935 the Nazis added Paragraph 175a to the Criminal Code, which made penalties for homosexual acts harsher, introducing a penalty of imprisonment for up to 10 years. It is estimated that between 10 000 and 15 000 homosexual people were imprisoned in concentration camps. From 1935 onwards many of Germany's 30 000 Romani peoples were imprisoned in work camps. This persecution was framed less in the false science of racism and more on social arguments that the Romani and Sinti peoples were workshy and asocial.

TABLE 4.2 Prosecutions under the Paragraph 175 (homosexuality) law in Germany from 1926. In 1935 the Nazis strengthened this law by making it a felony (increasing the length of imprisonment).

Year	Convictions	Year	Convictions
1926	1040	1933	957
1927	848	1934	1069
1928	804	1935	2363
1929	837	1936	5801
1930	804	1937	9244
1931	665	1938	9536
1932	801	1939	8963

H-G Stümke and R Finkler, *Rosa Winkel, Rosa Listen*, Rowohlt, Hamburg, 1985, p 262.

Integrating society

In addition to laws pertaining to power and race, the Nazi government introduced laws to bring German society into line. These laws included the 1933 *Work Order Act* which mandated that business owners and managers were designated as 'factory leaders' and were responsible not only for the successful operation of their business but also for the well-being of their 'followers' (employees). This replicated the concept of 'national community' within individual businesses. In June 1935 the *Reich Labour Act* declared that all men aged between 18 and 25 had to complete six months of work in the Reich Labour Service, usually on civic or agricultural projects, before they undertook military service. For women, Labour Service time became compulsory in 1939. The Reich Labour Service helped indoctrinate German young men into a military lifestyle. In April 1936 Hitler gave control of the Four-Year Plan to Göring, thereby superseding Minister of Economics Schacht. The Four-Year Plan was created to accelerate Germany's rearmament program and prepare the country for self-sufficiency within four years. Later, laws that were tied to the Four-Year Plan gave anyone caught transferring wealth outside of Germany the death penalty.

Social laws, such as the *Law of the Hitler Youth* introduced in December 1936, integrated all youth organisations into the Nazi system and concentrated power under the leadership of Baldur von Schirach. In 1939 a further law made the Hitler Youth and League of German Girls (BDM) membership compulsory for all German Youth.

Source Study 4.2 The legal foundations of the dictatorship

Source A: Extracts from the Nuremberg Laws, 15 September 1935

Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour

1. Marriages between Jews and nationals of German or kindred blood are forbidden. Marriages concluded in defiance of this law are void, even if, for the purpose of evading this law, they are concluded abroad.

Reich Citizenship Law

(1) A citizen of the Reich may be only one who is of German or kindred blood, and who, through his behaviour, shows that he is both desirous and personally fit to serve loyally the German people and the Reich.

(2) An individual of mixed Jewish blood is one who is descended from one or two grandparents who, racially, were full Jews, insofar that he is not a Jew according to Section 2 of Article 5. Full-blooded Jewish grandparents are those who belonged to the Jewish religious community.

ARTICLE 4

(1) A Jew cannot be a citizen of the Reich. He cannot exercise the right to vote; he cannot hold public office.

ARTICLE 5

(1) A Jew is an individual who is descended from at least three grandparents who were, racially, full Jews ...

Source B: Law on the Hitler Youth, 1 December 1936

The future of the German Nation depends upon its youth, and German youth shall have to be prepared for its future duties. Therefore, the Government of the Reich has prepared the following law which is being published herewith:

1. All of the German youth in the Reich is organized within the Hitler Youth.
2. The German Youth besides being reared within the family and school, shall be educated physically, intellectually, and morally in the spirit of National Socialism to serve the people and community, through the Hitler Youth.
3. The task of educating the German Youth through the Hitler Youth is being entrusted to the Reich Leader of German Youth in the NSDAP. He is the "Youth Leader of the German Reich". The position of his office is that of a higher governmental Agency with its seat in Berlin, and is directly responsible to the Fuehrer and the Chancellor of the Reich.
4. All regulations necessary for the execution and completion of this law will be issued by the Fuehrer Chancellor of the Reich.

Law on the Hitler Youth (December 1, 1936) in United States Chief Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*. Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1946. Volume 3, Document 001-PS – Document 1406-PS. Document 1392-PS, pp 972–73.

Questions

1. Explain the significance of Source A.
2. Assess the value of Source B for a historian studying the function of laws in the Nazi State.
3. Evaluate the significance of laws to the implementation of Nazi policy. In your response, integrate evidence from Sources A and B and your own knowledge.
4. Evaluate the significance of ideology in Nazi social policy with reference to Sources A and B and your own knowledge.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was the purpose of the *Decree for the Protection of the People and the Reich*?
2. Which law legitimised the removal of those deemed unreliable from the civil administration?
3. Describe the laws used by the Nazis to assert their control over Germany.
4. Evaluate the view that the Nazi consolidation was a 'legal takeover' of power.

Terror and repression

terror

the use of or threat of violence for political purposes

repression

the limitation of an individual's right to take part in political and/or social activities

Terror and **repression** played primary roles in limiting and restricting opposition to the party and the Nazi dictatorship. Most Nazi acts of terror and repression were targeted towards three groups: political opponents, those considered 'deviant', and racial aliens (particularly the Jews). The instruments of terror and repression were primarily under the authority of the SS and Heinrich Himmler. It should also be noted that other agencies in the Nazi State, including the party, the judiciary, civil service and health authorities, were expected to exercise social and political control.

Concentration camps

The *Enabling Act* in March 1933 allowed the Nazis to create a prison system of their own: the concentration camps. Initially operated by the SA in 1933 in their early role as 'auxiliary police', 70 'wild' concentration camps were established in disused factories, basements, castles and work sites, and even on an old tugboat. By the end of June 1933, concentration camps in Prussia alone contained about 60 000 political prisoners, mainly SPD and KPD members.



FIGURE 4.8 The entrance to the Dachau concentration camp in Bavaria today

In March 1933 the Dachau concentration camp in Bavaria was opened to house political opponents, mainly communists and socialists. A few months later Oranienburg was opened in Berlin. In 1937 a camp at Buchenwald and in 1938 another named Neuengamme was opened. In May 1939 Ravensbrück was built to house female prisoners, mainly Jehovah's Witnesses and Romani. Concentration camps under the SA were initially unregulated, but this changed when Himmler and the SS took over. In early 1934 Himmler assigned Theodore Eicke to create regulations for managing prisoners but this did not make the camps any less barbaric. Eicke tightened discipline and punishment regulations and introduced the infamous blue-and-white-striped 'pyjamas' that came to symbolise prisoners in the camp system.

TABLE 4.3 Concentration camp inmate numbers, 1934–39

Year	Inmates
October 1934	2400
Summer 1935	3800
November 1936	4761
December 1937	7746
June 1938	24 000
November 1938	50 000
December 1938	31 600
September 1939	21 400

N Wachsmann, *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps*, Hachette, London, 2015, p 627.

Concentration camps were seen as an economic resource for the SS from 1938. After the *Anschluss* with Austria in March 1938, a new camp at Mauthausen was opened with the prisoners labouring in a nearby granite quarry. Between 1933 and 1939 the camps housed mostly political prisoners and those classified by the Nazis as 'asocials', such as habitual criminals, homosexuals, Romani, the homeless, alcoholics, prostitutes, pimps and the 'work-shy'. Some 10 000 asocials were arrested and interned in concentration camps during the work-shy campaign of June 1938. In the pre-war period prisoner numbers peaked with the incorporation of Austria and the Sudetenland into Germany, and the 35 000 Jews who were arrested in the immediate aftermath of *Kristallnacht* (see Table 4.3).

Gestapo and State Police

In April 1933 the Secret State Police, known as the Gestapo, was created as an independent branch of the Ministry of the Interior, nominally under Göring's control. At the same time, politically suspect police leaders were dismissed and replaced by loyal Nazis. In Bavaria, for example, Himmler (the leader of the SS) became the chief of police. In 1934 control of the Gestapo passed to Himmler, who thereby obtained a unified political police force throughout the Reich. Following the Night of the Long Knives, the SS secured its independence from the SA. With Himmler's control of the Gestapo, and the concentration camp system for those arrested under 'protective custody', a centralised and coordinated apparatus of terror was formed. During the 1930s the SS had several key subsidiary policing and intelligence organisations. These included:

- SD – concerned with investigations and security, under Reinhard Heydrich
- Regular Police – uniformed police
- Kripo – criminal police
- Sipo – security police.

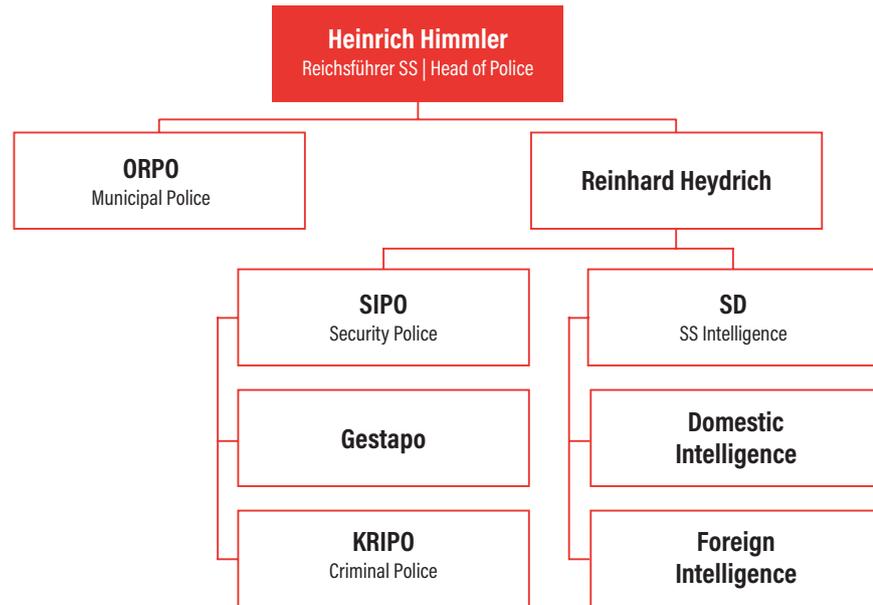


FIGURE 4.9 Structure of the SS and police apparatus in Nazi Germany

The final components of the SS police state were implemented in 1936. Firstly, the Prussian *Gestapo Law* gave authority over local police offices to the Gestapo. It also decreed that in carrying out investigations, the Gestapo could not be held to account. Finally, Himmler was appointed head of the entire German police force. Besides increasing Himmler's power significantly, it also meant that the SS was independent of the Ministry of the Interior.



FIGURE 4.10 Members of the Gestapo process new arrivals at a concentration camp.

The Gestapo focused on all things considered political in nature. Communists and socialists were most obviously political enemies. In the Third Reich, however, the political was more broadly imagined. Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses, Romani, homosexuals, abortionists, even members of a Polish cultural group, or those who spread rumours or read anti-Nazi literature, were all considered 'enemies of the people'.

Despite its image as all-seeing and all-knowing, the Gestapo was actually quite limited in size and not well resourced. In 1934, the Gestapo office in Berlin had 645 staff while all 33 regional offices combined had 1025 officials. Across Germany, there were only 7000 Gestapo personnel in 1937. This meant that in reality the Gestapo were generally behind on their cases and their paperwork. It also meant that as they were so stretched for personnel, the Gestapo relied to some extent on *V-Leute* (paid informers) or members of the public for information and tip-offs.

The Nazis tried to sustain a public interest in 'law and order'. This evolved into a nationwide event, the Day of German Police, that was first held in 1934. This was a day in which the relationship between the police and the people was celebrated with parades, demonstrations and events. It proved so popular that by 1937 it had turned into a week-long event.

Consent and coercion debate

A key part of the debate about control in Nazi Germany is whether the bulk of the German population needed to be terrorised to support the Nazi regime or not. At the beginning of the Third Reich, terror and repression were quite prominent as the Nazis sought to gain total control. However, after the initial consolidation of power, terror and repression gave way to what appears to be the general compliance of the population. This has been attributed to Hitler's economic and foreign policy 'successes' and not fear.

Consent argument

The consent argument suggests that the vast majority of Germans willingly followed the Nazi program and did not fear nor require terror or repression to follow the Nazi policies.

- Nazi terror only targeted selected enemies, such as asocials, communists, and Jews.
- The low number of Gestapo staff suggest that terror was largely perceived, rather than actual.
- Numbers of concentration camp inmates remained low.
- Support for the regime was high as seen in the large numbers of denunciations and *V-Leute* that the Gestapo were able to use.

Coercion argument

On the other hand, a convincing case can be argued that suggests coercion and not consent was a major factor in repression and control in Nazi Germany. This view is based on several valid points.

- The Nazis never won a free election, indicating that the majority of the population were not on their side.
 - The significant terror that was applied by the Nazis in the 1933–34 era had a lasting effect.
 - The Gestapo was only one facet of a terror system; other agencies, including the Nazi Party, Wehrmacht, civil courts and justice system, civil authorities, and health and welfare, all played a part in applying terror.
 - The role that fear and rumour played in controlling the population.
 - Civil prisoner numbers rose dramatically, from 69 000 in 1932 to 122 000 by 1937.
 - Convictions for treason and high treason in civil courts increased so that by 1937, 5255 people were found guilty of treason.
 - Complete loss of the rule of law was seen in the *Gestapo Law* of February 1936, when the Gestapo became immune to any wrongful acts. The radicalisation of justice was also evident in Himmler being appointed the Chief of the German Police in June 1936.
-

Question

1. Outline the nature of the consent versus coercion argument. Identify which argument you find more convincing using three pieces of evidence to support your argument.

Source Study 4.3 Terror and repression

Source A: The denunciation of Ilse Sonja Totzke

This denunciation was sent to the Würzburg Gestapo by the 20-year-old neighbour of Ms Totzke, who was arrested shortly after and sent to a concentration camp.

Since March 1938 Ilse Sonja Totzke is a resident next door to us in a garden cottage. I noticed the above-named [Ms Totzke] because she is of Jewish appearance ... I should like to mention that Miss Totzke never responds to the German greeting 'Heil Hitler.' I gathered from what she was saying that her attitude was anti-German. [...] Now and then a woman of about 36 years old comes and she is of Jewish appearance ... To my mind, Miss Totzke is behaving suspiciously. [...] Every German can and must know the laws, only they do not appear to exist for Fräulein Totzke.

Würzburg Gestapo file 16015 quoted in P Hayes (ed.), *Lessons and Legacies I: The Meaning of the Holocaust in a Changing World*, Holocaust Educational Foundation, Illinois, 1991, p 362.

Source B: Richard Evans, historian

How much does the practice of denunciation actually reveal about people's attitudes to the regime? What it does not reveal, to begin with, is that Nazi Germany was a 'self-policing society', as Gellately claimed ... [...] In practice, of course, denunciation was extremely rare: there were only between three and fifty-one denunciations a year in Lippe [German city] where the population was 176,000, during the Third Reich, for instance; and a relatively high proportion of denouncers were members of the Nazi Party – 42 percent in Augsburg, for example. In Düsseldorf, some 26 percent of Gestapo investigations were triggered by denunciations from members of the general population; the other three-quarters were initiated by Gestapo officers or informers, Nazi Party organisations, the criminal police and the SS, and state authorities of one kind and another. In addition, a study of recently declassified Gestapo files for the Koblenz and Trier region has revealed that the Gestapo made extensive use of paid informers and also kept a register of unpaid informers, whom they did not scruple to use repeatedly, around a third of these people were members of the Nazi Party or its affiliated organisations.

R Evans, 'Coercion and Consent in Nazi Germany', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 151, 2007, p 74.

Source C: Robert Gellately, historian

There is considerable support in the documentation on Nazi Germany, especially from the Gestapo files, that the Nazi terror constituted a radical version of a 'self-policing' society. Thanks to denunciations from the population, it was possible for a remarkably small number of Gestapo and other officials to police not only the public but also the private spheres of social life. Above all, these denunciations made possible the myth of the Gestapo as 'all-knowing' and 'ever-present'. The systems of policing and self-policing worked in tandem [...] The Gestapo was dependent on denunciations and received them routinely at least until the system began to falter in the last year of the war.

R Gellately, 'Denunciations in Twentieth-Century Germany', *The Journal of Modern History*, 68, 4, (Dec, 1996), p 965.

Questions

1. What does Source A suggest Ms Totzke was guilty of?
2. Evaluate Source A as evidence for historians to investigate the nature of National Socialist rule in Germany between 1933 and 1939.
3. Compare and contrast the assessments of the Nazi system of terror expressed in Sources B and C.
4. Evaluate the significance of the Nazis' use of terror and repression between 1933 and 1939. In your response, integrate evidence from Sources B and C and your own knowledge.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Which groups were targeted for Nazi terror and repression?
2. What methods and apparatus did the Nazis use to terrorise and repress their opponents?
3. Outline the creation of the concentration camp system.
4. What was the nature of the Gestapo in the Third Reich? Identify its strengths and weaknesses.

Nazi propaganda and censorship

The Nazis' oversight of the media and arts served two main parallel functions. The party's propaganda tended to emphasise and celebrate the achievements of the regime, promote policy or 'enlighten' citizens. Concurrently, the same institution also limited and restricted the types of information that the public could access. This restriction of information was a form of censorship. This complex system of controlling the flow of news and information was overseen by Joseph Goebbels, as Minister of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment. This control was applied across all aspects of the arts and media through the Reich Chamber of Culture, an agency which could determine the right of an artist to paint and exhibit their works or for authors to be able to publish their writings. It was, arguably, through the newer mass mediums of radio, press and film, that Nazism's techniques of propaganda and enlightenment were clearest.

After his appointment to the position, Goebbels announced his goals at a press conference:

It is not enough for people to be more or less reconciled to our regime, to be persuaded to adopt a neutral attitude towards us, rather we want to work on people until they have capitulated to us ... the new ministry has no other aim than to unite the nation behind the ideal of the national revolution ... it must be our task to instil in these propaganda facilities a modern feeling. Technology must not be allowed to proceed ahead of the Reich, the Reich must go along with technology ...³

During the rise to power, propaganda played an important part in mobilising support for the NSDAP. In power its function necessarily changed. Historian David Welch suggests that Nazi propaganda simply reinforced for Nazi voters the 'rightness' of what they were doing. It was as much about confirming as about converting public opinion. He also suggests that Nazi propaganda was not able to convert those who were adamantly anti-Nazi, and at least ensured 'passive' support for the regime among non-Nazi Germans.⁴ So while Goebbels may not have achieved his goal of capitulation, censorship and propaganda was an integral element of the Nazi dictatorship.

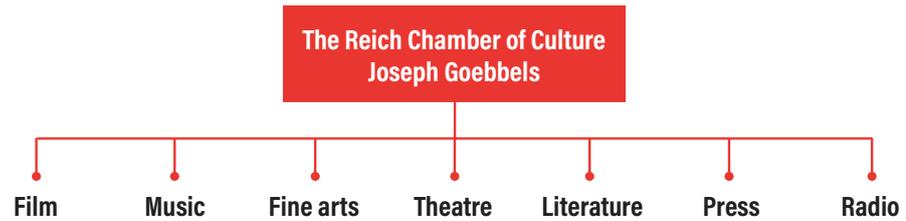


FIGURE 4.11 Established in September 1933, the Reich Chamber of Culture oversaw all aspects of the arts and media in the Third Reich.



FIGURE 4.12 A poster promoting the low-cost people's radio. The poster reads: 'All Germany can hear the Führer with the People's Receiver.'

Radio

A major tool of Nazi propaganda was radio. Hitler's speeches were readily adaptable to this emerging form of mass communication. On 1 April 1934, the Reich Radio Company was formed to unify the broadcasting system. The Nazi government also established a program to make radios affordable. The *Volksempfänger* (people's receiver), produced in a range of models, greatly expanded the reach of radio broadcasts over the period between 1933 and 1939. By 1939, over 70 per cent of German households – more than anywhere else in the world – had a radio set. Radio broadcasts, however, were not a constant barrage of Hitler speeches. Rather, in recognition that constant propaganda would be more likely to undermine power, radio was largely focused on entertainment with the broadcasting of major speeches, rather than all political speeches. While the *Volksempfänger* radios were generally only suitable for picking up local signals, at night it was possible to listen to international broadcasts. Once the war started in 1939, doing so became punishable by death.

Print media

In 1933 Germany boasted more daily newspapers than the combined totals of Britain, France and Italy. Although no national newspaper existed, most large German cities had four or five daily papers. Many major newspapers had political

affiliations and each of the major parties enjoyed the support of their own newspapers. On coming to power, the Nazis owned 59 daily newspapers, with a combined circulation of 782 121. In April 1933 the German Press Association, the guild which regulated entry into the profession, 'coordinated' itself by making Nazi Party Press Chief Otto Dietrich its chairman. It thereafter required all journalists to be registered with it and to follow its instructions. In June, the Newspaper Publishers Association appointed the Ehrer Verlag (the Nazis' publishing house) chief, Max Amann, as their chairman.

Censorship was established with the *Editors Law* of October 1933, which banned non-Aryans from being journalists. Paragraph 14 of the law set out the regime's demand that editors must omit anything 'calculated to weaken the strength of the Reich abroad or at home.' In December 1933 the Propaganda Ministry created the state press agency, the

Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro, which provided 'guidance' to the press. In addition, the Ministry of Propaganda held daily briefings outlining what was to be printed or not. Through the 1930s the Nazi Party's publishing house gradually acquired ownership of the vast majority of the German press, so that, by 1939, the Nazis controlled two-thirds of the print media. As the party tightened its control over print media, the number of publications declined. In 1933 approximately 10 000 periodicals and journals were being published in Germany every year. By 1938 the figure had reduced to 5000.

Nazism and film

As with other sectors of the media, the Nazis established control of the German film industry in 1933. Early legislation prevented Jews from working in acting roles or behind the scenes. The Reich Film Chamber provided 'positive censorship' – ensuring that all films were censored before going into production. In February 1934 the Reich Cinema Law introduced a system where films regarded as 'politically valuable' were exempt from tax. By 1936 the state was financing more than 73 per cent of all German feature films. After 1938 cinema owners could not refuse to show a film regarded as 'politically valuable'. The Nazis also brought films to a wider audience. The Regional Film Service organised 121 345 screenings that were attended by 21 million Germans in 1935 alone.

In practice, however, very few films were overtly political or propagandist in nature. A number, including *SA-Mann Brand*, *Hitlerjunge Quex* and *Hans Westmar*, celebrated the struggle for power. Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935) and *Olympiade* (1938) combined celebrations of Hitler, the party and physicality in state-sponsored art productions. Documentaries and newsreels similarly carried overtly political messages.

More prevalent were films designed to be entertaining. Goebbels himself did not believe that film should be used as 'heavy-handed' propaganda but preferred that film was entertaining and escapist. The bulk of German movies in the 1930s were therefore dramas, love stories or comedies. American films also remained popular under the Nazis until they were banned in 1940. For example, 64 of the 214 feature films released in German cinemas in 1933 were made in the United States.



FIGURE 4.13 The ritual pageantry of the Nazi Party's Nuremberg rally was captured vividly in Leni Riefenstahl's 1935 film, *Triumph of the Will*. The film centralised Hitler as a messianic figure, promoted the unity of the *Volksgemeinschaft* and blurred the lines between art and propaganda.

Source Study 4.4 Nazi propaganda and censorship

Source A: Poster from the 1936 referendum



FIGURE 4.14 The poster reads: 'Before: Unemployment, hopelessness, desolation, strikes, lockouts. Today: Work, joy, discipline, camaraderie. Give the Führer your vote!'

Source B: Goebbels to staff, March 1933

I consider radio to be the most modern and most crucial instrument that exists for influencing the masses ... First principle: At all costs avoid being boring. I put that before everything ... You must use your imagination ... bring the masses the new attitude in a way which is modern, up to date, interesting, and appealing; interesting, instructive, but not schoolmasterish.

Goebbels quoted in J Laver, *Nazi Germany 1933–1945*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1991, p 25.

Source C: Extract from the *Editors Law*, October 1933 (Article 3.3)

(3) The Reich minister for popular enlightenment and propaganda will determine which publications are to be considered political by the terms of this law. If the publication is dedicated to a specific subject, then this decision is to be made in consultation with the highest Reich or regional authorities concerned.

A Rabinbach and SL Gilman, *The Third Reich Sourcebook*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2013, p 467.

Source D: *Manchester Guardian*, 25 June 1935

Owing to the lack of trustworthy papers news is now circulated in Germany by word of mouth, with the inevitable consequences. The official organ of the Reich Press Association recently published an article upon what it called 'The Spoken Newspaper.' The writer admitted that the newspapers in Nazi Germany were not fulfilling their proper function. 'It almost forces readers to satisfy their curiosity and desire elsewhere,' he admitted. 'The Spoken Newspaper' may be utter nonsense or malicious gossip, but the fact that it exists is a warning signal for us newspaper men.

Manchester Guardian, 25 June 1935, p 9.

Questions

1. What is the value of Sources A and B for a historian studying the role of Nazi propaganda?
2. How important was propaganda to the development of Nazi control? In your response integrate evidence from Sources A and B and your own knowledge.
3. To what extent was Nazi censorship of information effective in achieving Nazi goals during the period between 1933 and 1939? In your answer integrate evidence from Sources C and D.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Identify four key themes in Nazi propaganda between 1933 and 1939.
 2. Explain the Nazi methods for controlling all forms of art and media in the Third Reich.
 3. Outline the extent to which the Nazis used radio as a propaganda device.
 4. What was the nature of Nazi control of film in Germany?
 5. Describe the measures used to control newspaper and print media in Germany.
-

Further resources

M Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*, Hill & Wang, London, 2001.

R Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, Penguin, London, 2005.

I Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, Bloomsbury, London, 2015.

I Kershaw, *The Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in the Third Reich*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987.

D Welch, *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda*, Routledge, Oxford, 1993.

Weblinks

German History in Images and Documents

<https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org>

German Propaganda Archive

<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/>

Activities

Bringing it together

1. Define the Hitler myth and explain its significance in understanding the role of Hitler in the Third Reich. Find three primary sources that illustrate aspects of the Hitler myth and annotate them. In small groups or as a class, share the results of your research.
2. Individually, or in small groups, select a member of the party leadership from the table on pages 108–9. Create an annotated timeline of their involvement and contribution to Nazi Germany and find three quotes and three primary sources associated with this individual from 1933 to 1939. Using the identified sources and quotations, evaluate their role in the Third Reich over the same period. Integrate evidence from the source and your own knowledge.
3. Create a summary table of key laws used to exercise control over the political, economic and social aspects of German life between 1933 and 1939. Remember to include laws discussed in Chapter 3. The table should include the following headings: Year, Title, Description, Consequences. Rank the laws in terms of effect on the German population and write a paragraph justifying your selections.
4. 'The National Socialist state was built on legal foundations.' Evaluate this statement in an extended response.
5. Create a diagram illustrating the relationship between the Party, government, the law and policing in the Third Reich. Describe the relationships you identify in one paragraph.
6. In small groups or as a class, evaluate the usefulness to historians of the ideas of consent and coercion in understanding the nature of control in Germany between 1933 and 1939.
7. Create a table detailing the methods used by the Nazi Party to exercise control. The table should include rows for laws, censorship, repression, terror, propaganda, cult of personality. Columns should include definition, key individuals and organisations, description, and implications and effects.
8. Evaluate the effectiveness of methods used by the Nazi regime to exercise control over Germany between 1933 and 1939, using sources in this chapter and your own knowledge.

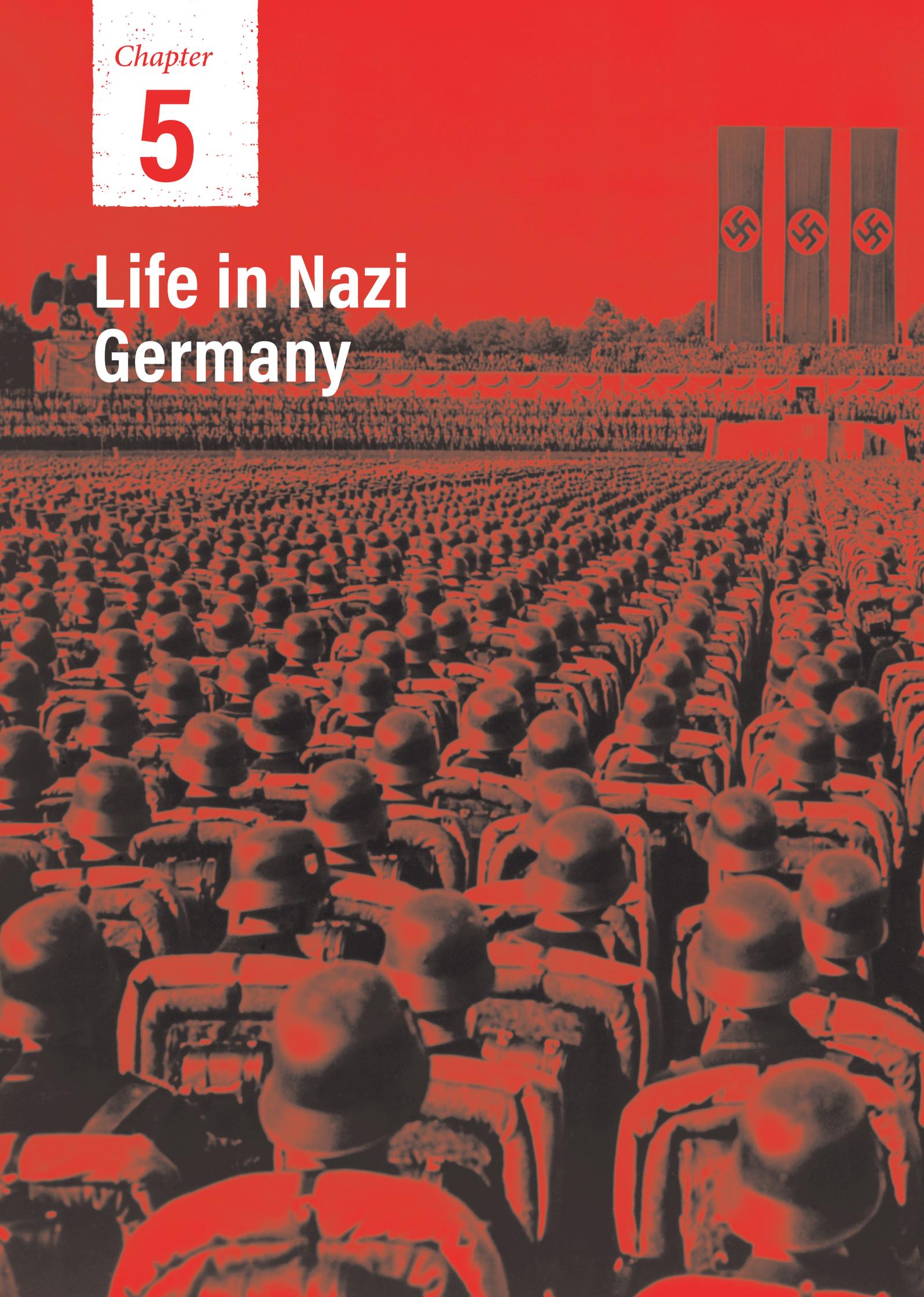
Endnotes

- 1 G Scholtz-Klink, 'Deutsch sein — heißt stark sein. Rede der Reichsfrauenführerin Gertrud Scholtz-Klink zum Jahresbeginn', *N.S. Frauen-Warte*, 4 (1936), pp 501-502 at German Propaganda Archive.
- 2 *Reichsgesetzblatt I*, 1933, Berlin, Reichsverlagsamt, p 83. Trans R Loeffel.
- 3 Goebbels speech, March 1933, quoted in J Noakes and G Pridham (eds), *Documents on Nazism 1919-1945*, Jonathon Cape, London, 1974, p 334.
- 4 D Welch, *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda*, Routledge, Oxford, 1993, p 9.

Chapter

5

Life in Nazi Germany



Volksgemeinschaft

(German) the people's community;
the racially pure German state
imagined by the Nazis

Everyday life in 1930s Germany, and the Nazi social programs that shaped it, was built on the idea of the *Volksgemeinschaft* – a racial-national people's community. The Nazis attempted to unify 'Aryan Germans' in what was imagined to be a harmonious social order and the party left no doubt about who was included and excluded from this community. Their racial hierarchy put Aryans at the top, ranked lesser peoples below them and characterised Jews as corrupting and destructive at the bottom. Racial purity, sacrifice and duty were the watchwords of this supposed racial utopia.

To establish this new totalitarian order, the Nazi Party aimed to permeate all aspects of everyday life. The threat of terror combined with propaganda and censorship, as discussed in Chapter 4, played a significant role. In this chapter we consider the equally significant efforts to control culture, religion and the everyday life of Germany's citizens, in particular workers, young people and women. There was an impetus to reconstruct society in a new and revolutionary manner and the traditional ties of religion, class and family were disrupted and undermined. In addition, this chapter examines the marginalisation and persecution of opponents of the regime and the avenues and forms of resistance open to the German people before 1939.

Cultural expression

If the Nazis were to succeed in reshaping the German mind and will, then cultural expression would have to play a significant role. Art, music, film, literature and architecture would have to reflect a romanticised German past favoured by the Nazis and reject the modernism of the national cultural scene that was thriving in the 1920s.

Germany was the home of intellectual and cultural icons, including Albert Einstein, Marlene Dietrich, Thomas Mann and Bertolt Brecht. Modern science and ideas were thriving and the Weimar constitution was widely regarded as among the most liberal in the world. To the Nazis, the intellectual and material landscape would have to be reshaped and the Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda was established under Joseph Goebbels to oversee this transformation (see Chapter 4, pages 120–22). The arts ceased to be simply art, but became a weapon in the National Socialist racial war.



FIGURE 5.1 Book burning on the night of 10 May 1933. Among the books burned were works by Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Ernest Hemingway, Jack London and H.G. Wells.

Burning books

The first act of the Nazis that was intended to destroy the intellectual foundations of the old order was the book burnings that marked their early days in power. On the night of 10 May 1933, the National Socialist German Students' Association and Nazi officials gathered outside universities and libraries across Germany. There, they removed the works of 'un-German' authors and took them out into public squares and burned them.

Any books opposed to Nazi ideology were destroyed. Works about Marxism, sex and sexuality, pacifism or art were thrown into the flames.

The visual arts

The Nazi movement had been openly hostile to modernism in all its forms, but most particularly in the visual arts. Modernist artists (such as Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee and Oskar Kokoschka) rejected tradition and realism, and experimented with form, style, colour and lines. To Hitler, who was himself a street artist who drew provincial landscapes on postcards, such art embodied un-German values.

Initial steps against modernism included limiting the practice of these supposedly un-German artists, closing the influential Bauhaus design school and the removal of unacceptable artworks from collections and galleries. In 1937, the Nazis gathered and exhibited 650 modern works of art confiscated from public museums across Germany in the Degenerate Art exhibition in Munich. The works of contemporary artists, including Picasso and the German Expressionists Emile Nolde, Otto Dix and Georges Grosz, were hung chaotically with accompanying insulting text, such as ‘Revelation of the Jewish Soul’. The exhibition was later staged in other German cities and proved very popular.

In place of this so-called ‘degenerate’ art, the regime favoured more traditional and conservative styles. Generally representative of and influenced by classicism, National Socialist art celebrated German culture and history, as defined by the Nazis. The party’s years of struggle and the representations of the Führer also figured prominently in this permitted cultural expression.

At the same time as the Degenerate Art exhibition, the Nazis staged a second exhibition. The Great German Art Exhibition at the House of German Art displayed Nazi-approved works that depicted the Aryan norm. In a speech to open the exhibition, Hitler argued that art should follow the ‘law of clarity’ and “Works of art” that cannot be understood on their own, but rather require a pompous user manual to justify their existence.’ He said:

Art is in no way fashion. In the same way that little changes in the nature and blood of our people, art, too, must lose its character of transience; instead, in its continuously intensifying creations, it must be a worthy visual expression of the life’s course of our people. Cubism, Dadaism, Futurism, Impressionism, and so on, have nothing to do with our German people.¹



FIGURE 5.2 Goebbels and Hitler inspected the Degenerate Art exhibition in Munich in 1937. Displayed are the modernist artworks of painters and sculptors.



FIGURE 5.3 The Zeppelin Field speaker’s podium, the site of Hitler’s speeches at Nazi Party rallies outside Nuremberg, embodies the classical elements favoured by the party.

Dadaism

an experimental modernist art movement that emerged during World War I



FIGURE 5.4 This sculpture, *Der Partie* by Arno Breker, stood at the entrance to the Reich Chancellery. The style, as in Fascist Italy, was evocative of classical sculpture.

Nazi architecture

Like painting, architecture of the time was considered by the Nazis to have been corrupted and the party advocated a preferred style inspired by the classical style of ancient Greece and Rome. Major examples of National Socialist architecture were the rally sites outside Nuremberg, the Reich Chancellery in Berlin and the stadium for the 1936 Olympic Games. More than anything else, Nazi architecture conveyed power and monumental scale.

The plans to rebuild Berlin as Germania, the capital of the Third Reich, highlight this obsession with scale. Designed by Albert Speer, the city was redesigned to dwarf existing monuments. The plans included a north-south boulevard

which would be two-and-a-half times Paris' Champs-Élysées; a Great Hall to house 150 000 people; a victory column that would stand 120 metres high (more than two-and-a-half times the height of the Parisian Arc de Triomphe); and a train station to eclipse New York's Central Station.

Source Study 5.1 Cultural expression

Source A: Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*

Sixty years ago an exhibition of so-called dadaistic 'experiences' would have seemed simply impossible and its organisers would have ended up in the madhouse, while today they even preside over art associations. This plague could not appear at that time, because neither would public opinion have tolerated it nor the state calmly look on. For it is the business of the state, in other words, of its leaders, to prevent a people from being driven into the arms of spiritual madness. And this is where such a development would some day inevitably end. For on the day when this type of art really corresponded to the general view of things, one of the gravest transformations of humanity would have occurred: the regressive development of the human mind would have begun and the end would be scarcely conceivable.

Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, translated by R Manheim, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1943, pp 258–259.

Source B: Extract from a speech by Joseph Goebbels, 10 May 1933

... the era of exaggerated Jewish intellectualism is now at an end. The triumph of the German revolution has cleared a path for the German way; and the future of German man will not just be a man of books, but also a man of character and it is to this end we want to educate you ... You do well at this late hour to entrust to the flames the intellectual garbage of the past. It is a strong, great and symbolic undertaking, which shall prove to all the world that the intellectual basis of the November Republic is here overturned; but that from its ruins will arise victorious the lord of a new spirit.

Joseph Goebbels quoted in *Books Burn as Goebbels Speaks*, Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website, accessed 25 July 2021.

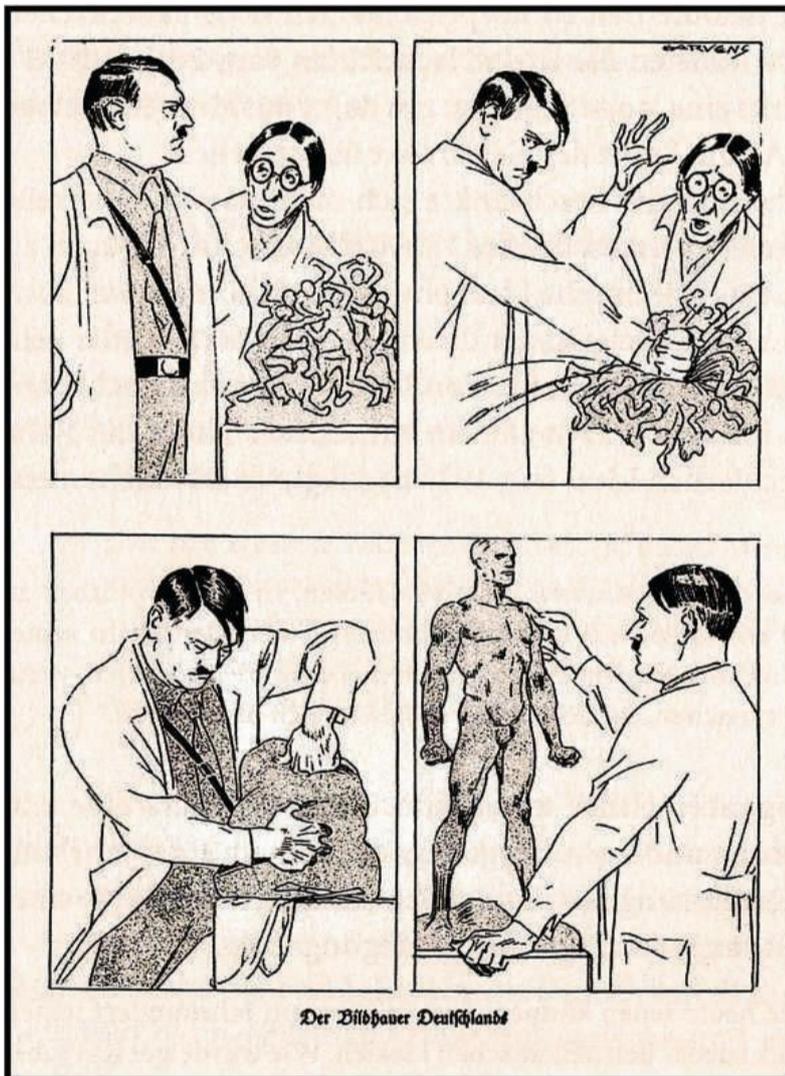
Source C: Nazi cartoon, 1933

FIGURE 5.5 A 1933 Nazi cartoon depicting Hitler as an artist reshaping German society. The caption reads: 'The German sculptor'.

Questions

1. According to Source A, what is Hitler's attitude towards the Dada art movement?
2. Identify three points from Source B that describe Goebbels' attitude towards Jewish ideas.
3. Evaluate Source C as historical evidence of cultural expression in Nazi Germany.
4. What methods did the Nazis use to control cultural expression? In your response, integrate evidence from Sources A, B and C.
5. Contrast the value of Sources B and C to a historian studying the nature of Nazi control of German cultural expression.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain why members of the Nazi Party destroyed books written by Germans.
2. Define 'degenerate art'.
3. Compare the sculpture in Figure 5.4 with the example of Italian Fascist sculpture in Figure 2.21. Account for the stylistic similarities between the two examples.

Religion

The Christian churches had formed an integral part of pre-Nazi society. They were divided between 40 million Protestants of various denominations, and roughly 20 million Catholics. Religious affiliations shaped not just faith but also political and social life. For example, the majority of German Catholics, who tended to live in the nation's south and west, typically voted for the Catholic political parties, the Centre Party and the Bavarian People's Party. This Catholic-shaped social world extended to Catholic trade unions, youth groups, social and charitable organisations, education and even newspapers. Similar parallel organisations existed in the Protestant communities that dominated northern and eastern Germany.

But there were important differences between the Nazi worldview and Christian beliefs. For example, the Nazis emphasised national and racial strength and the elimination of weakness, a view that was fundamentally at odds with Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. It would be difficult to reconcile the two ideas but the Party was able to capitalise on pre-existing tension in the Protestant churches and impose restrictions and limitations on the Catholic Church in order to achieve its broader aims of coordination and social integration.

The split in Protestant Christianity

Nazi attempts to coordinate the Protestant church were centred on the German Evangelical Church. That the Nazis would try to 'coordinate' the various traditions into a national church should not have surprised the clergy. This process of bringing the churches into line with the National Socialist regime was part of the wider process of *Gleichschaltung*. The Nazis won the support of the German Christians, a large Evangelical group sympathetic to the Nationalist Socialist message, who were elected to influential Church council positions in the early 1930s.

In April 1933, as part of the Nazi political reorganisation of Germany, the German Christians announced their intention to abolish the regional organisation of the church and replace it with a central national body. On 23 July 1933 the Reich Church was established, with Hitler's blessing, under the leadership of Bishop Ludwig Müller.

The Reich Church quickly took on the signs and symbols of Nazism: pastors delivered sermons in SA or SS uniforms, flags were lowered, raised or dedicated, and the swastika was hung in church. At the so-called Brown Synod in September 1933, Reich Church leaders called for the removal of the cross from churches and the Old Testament from the Bible on the grounds that they were Jewish. Its leaders declared that Hitler was finishing the work of Martin Luther's Protestant reformation and Bishop Müller used the SA to storm the Evangelical Church headquarters and install his own administration.

All this was too much for some pastors who had been uneasy about the drift away from traditional Christianity during 1933. They organised opposition in the form of the Pastors' Emergency League. Led by Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Niemöller, the League was supported by 6000 pastors and led to the establishment of the **Confessing Church**. This development triggered the *Kirchenkampf*. The church struggle can readily be considered as a form of opposition, by the Confessing Church, to Nazi interference in its doctrine or practices.

Despite the initial successes of the German Christians, the Nazis were forced to admit that early attempts to coordinate the Church had failed. It was one thing to attempt to interfere with the organisation of the Church hierarchy and structure but it was another altogether to attempt to change core Christian doctrine, ritual and symbols. At least in the early stages of the regime, dissent from the pulpit of the Confessing Church remained largely unchallenged.

Gleichschaltung

(German) coordination/bringing into line; used to describe the process of the Nazi Party's integration of German society into a single system

Confessing Church

a religious movement in Nazi Germany opposed to the political interference and unification of all Protestant churches

Kirchenkampf

(German) church struggle; refers broadly to the range of religious conflicts and tensions between Christian churches and the Nazi State

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a leading Lutheran Pastor and head of the Confessing Church. A vocal critic of the German Christians, Bonhoeffer rejected the Nazi influence in the Church and resisted its efforts to change doctrine. Bonhoeffer was particularly incensed by the Aryan Paragraph which attempted to ban pastors of Jewish descent from continuing in the ministry. His resistance to the Nazis resulted in his imprisonment and he was accused of involvement in the wartime 20 July 1944 plot to assassinate Hitler. He awaited trial at Tegel prison in Berlin before eventually being moved to concentration camps in Buchenwald and Flossenburg. He was condemned to death in a military court and hung on the morning of 9 April 1945 – only weeks before US troops liberated the area.

The Catholic Church

The south was both the home of National Socialism and the majority of Germany's 20 million Catholics, and there were mixed attitudes in the Nazi Party towards the Catholics. Hitler and Goebbels admired the size and organisation of the Roman Church, while SS deputy leader Reinhard Heydrich elevated his hatred of Catholics to the same level as the Jews. Whatever the attitude, the Nazis needed to integrate the Catholic Church and population into the National Socialist system.

Traditionally, the Catholics were politically organised around the Centre Party and the Bavarian People's Party. These parties had enjoyed a consistent level of political success throughout the 1920s and represented Catholic interests in the Reichstag. The Nazis needed to neutralise the political wing of the Catholics and they did so with the *Reichskoncordat*, the July 1933 formal agreement between Nazis and the Vatican to protect the Church in return for its commitment to abstain from politics.

But the vague terms of the **concordat** meant that Nazis could meddle in Catholic organisations, ban its newspapers and interfere in charities. It soon became clear that the regime was trying to integrate the Church and its people into the National Socialist system. The Catholic hierarchy was powerless to protest under the terms of the concordat. By 1936, the tensions between the Nazis and Catholic Church were out in the open. Catholic youth were pressured to join the Hitler Youth rather than stay in their church organisations, and Catholic schools began to feel pressure to close.

All of this angered the Catholic Church and on 14 March 1937, Pope Pius XI issued an encyclical called 'Burning with Anxiety' to be read out in every German Catholic church. The encyclical detailed the lists of complaints against the Nazi regime, its ideology and the impact on the Church. Hitler was furious. The Gestapo seized Catholic printing presses and confiscated every copy from Catholic offices. Nazi newspapers were silent on the matter. Some of Hitler's advisers suggested that he tear up the concordat, but he showed restraint. Fracturing relations with the Vatican would pose a political problem in the south of Germany and Austria. The concordat remained, but persecution increased.

Other religions, particularly the German Jewish communities and Jehovah's Witnesses, experienced persecution under the Nazi dictatorship (see pages 145–9).



FIGURE 5.6 Dietrich Bonhoeffer is commemorated as a martyr to his faith in this sculpture at Westminster Cathedral, London.

concordat

an agreement between the Vatican and a nation-state

Source Study 5.2 Religion

Source A: A letter from Bonhoeffer to his grandmother

Our work here gives us both trouble and pleasure. We want to attempt to extract from the 'German Christians' some answer about their intentions. Whether we shall succeed is certainly very doubtful. For even if they nominally give some ground in their formulations, they are under such powerful pressure that sooner or later all promises must be overborne. It has become ever more evident to me that we are to be given a great popular national Church, whose nature cannot be reconciled with Christianity, and that we must prepare our minds for the entirely new paths which we shall then have to follow. The question is really: Christianity or Germanism? And the sooner the conflict is revealed in the clear light of day the better.

Bonhoeffer quoted in E Metexas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 2010, p 185.

Source B: Extract from *The Cross of Christ and the Swastika* pamphlet

The author, Gerhard Hahn, was a leader of the German Christians.

The cross of Christ and the swastika do not need to oppose each other, and must not do so, but rather they can and should stand together. One should not dominate the other, but rather each should maintain its own meaning and significance ... The old gospel with new strength! It is not that we want to add something to the divine power of the gospel. However, God's call that rings through our age demands that we put our strength to new and better use for the gospel.

Extract from G Hahn, *The Cross of Christ and the Swastika*, at German Propaganda Archive website, accessed 29 March 2021.

Source C: The Nazi grace

Führer, my Führer, bequeathed to me by the Lord,
 Protect and preserve me as long as I live!
 Thou hast rescued Germany from deepest distress,
 I thank thee today for my daily bread,
 Abideth thou long with me, forsaketh me not,
 Führer, my Führer, my faith, and my light!
 Heil, Mein Führer

Nazi grace, quoted in GL Mosse, *Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Social and Cultural Life in the Third Reich*, Schocken Books, New York, 1987, p 241.

Source D: Article 1 of the *Reichskoncordat*, July 1933

Article 1

The German Reich guarantees the freedom of the profession and public practice of the Catholic religion. It recognises the right of the Catholic Church, within the limits of the law that applies to all, to regulate and administer her own affairs independently, and, within the framework of her competence, to publish laws and ordinances binding on her members.

Concordat between the Holy See and the German Reich, July 20, 1933, in United States Department of State, *Documents on German Foreign Policy: From the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry*, Series C (1933-1937), The Third Reich: First Phase, Volume 1: January 30 – October 14, 1933. Document Number 371, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1957-1964, pp 669-78.

Source E: Historian Fritz Stern on the concordat

The Concordat was [Hitler's] first international agreement, and it vastly enhanced his respectability in Germany and abroad. A great moral authority had trusted his word. But did the Vatican ... really believe that National Socialism would abide by the Concordat, was there really much likelihood that the regime would leave untouched a rival organization with its own dogmas and with such sweeping power over education?

F Stern, *Dreams and Delusions: The Drama of German History*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1999, p 169.

Questions

1. What is the perspective of Source A? Identify the problems Bonhoeffer is seeking to address with the position of the German Christians.
2. What are the values of Source A for a historian studying resistance to Nazi religious policy?
3. What are the values and limitations of Source B for a historian studying the impact of Nazi religious policy?
4. Evaluate Sources C and D as evidence of the control the Nazis had over religion in Germany.
5. How successful was Hitler's religious policy? In your response integrate evidence from Sources C and E.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Outline the reasons why the Nazis might have had difficulty imposing their worldview on Christians and Catholics in Germany.
2. What were the main differences between the Reich Church and the Confessing Church?
3. Identify the advantages and disadvantages of the concordat for Catholics and the Nazi Party.

Workers

In the years prior to the Nazi ascension to power, the German worker had suffered greatly. World War I, the harsh economic conditions of the early Weimar period, the 1923 hyperinflation and the Great Depression had all sown the seeds of discontent. These rolling crises were reflected in the vote. By 1932, voters were moving away from the centre to the fringe: the Nazis gained strongly in the polls after 1930. But the Communists were also increasing their vote on the other side of the political spectrum.

Six million Germans were unemployed in 1933 and Hitler's campaigns of 'bread and jobs' and full employment were welcome promises to German workers. The German working classes had traditionally supported the Nazi's sworn enemies, the Communists and the Socialists. When the Nazis took power in January 1933, they had to bring the large mass of industrial working class under Nazi control, remove trade unions and gear the worker for an economy built in the image of the Nazi worldview.

But the Nazi brand of socialism was not based on the workers' paradise promised by the KPD. Instead, the Nazis offered a national socialism. Reich Labour leader Robert Ley would tell workers in his 1936 announcement of a new Four-Year Plan what was expected of them. The watchwords were 'struggle and sacrifice to restore the strength of the German nation'.

As with every other group in the *Volksgemeinschaft* the workers had a role to fulfil in the German nation. The Nazi economic plan was to build huge infrastructure projects including roads and buildings, rearm the military and to achieve autarky, economic self-sufficiency.

TABLE 5.1 Average annual unemployment, Germany 1932–38

Year	Number of unemployed
1932	5 575 500
1933	4 804 400
1934	2 718 300
1935	2 151 000
1936	1 592 700
1937	912 300
1938	429 500

J Remak, *The Nazi Years: A Documentary History*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1969, p 75.

The German Labour Front

Germany's 169 trade unions were integrated into the National Socialist cultural, social and political system. As with the churches, the Nazis perceived trade unions as potential opposition groups and, in many cases, because of their Marxist and Catholic basis, were seen as being international in outlook. The establishment of *Deutsche Arbeitsfront*, the German Labour Front (DAF), was a key element of the Nazi movement's integration and alignment of major social and political institutions that characterised the process of *Gleichschaltung*.

The Nazis chose 1 May 1933, the traditional workers' holiday, as the time to bring the German workers into the Nazi state. Trade union leaders were invited to Berlin to great fanfare and celebration. President von Hindenburg, Hitler and Goebbels gave speeches that celebrated the workers and proclaimed that National Socialism was their friend. Hitler declared an end to class warfare, the unity of the German people and announced that every single German 'would experience manual labour once in his lifetime' to rid the country of the prejudices of class. 'Mental and manual workers must never be allowed to be on opposite sides,' he declared. He called for unity between worker and owner, the private and public sectors, and trade unions and government. He announced a program of full employment and called for trade union leaders to cooperate with the goal of rebuilding the German nation. Hitler's speech reshaped the meaning of 1 May and he declared it Germany's 'National Labour Day'.

The next day, the SA raided union offices and imprisoned their leaders. On 10 May 1933, the DAF was established under the leadership of Robert Ley. The DAF integrated all trade unions into a single workers' organisation. Initially membership was voluntary but pressure to join was strong and the chances of getting a job without membership were slim. Over time, membership became compulsory in key industries. The DAF attempted to maintain peace between workers and employers in the so-called national interest.

Nazis would negotiate contracts and collective bargaining. Striking was banned. Twenty million German workers joined the Labour Front and it was Nazi officials, and not the workers' representatives, that set wages and conditions.

Robert Ley

Robert Ley was head of the German Labour Front. Ley came from a poor peasant family and had grown up in poverty. He held a PhD in chemistry but was expelled from the pharmaceutical company IG Farben in 1928 for his involvement with the Nazi Party. When the Nazis came to power, he directed all labour to the program of full employment and the development of heavy industry for rearmament. The DAF and its programs were funded by 1.5 per cent of the wages of its 25 million members. Contemporaries and historians have claimed that Ley and the DAF were among the most corrupt elements of the Nazi regime. At the end of the war, he was committed to stand trial among the leading Nazis at Nuremberg. It is established that he organised slave labour for the Nazi war effort. He hanged himself in October 1945 before the trial started.



FIGURE 5.7 Robert Ley, Gauleiter, Reichsleiter and Leader of the DAF

The life of the German worker

With the end of trade unions, German workers were put to the task of building both Germany's economy and a National Socialist society where the highest ideal was devotion to the state. The goal of ending unemployment would initially be met with large-scale public works, such as building roads, under the direction of the National Labour Service. Unemployed young people under 25 were put to work on infrastructure projects and housed in makeshift camps where work routines were highly regimented and conditions were poor. After the 1935 announcement that Germany would rearm and conscript 500 000 men, more jobs were added in the military and heavy armaments industry. This increase in employment opportunities led to a renewal of German women's participation in the labour force.

Although German workers lost the ability to negotiate wages and conditions, the Nazis attempted to offset the potential for discontent with other programs. If living standards could not be met through wage increases (wages were effectively frozen at 1933 levels until the end of the regime), then the Nazis would subsidise leisure activities, beautify work spaces and provide activities for workers.

Strength through Joy

On 27 November 1933, the *Kraft durch Freude* (KdF) program, or 'Strength through Joy', was intended to bring middle-class leisure activities to Germany's 30 million workers. Opera, tennis lessons, theatre, evening classes, skiing holidays and free travel were offered to workers to offset stagnant wages. It is estimated that by 1938 about 10 million Germans had taken a KdF holiday within Germany and across the border to places such as Italy and Austria.

The program was designed to lift morale among workers, to foster gratitude to the state and prevent plotting against the government during free hours. By 1937 the program had become compulsory and those who did not participate were viewed with suspicion.

Although many people took the opportunity to take a KdF holiday, the success of 'Strength through Joy' was not clear cut. Accommodation was often poor and dormitory-style with little privacy. The low subsidies paid by the government to hotels and restaurants meant that the food was often of a poor quality. Well-heeled travellers rarely wanted to holiday with the 'rabble'

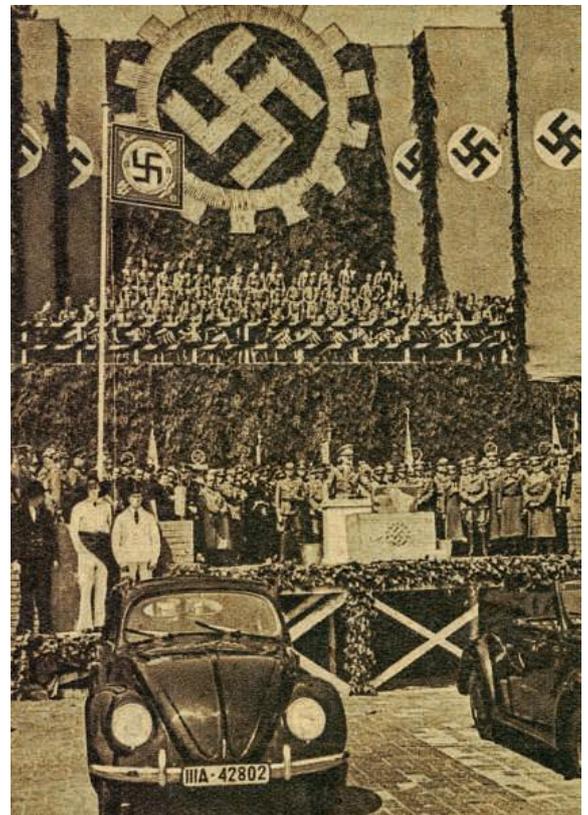


FIGURE 5.8 The Volkswagen, or the people's car, was a project of the KdF. Envisaged as an affordable vehicle purchased on an instalment plan, the ideal did not become a reality. Rearmament and then war stymied the campaign.

of the workers, despite Hitler's vision of a classless Germany. Those who were full-paying customers often resented having to holiday with people who were on subsidised travel. For working-class people, who could not previously afford a holiday, the KdF provided opportunities to take cruises, go skiing or stay at resorts. It helped to raise the living standards of ordinary Germans, even if this was not reflected in their pay packets.



FIGURE 5.9 The Great Depression's unemployed were recruited into public works, such as building roads.

Beauty of Labour

While Strength through Joy was about leisure time, Ley also understood that conditions at work needed to be improved, so the Beauty of Labour program was set up under the KdF to improve workspaces. It sought to improve the health conditions inside mines, factories and other workplaces. Toilets, eating facilities and parks would be beautified; the rooms would be painted, light would be let in, and staff would be issued with better uniforms. The Nazis understood that a pleasant workplace would equal healthy, happy workers.

Businesses could claim tax deductions against any workplace improvements. Unfortunately, the Beauty of Labour program had an unintended consequence. Many workplaces got their workers to make the improvements instead of paying to have painting, gardening and other improvements projects completed. Workers simply stayed back after work.

Source Study 5.3 Workers

Source A: Hitler's speech, Berlin, 1 May 1933

This First of May shall document that we do not intend to destroy, but rather plan to build up. One should not choose the most beautiful spring day of the year as a symbol of fight, but as a symbol of constructive work; not as an embodiment of decay and thus disintegration, but only

of *Völkisch* solidarity and thus of rising up. It is no coincidence that our opponents, who claim to have been celebrating this day for seventy years now and who have been in power in Germany for fourteen years have not, in spite of everything, succeeded in gaining hold of the German Volk on this day as we have done from the very beginning. The Volk unconsciously perceives in its core that any celebration of the Marxist type was contrary to the springtide season. It did not want hate, it did not want struggle, it wanted uplifting! And today the Volk senses it: the First of May has recovered its true, intrinsic meaning.

Adolf Hitler, Speech, *Lustgarten*, Berlin, 1 May 1933.

Source B: Extract circular from Robert Ley, 21 April 1933

SA as well as SS are to be employed for the occupation of trade union properties and for taking the relevant persons into protective custody ... The taking over of the independent trade unions must proceed in such a fashion that the workers and employees will not be given the feeling that this action is directed against them, but, on the contrary, against a system that does not conform to the interests of the German nation.

Circular from Dr R Ley, Staff Chief of NSDAP Political Organizations, on the Action to 'Coordinate' [*Gleichschaltungaktion*] the Free Trade Unions (21 April, 1933), at German Historical Documents website, accessed 29 March 2021.

Source C: Extract from 'The Führer and the German worker' by Robert Ley

The change that has transformed the German people since National Socialism took power is clearest in the attitude of the worker to the new German state and in the state's attitude toward work and the worker.

The workers as a class began to form at a time when liberalism dominated European thinking. Liberalism saw labor as something unpleasant, almost demeaning. Its highest ideal was to live from the work of others. The most desirable goal was no longer to join in building the future of one's people and to take pleasure in it, but rather to cease unpleasant labor as rapidly as possible and to live as a retiree or coupon-clipper, at best earning money from property or commerce. Such a view naturally leads to a denigration of labor, with the scale of labor looking something like this: At the top, the unemployed class, then those who work in finance or commerce, then the professions, finally physical workers.

The latter was the dirtiest and most demeaning that could happen to a person, and he who had the misfortune to earn his living with his own hands was kept out of the 'better circles.' He was 'impossible.' How deep this liberal view had poisoned the healthy people is proven by the fact that even the worker who labored daily felt himself inferior, and saved every penny he could so that his son could become something 'better,' ...

R Ley, 'Der Führer and das deutsche Arbeiter', in *Adolf Hitler: Bilder aus dem Leben des Führers*, Cigaretten/Bilderdienst Hamburg/Bahrenfeld, Hamburg, 1936, pp 56–261, at German Propaganda Archive website, accessed on 29 May 2021.

Source D: Historian Richard Evans on Strength through Joy tours

On cruises and other trips, while Party officials and middle-class passengers spent lavishly on presents, souvenirs and expensive meals and entertainments onshore, the workers were unable to afford even the simplest additions to the basics provided by the tour itself. There were many complaints from working-class participants about the ostentatious behaviour of their bourgeois fellow tourists, and little real social mixing on most of the trips. Class antagonism was paralleled by regional rivalries; on one cruise to Italy, discord between the Rhinelanders and Silesians on board reached such a pitch that the two groups refused to stay in the same room with each other.

R Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, Penguin, London, 2005, p 471.

Questions

1. According to Source A, how did Hitler want to change the meaning of 1 May, the traditional workers' holiday?
2. Evaluate Source B as evidence of the impact of Nazism on workers.
3. In Source C, what claims is Ley making about the nature of work under liberalism? How would this change under National Socialism?
4. According to Source D, how successful was the Strength through Joy program in diminishing class conflict?
5. How successful were the Nazis with their policy on German workers? In your response, integrate evidence from Sources A, B, C and D, and your own knowledge.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who was the leader of the German Labour Front? Explain his significance in the Nazi State.
2. Describe the Strength through Joy and Beauty of Labour programs. Explain and evaluate their functions in Nazi Germany.
3. Evaluate the importance of the Nazi Party's use of laws in relation to workers.
4. Describe the impact of the German dictatorship in the lives and experiences of workers in Germany between 1933 and 1939.

Youth

Youth movements, run by churches, political parties and independent groups, had a long tradition in Germany. So it was inevitable that the youth movements would also be subjected to the process of coordination as the Nazis consolidated their power. The Nazi regime understood the importance of nurturing German youth into Nazi ideology and values, because the boys would eventually be drafted into military service and the girls would serve the state by bearing children. The most obvious way to shape the minds of the young was through the education system, but eventually the Hitler Youth, led by Baldur von Schirach, became the main body.

TABLE 5.2 Nazi youth movements

	Male	Female
10 to 14 years	German Youngsters (<i>Deutsches Jungvolk</i>)	Young Girls League (<i>Jungmädelbund</i>)
14 to 18 years	The Hitler Youth (<i>Hitlerjugend</i>)	The League of German Girls (<i>Bund Deutscher Mädel</i>)

The Youth League of the Nazi Party had been established in 1922 and by the time Hitler came to power in January 1933 they had a membership of about 100 000 young people. By the end of 1933, that had grown to two million, and pressure emerged to integrate youth movements into the National Socialist system. As a result, Boy Scouts, the Catholic youth movement, sports clubs and youth branches of other political parties were absorbed by the Hitler Youth. In December 1936, the Reichstag passed a law that gave the Hitler Youth authority over all young people in Germany and at the beginning of 1939, its membership boasted 8.7 million after joining was made compulsory.

Subsidiary organisations, particularly for boys, provided specialisation in naval, military and technical training. The various branches of the youth movement published their own newspapers that reinforced Nazi ideology, but also paid attention to camping and woodcraft, and included advertising for youth-focused products, such as Coca Cola, uniforms and musical instruments.

The Hitler Youth's members wore uniforms, sang patriotic songs and read Nazi books. They participated in activities designed to build physical strength and endurance and to foster a feeling of nationalism and loyalty to Hitler and the state. Each age group had to complete a mandatory curriculum each year that was steeped in Nazi ideology: a mix of German history, Hitler worship, anti-Semitism, physical education and biology. 'Graduates' were expected to emerge with a positive disposition towards a mythical German heroism, a devotion to Nazism, a hatred of weakness and a disdain for the Weimar period.

According to 'The Educational Principles of the New Germany', an article published in a Nazi magazine for women, the purpose of National Socialist education was to develop: '... the holy sense of people and fatherland! Awakening this in the German youth requires that they have a clear understanding of the value of people and fatherland.' The article spelled out the four foundations of a good Nazi education: race, military training, leadership and religion.

However, the results were mixed. Many Hitler Youth were more interested in using the sporting facilities than hearing political speeches. Many of its leaders simply read through the manuals routinely, failing to instil a sense of national feeling. Others felt resentful that the Hitler Youth activities were taking up their time. Many did not want to collect money for donations, a compulsory activity. Military discipline was the most hated aspect of the movement. The boys, for example, were trained by former Brownshirts: there were lengthy marches, weapons training, and harsh punishments for disobedience. Many simply did not show up to the training evenings. The endless songs were tedious and the parades lasted two hours.

The Hitler Youth movement undermined the family unit that was central to the people's community. This was a good outcome for the Nazis, who used the organisation as a vehicle for conformity and social integration. While children were being indoctrinated



FIGURE 5.10 A 1936 poster of the *Bund Deutscher Mädel*, the League of German Girls, for females aged 14 to 18



FIGURE 5.11 Members of the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* saluting the swastika in 1933.

into National Socialism, parents who harboured old ideas were forced to self-censor at home. Teachers listened carefully to children who unwittingly or deliberately reported their parents' political beliefs and homes became a battle between the new Nazi ideas and old loyalties.

Over time, many of the activities encouraged increasingly aggressive behaviour from boys in particular. Paedophile scandals among the leaders were covered up, and despite military discipline within the ranks of the Hitler Youth, the boys were increasingly rude in public, to parents and schoolteachers.

Baldur von Schirach



FIGURE 5.12 Baldur von Schirach on parade with Hitler and members of the youth movement

Baldur von Schirach was the leader of the Hitler Youth. He joined the Nazi Party in 1924, convinced of his own anti-Semitism through his extensive readings of eugenics and anti-Jewish literature. He wrote poetry about his devotion to Hitler and the ideals of National Socialism. Von Schirach was an outstanding organiser and propagandist. As one of the leading Nazis, he was one of the few to have a change of heart at Nuremberg. He conceded that he had poisoned the German youth and his about-face earned him 20 years in prison at Spandau.

Source Study 5.4 Youth in the Third Reich

Source A: An extract from Hitler's speech from a 1935 Nuremberg rally

In our eyes the German boy of the future must be slender and supple, swift as greyhounds, tough as leather and hard as Krupp steel. We must bring up a new type of human being, men and girls who are disciplined and healthy to the core. We have undertaken to give the German people an education that begins already in youth and will never come to an end. It starts with the child and will end with the 'old fighter.' Nobody will be able to say that he has a time in which he is left entirely alone to himself.

Quoted in N H Baynes, *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler*, vol. 1, H Fertig, New York, 1942, p 544.

Source B: A young man's report after returning from a Hitler Youth camp

We hardly had any free time. Everything was done in a totally military way, from reveille, first parade, raising the flag, morning sport and ablutions through breakfast to the 'scouting games', lunch and so on to the evening. Several participants left the camp because the whole slog was too stupid for them. There was no kind of fellow-feeling between the camp inmates. Comradeship was very poor, and everything was done in terms of command and obedience ... The camp leader was an older Hitler Youth functionary of the drill sergeant type. His entire educational effort amount to barking orders, holding scouting exercises, and general slogging ...

Quoted in R Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, Penguin, London, 2005, p 277.

Source C: An old German soldier complains about his son

The lad has already been completely alienated from us. As an old-front soldier I'm against every war, and this lad is just mad about war and nothing else. It's awful, sometimes I feel as if my lad is the spy in the family.

Quoted in R Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, Penguin, London, 2005, p 279.

Questions

1. According to Source A, what was the goal of the German education system and the Hitler Youth? How was this different from traditional education?
2. What are the values and limitations of Source A to a historian studying Nazi attitudes to German youth?
3. What is the perspective of the writer in Source B? What does he think of the Hitler Youth camps?
4. What does Source C tell us about the impact of the Hitler Youth on families?
5. Evaluate the impact and nature of Nazi youth policy on German youth? In your response integrate evidence from Sources A, B and C.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Identify the four major youth-orientated organisations in Nazi Germany.
2. Explain the goal of National Socialist youth movements.
3. Create a diagram or infographic illustrating the experience of youth in the Third Reich.



FIGURE 5.13 During the election campaign of 1932 the Nazis appeal directly for the women's vote. The text reads 'We women choose List 2 National Socialists'. Election records show that despite Nazism's narrow conceptualisation of women's place in society, women were strong supporters of the party.



FIGURE 5.14 German women wearing traditional costumes participate in a 1935 harvest festival. During the Third Reich, country women continued to play an important part in agriculture regardless of the party position that a woman's place was in the home.

Women

Women would play a key role in Hitler's plans to develop a racially pure German state. They were idealised as blonde, beautiful and physically strong, devoted wives and mothers, and loyal to the Nazi state. The slogan 'Children, kitchen, church' was an idealisation of the Nazi vision for women – a model that celebrated domesticity and motherhood in the racial struggle.

Hitler and the Nazi Party held strong traditional and conservative views about women. They believed that a woman's place was in the home and there should be a strict division between the work and domestic sphere. It was a woman's role to keep the home running, display a loyal devotion to her husband and nurture children for the growth, strength and racial purity of the Reich. The Nazis even articulated visions of appropriate fashion. Trousers were to give way to dresses, hair was to be braided and fabrics were to be inexpensive. Make-up and smoking were discouraged. While the *NS Frauenschaft* (the National Socialist Women's Movement) had more than two million members, a newspaper and leader, Gertrud Scholz-Klink, the reality for German women was more complex and varied than the party image.

Marriage and family

National Socialist women's policy was dominated by pronatalism, policies that encourage procreation and grow the population. Marriage was encouraged as a duty and reflected a loyalty to both the family, the regime and the race, and there were generous incentives for settling down into family life. In July 1933, the *Law for the Encouragement of Marriage* provided loans to marry and have a family. The government gave newly engaged couples a 1000-mark loan, and with each child that was born, 25 per cent of the loan was cancelled. Between 1933 and 1936, it is estimated that 695 000 people took out these loans. Single people or childless couples met some of these costs with an additional tax burden.

Having children would also bring social recognition. The Cross of Honour for the German Woman was awarded to women who had four or more children – and for those who had eight or more, they were awarded the Gold Cross. Hitler Youth were required to salute them in the street. For those who went the extra mile and had ten children, Hitler was made godfather of the tenth child.

Despite the Nazi emphasis on marriage and family, in reality the birth rate among Aryan Germans only slightly increased, having been declining in Germany since the 1880s.

Women and work

As with most of the Nazi social programs, the reality was quite different from the image projected in Nazi propaganda. While the Nazis implemented pronatalist policies, the reality was that female participation in the workforce actually increased by nearly 2.5 million women between 1933 and 1939. Women were cheaper labour than men and the overheating of the economy due to the rearmament program meant that women were drawn into the workforce.

After the Nazis seized power, they actively tried to remove women from the workforce. In 1933, female schoolteachers, judges, lawyers and doctors were, under the terms of the *Law for the Reduction of Unemployment* and the conditions of the marriage loans, pushed out of paid work. Women were also restricted to a quota of 10 per cent of enrolments in university programs, further limiting career opportunities. From 1936, however, the rearmament program and the shortage of workers changed labour market demands and party expectations. Women were increasingly recruited back into the workforce, especially in clerical jobs and manufacturing assembly lines for consumer goods. When the requirement to quit work to be eligible for the marriage loan was lifted in late 1936, more women became working mothers. The DAF encouraged the creation of day-nurseries in workplaces, but many workplaces refused to provide the facilities.

Source Study 5.5 Women in Nazi Germany

Source A: Extract from a speech by Gertrud Scholtz-Klink

Women, I wish to try briefly to make clear what the deepest calling we women have is: motherhood. In the bad fourteen years between 1918 and 1933, motherhood was often robbed of its deepest meaning and reduced to something superficial, something that was even held in contempt. Instead of a child being seen as the deepest affirmation of the woman and of life, it was seen as a burden, as a sacrifice on the part of the woman. A child was often seen not as a great link to God as the creator of all life, before whom we must bow with folded hands and trembling hearts, but rather very often as the result of a weak mind and as an escape from the great events of life.

Many women were superficially mothers, but they had forgotten to subordinate themselves to the law of life, which sees the affirmation of a child as the answer of the woman to her people, and also her contribution to the right of her people to survive. Transforming the calling of motherhood to the job of motherhood left children joyless, unhappy, without strength or soul. Devilish forces under the leadership of Marxism attempted to lead German women along this path.

G Scholtz-Klink, 'Deutsch sein — heißt stark sein. Rede der Reichsfrauenführerin Gertrud Scholtz-Klink zum Jahresbeginn', *N.S. Frauen-Warte*, 4 (1936), pp 501–502, at German Propaganda Archive website, accessed on 29 May 2021.

Source B: Historian Claudia Koonz

What did this overtly misogynist movement offer to women? Nazi men inadvertently gave women Nazis a unique opportunity because they cared so little about the women in their ranks. Men allowed women considerable latitude to interpret Hitler's idea as they wished, recruit followers, write their own rules, and raise funds. In other parties, male leaders welcomed women officially but curtailed women leaders independence and chastised them at the slightest sign of separatism. In the service of womanly ideals, Nazi women sometimes behaved in most un-'ladylike' ways: managing the funds they raised, marching, facing down hecklers, making soap box speeches and organising mass meetings, marches and rallies. While espousing women's special nature and reactionary views of the family, these women never thought they would retreat to the household. True, they crusaded to take women out of politics, but they did so in order to open up other areas of public life to women.

C Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, Family and Nazi Politics*, Methuen, London, 1987, p 5.

Questions

1. How does Source A reflect Nazi ideology about the role of women?
2. To what extent does Source B provide evidence of the nature of Nazi policy towards women?
3. Compare the value of Sources A and B for a historian investigating the impact of the Nazi regime on German women.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe the role of women in the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft*.
2. What was the experience of working women between 1933 and 1939?
3. Was Nazism able to accomplish its goal of 'returning women to the home' between 1933 and 1939?

The persecution of minorities

The Nazi worldview was shaped by racism, eugenics and Social Darwinism. They thought that history was a struggle between the strong and weak in which only the fittest race would endure. The implications of this worldview had significant consequences for the minorities that lived in Germany. They were regarded as racially impure and a threat to Aryan Germans. The whole purpose of National Socialism was to support a national renewal, and protecting the racial purity of Germany was central to that project.

The concentration camp system

In March 1933, the first concentration camp was established at Dachau, just outside Munich. Through the 1930s the system of camps expanded and the types of inmates were widened. Initially the concentration camp system served as an apparatus of the regime's terror system and inmates were generally political opponents. Over time others deemed enemies of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, such as the asocial, the mentally ill, homosexual people, Jews, habitual criminals and ethnic minorities, most notably the Romani peoples, joined the political inmates of the camp system.

Jewish persecution

The June 1933 census showed 505 000 Jews living in the German nation out of a total population of 67 million people. Between 1933 and 1939, the Nazis systematically sought to exclude the Jewish population from the nation by first encouraging them to migrate and then incrementally removing them from the economic and social life of the nation. The Jews were subject to some 400 specific laws and bore the brunt of vile propaganda and violent persecution.



FIGURE 5.15 In 1935 a banner declaring that 'Germans do not buy from Jews' flew in the streets of Greifenberg, Pomerania, which is now part of Poland.

Timeline 5.2: The Nazi persecution of the Jews between 1933 and 1939

- 1933**
 - 1 April: Hitler ordered a failed boycott of all Jewish businesses.
 - 7 April: The *Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service* excluded all Jews from the professions.
 - 25 April: The *Law Against Overcrowding in Schools and Universities* excluded Jewish students from attending school and university.
- 1935**
 - 15 September: The Nuremberg Laws banned Jewish people from holding German citizenship and marrying non-Jews.
- 1937**
 - 8 November: The Eternal Jew art exhibition opened in Munich, depicting the Jews as a powerfully corrupt force in Germany.
- 1938**
 - 17 July: Jews were required to formally add Israel and Sarah to their names.
 - 12 September: Jews were banned from all German cultural and entertainment activities.
 - 3 October: Enforced closure and sale of all Jewish businesses to Germans.
 - 5 October: All Jewish passports to be stamped with a 'J'.
 - 9 November: *Kristallnacht* – the Night of the Broken Glass – unleashed destruction on Jewish synagogues and businesses.

On 1 April 1933, Hitler called for a boycott of all Jewish shops and businesses, but the party had to cancel the order because the German people did not comply. A week later, Jewish people were removed from their jobs in the civil service. Teachers, professors, lawyers and other government workers were simply fired. Two weeks after that, the Jewish student intake at schools and universities was drastically cut.

Legislative initiatives that sought to codify the imagined distinction between Jews and Germans were also implemented. The most significant of these were the two laws commonly referred to as the Nuremberg Laws. The *Law for the Protection of German Blood* (1935) banned sexual relationships and marriages between those defined as of the Jewish and German races and annulled existing marriages. Failure to comply was punishable by hard labour in the camp system. The other element of the Nuremberg Laws was the *Reich Citizenship Law* (1935). This stripped most Jews and other minorities of their German citizenship. This made German Jews a subject people, rather than citizens.

The Jews were also the target of a merciless propaganda campaign through the Nazi monopoly on the press. Newspapers, speeches and political cartoons reduced the Jewish population to a caricature: a tumour in the life of the German nation and a threat to the Aryan bloodline. One such example was the children's book, *The Poisonous Mushroom*, which depicted Jews as the archvillains in the German nation, with rat-like ugly features seeking to harm German children. Jews were depicted as doctors, dentists and lawyers, looking to swindle or corrupt innocent Germans. The tagline of the anti-Semitic newspaper, *Der Stürmer*, was 'the Jews are our misfortune'.

As the 1930s progressed, anti-Semitic policy intensified, particularly after the 1936 Olympic Games. One of the most famous pogroms in history was visited on Jewish businesses and synagogues on 9–10 November 1938: *Kristallnacht* – the Night of Broken Glass. Triggered by the assassination of a German embassy official in Paris, Nazi party members and Hitler Youth 'spontaneously' smashed



FIGURE 5.16 The town of Schwedt, north-east of Berlin, in 1935. The sign states 'Jews are not wanted in this locality'.

up synagogues and Jewish businesses across the country. The trail of destruction was enormous; 7500 businesses were destroyed and in the following week over 25 000 Jews were rounded up and taken to concentration camps. The Jews were blamed for the attack, and forced to pay for the damage.

By September 1939, 214 000 Jews remained in Germany. More than half the original population had managed to migrate in the first six years of the Nazi regime. Of those who remained, thousands had been rounded up and put in concentration camps after *Kristallnacht* and most others were left without a job, having been excluded from the economic life of the nation. The Nazis had succeeded in excluding Jews from the social, legal, political and legal aspects of the nation.

During the course of World War II, National Socialist policy radicalised quickly. Initially concentrating Jewish communities in ghettos, as German forces moved into the Soviet Union mass extermination commenced. During this phase extermination was generally done in public, carried out by German policeman, SS members, the Army and local volunteers. The industrialised extermination of the death camps followed. In total at least six million Jews were killed in National Socialism's racial war.



FIGURE 5.17 *Kristallnacht* derived its name from the smashed glass that littered the streets of German towns and cities following the state-prompted pogrom.

The Romani and Sinti

When the Nazis came to power there were approximately 30 000 Romani and Sinti people in Germany. Deemed by the Nazis to be an 'inferior' people, the Nazis believed the Romani and Sinti were genetically disposed towards criminality. The Romani and Sinti (in English sometimes negatively referred to as gypsies) traditionally lived a migratory life, but by the

1930s many had settled in urban centres. This mobility, the belief that they were criminals and the assessment that they were racially impure, led to systematic persecution by Nazi authorities.

Considered to be of 'mixed' blood and therefore a threat to national racial purity, with the introduction of the Nuremberg race laws in 1935, they were banned from marrying Aryan Germans. Moreover, since the Nazis believed they were criminals, from 1936 onwards many were subjected to forced sterilisation. Two years later, the Reich Central Office for the Suppression of the Gypsy Nuisance was established by Heinrich Himmler as an authority of the SS. This organisation oversaw the creation of a database of known Romani and Sinti, their removal from cities, internment in camps and use in forced labour.

As a racial 'other', the Romani and Sinti peoples were swept up in the events of World War II and it is estimated that of the one million in Europe, between 200 000 and 500 000 perished in death camps.

The mentally ill and disabled

The Nazis also pursued sterilisation and euthanasia programs as part of their racially informed social engineering. The 1933 *Law for the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring*, for instance, defined who could be sterilised. It included people who had such illnesses as:

- congenital feeble-mindedness
- schizophrenia
- manic depression
- Huntington's chorea
- hereditary blindness, deafness or epilepsy.

Alcoholism was also noted as grounds for sterilisation. The process was overseen by Hereditary Health Courts – these were not courts in the ordinary sense, but undertook administrative procedures overseen by doctors. It is estimated that approximately 400 000 people were sterilised as part of the Nazis' social engineering programs.

Euthanasia programs were initiated in secret during 1939. As part of the Action T-4 program, disabled people living in state-run homes and hospitals were assessed and killed by medical staff. Beginning as an informal system applied to children, then becoming more widely practised on the basis of an informal note from Hitler to grant 'mercy' deaths, Action T-4 formalised in early 1940 and used lethal injection and carbon monoxide gassing to euthanise people with disabilities. Estimates made by T-4 officials concluded that by late 1941, 93 251 beds had been 'released' by gassing or other methods on their previous occupants.² Significantly, the euthanasia program was one of the few instances when popular opposition to a party program led to Hitler issuing an order in 1941 for it to stop. It was not stopped entirely, however, as the methods were redeployed, initially used on the sick and ill in concentration camps, then applied on an industrial scale to the killing of Jews in death camps as part of the Holocaust.



FIGURE 5.18 Political prisoners at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in 1938

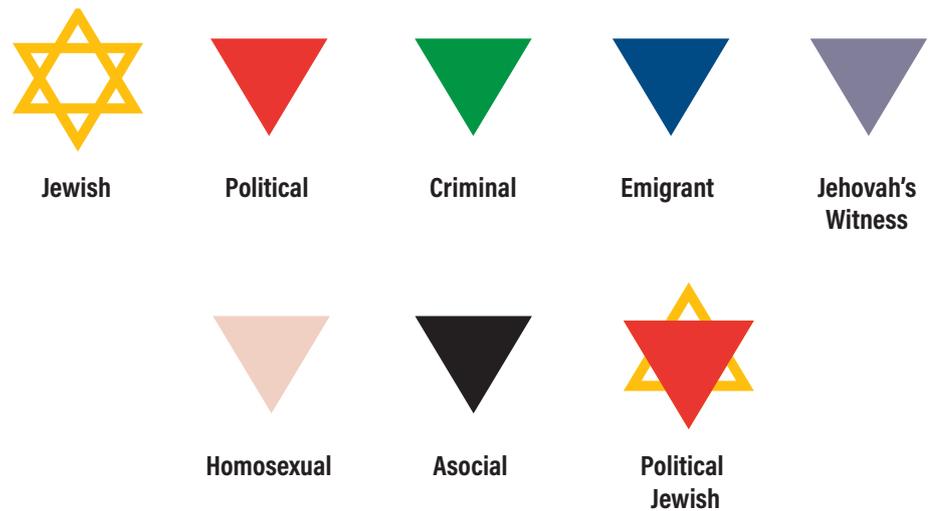


FIGURE 5.19 Prisoners in concentration camps were identified by these symbols.

The persecution of homosexual people

The Nazis also persecuted homosexual people, whom they regarded as corrupting and undermining the campaign to increase the birth rate. While the Imperial and Weimar legal codes had both outlawed male homosexuality, the Nazis pursued the community with greater vigour than their predecessors. Gay men were tortured to give away their contacts, and gay bars and publications were shut down. Anyone arrested on the suspicion of being a homosexual could, and often was, sentenced to re-education in concentration camps. There, the pink triangles that denoted their alleged crime earned them hard work from the guards and ridicule from other inmates. In 1935 an amendment to the legal code resulted in harsher punishment and a redefinition of the crime to the broader ‘unnatural acts’. Historians estimate that no fewer than 50 000 gay men were taken into custody for homosexuality. Of these, 25 000 were arrested between 1937 and 1939, and of those arrested, two-thirds were found guilty.

The experience of lesbians differed to that of gay men. This partly reflected Nazism’s underlying misogyny, and also that lesbianism was not part of the criminal code. In some instances, lesbians, like gay men, had attracted attention because of their less ‘conventional’ lifestyles and were considered asocial and penalised in the concentration camps. Many of their publications and clubs were also shut down, but the persecution of gay men was often much more overt.

Jehovah’s Witnesses

Jehovah’s Witnesses were persecuted because their world view did not align with that of the Nazis. Although many held German citizenship, their commitment to peace was against the Nazi ideals of struggle and conflict. As pacifists, they refused conscription into the army or to work in rearmament industries. The Jehovah’s Witnesses also refused to accept total Nazi rule and many refused to give the Hitler salute. They believed that they were answerable only to God and refused to bow down to any man, including Hitler. The Nazis raided their offices, banned their meetings and shut down their publications. Many were eventually put into concentration camps and forced to wear the purple triangle to identify themselves. It is estimated that 1400 of the 6000 Jehovah’s Witness inmates were murdered in the camps.

Source Study 5.6 Persecution in the Third Reich

Source A: *Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour*, 1935

Moved by the understanding that purity of German blood is the essential condition for the continued existence of the German people, and inspired by the inflexible determination to ensure the existence of the German nation for all time, the Reichstag has unanimously adopted the following law, which is promulgated herewith:

Article 1

1. Marriages between Jews and citizens of German or related blood are forbidden. Marriages nevertheless concluded are invalid, even if concluded abroad to circumvent this law.
2. Annulment proceedings can be initiated only by the state prosecutor.

Article 2

Extramarital relations between Jews and citizens of German or related blood are forbidden.

Article 3

Jews may not employ in their households female subjects of the state of Germany or related blood who are under 45 years old.

Article 4

1. Jews are forbidden to fly the Reich or national flag or display Reich colours.
2. They are, on the other hand, permitted to display the Jewish colours. The exercise of this right is protected by the state.

Article 5

1. Any person who violates the prohibition under Article 1 will be punished with a prison sentence with hard labour.
2. A male who violates the prohibition under Article 2 will be punished with a jail term or a prison sentence with hard labour.
3. Any person violating the provisions under Articles 3 or 4 will be punished with a jail term of up to one year and a fine, or with one or the other of these penalties.

Article 6

The Reich Minister of the Interior, in coordination with the Deputy of the Führer and the Reich Minister of Justice, will issue the legal and administrative regulations required to implement and complete this law.

Article 7

The law takes effect on the day following promulgation, except for Article 3, which goes into force on January 1, 1936.

Nuremberg, September 15, 1935

At the Reich Party Congress of Freedom

The Führer and Reich Chancellor
[signed] Adolf Hitler

The Reich Minister of the Interior
[signed] Frick

The Reich Minister of Justice
[signed] Dr. Gürtner

The Deputy of the Führer
[signed] R. Hess

Source B: Reich Citizenship Law, 15 September 1935

The Reichstag has unanimously enacted the following law, which is promulgated herewith:

Article 1

1. A subject of the state is a person who enjoys the protection of the German Reich and who in consequence has specific obligations toward it.
2. The status of subject of the state is acquired in accordance with the provisions of the Reich and the Reich Citizenship Law.

Article 2

1. A Reich citizen is a subject of the state who is of German or related blood, and proves by his conduct that he is willing and fit to faithfully serve the German people and Reich.
2. Reich citizenship is acquired through the granting of a Reich citizenship certificate.
3. The Reich citizen is the sole bearer of full political rights in accordance with the law.

Article 3

The Reich Minister of the Interior, in coordination with the Deputy of the Führer, will issue the legal and administrative orders required to implement and complete this law.

Nuremberg, September 15, 1935

At the Reich Party Congress of Freedom
The Führer and Reich Chancellor

[signed] Adolf Hitler

The Reich Minister of the Interior
[signed] Frick

Questions

1. What were the consequences for Jewish people of the law outlined in Source A?
2. Evaluate Source B as evidence for a historian studying citizenship in Nazi Germany.
3. Using Sources A and B and your own knowledge, describe the significance of laws in the establishment and administration of the Nazi regime.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Identify three groups subjected to persecution by the Nazi regime.
2. Explain why Jehovah's Witnesses and homosexuals were subjected to persecution in Nazi Germany.
3. How did the Nazis use laws to persecute minorities in the Third Reich?

Opposition to the Nazi regime

The nature and form of opposition to Nazism is, understandably, difficult to gauge. The systematic use of terror, the threat of violence, concentration camps, informants, and the security apparatus of policing (the Gestapo and the Security Service (SD)) means that the expression of opposition was rarely public or visible. The question also arises as to what constitutes 'opposition' in a context where the State expects conformity. For example, are all forms of behaviour, such as telling jokes about the party leaders, not contributing to a charity drive, not listening to a Hitler speech or plotting to assassinate the Führer, equal

or equivalent expressions of opposition to the regime? These concerns have challenged Germans as they attempt to reconcile themselves with their National Socialist past and historians as they consider that past.

It is certainly clear that there were forms of opposition. In the early stages of the establishment of the regime, political opponents took stances against the consolidation of National Socialist power. The most significant example might be the Social Democrats voting against the introduction of the *Enabling Act* in 1933. This display of bravery, in the face of intimidation by the SS and SA who were present in the Reichstag as the Act was voted into law, was one of the few public and collective displays of opposition and took place in the very early stages of the regime's seizure of power. Members of the Social Democrat and Communist parties also demonstrated their opposition to the regime by establishing networks across Germany and distributing, at great risk, political pamphlets and assisting others to flee. Key leadership figures in each party fled Germany in the early 1930s and worked in exile gathering and monitoring conditions at home but accomplishing very little.

Another measure of opposition might be acts of violence against the political leadership. This is, perhaps, the most extreme form of opposition; one that carries considerable personal risk. In the period before 1939 there were several known plots to assassinate Hitler. These plots obviously failed, with most group initiatives revealed by informants to the security services. The most 'successful' was a lone attempt by Georg Elser, a 36-year-old cabinet maker and former member of the *Roter Frontkämpferbund*, the Communist Party's paramilitary equivalent of the Nazis' SA. The attempt entailed planting a bomb at the *Bürgerbräukeller*, the beer hall from which the Munich Putsch was launched in 1923. It was timed to coincide with Hitler's commemorative annual speech on 8 November 1939. Hitler, who was anxious to get back to Berlin to complete war planning, left 13 minutes before the explosion. The blast killed eight people and injured 63. Elser was captured, tortured while in Gestapo custody and held in a concentration camp until his execution in 1945.

The question of intent also needs to be considered in evaluating opposition. The actions of political parties such as the KPD and SPD, and the solo efforts of the likes of Elser, were clearly focused on bringing an end to the Nazi regime. Many forms of opposition do not reflect such aspirations. Acts of defiance by church members, for example, were made at great personal cost. But they were not, in the period before 1939, oppositional acts attempting to overthrow the regime but were attempts to protect or preserve the interests of their faiths. This does not mean that the 800 Confessing Church pastors held in concentrations camps were not resisting Nazi rule, but it does mean the opposition to the regime did not necessarily extend to attempting to overthrow the entire system. This was probably the position of the majority of individual Germans. They often embraced aspects of the regime, such as improved job opportunities, but disapproved of having to use the Hitler greeting. This did not mean that they wanted to overthrow the government entirely.



FIGURE 5.20 The aftermath of the blast that detonated 13 minutes after the departure of Hitler from the *Bürgerbräukeller* on 8 November 1939.

The recognition of this distinction became particularly significant with the shift in the interpretation of the Nazi past in the early 1970s. The interpretation of resistance focused on everyday life and the ways in which individuals negotiated and expressed their relationship and attitude towards the state. Resistance and opposition could therefore include the little things in everyday life. Not saluting, not contributing to charity campaigns, telling jokes about leaders and not listening to the radio were, by this definition, expressions of opposition through non-compliance. Rebellious acts such as those were more widespread than those of a more drastic nature.³

TABLE 5.3 Düsseldorf Gestapo, 1933–45: Cases by category

Continuation of outlawed organisations (political parties, religious sects, youth groups)	30.00%
Non-conforming behaviour (verbal utterances, work and leisure activities)	29.00%
Acquiring or spreading forbidden printed matter	4.50%
Listening to foreign radio	2.30%
Political passivity	0.90%
Conventional criminality	12.00%
Others (unspecified)	21.30%

Adapted from R Overy, *The Historical Atlas of the Third Reich*, Penguin, London, 1996, p 35.

Youth and opposition

The idealised National Socialist childhood was one of party-sanctioned education, involvement in the youth movements and subsequent transition to adulthood via a year spent in the Labour Service and then either military service and work for men, or domesticity and motherhood for women. Many German youths accepted this course, but there are also numerous examples of young people challenging the oversight of the state. The form and nature of these reactions varied according to locality and class. The Swing Kids are arguably the most well-known of such youth groups. Largely from middle-class backgrounds in large cities, Swing Kids embraced jazz (music considered degenerate by the regime), dancing and fashion inspired by Britain and the United States. The Swing Kids' behaviour (see Source D below) was deemed by Hitler Youth observers to be 'wild'. As historian Detlev Peukert notes, the Swing Kids, like their working-class peers the Edelweiss Pirates, were actively non-political, an act which in itself was political.⁴

A more politicised strain of youth opposition emerged in Leipzig between 1937 and 1939. Described by the Leipzig Gestapo as '*Meuten*' (a gang or pack), this informal grouping of about 1500 young people emerged in traditionally working-class areas with a long association with the KPD. While aspects of the Leipzig *Meuten* reflected this cultural heritage, such as their apparent equality and interest in the Spanish Civil War, they appeared to be more interested in gathering in public places, hiking at nearby lakes, sex and provoking the Hitler Youth. These common interests made the Leipzig *Meuten* very similar to the Edelweiss Pirates.

Source Study 5.7 Opposition

Source A: SOPADE Report, July 1938

The Social Democrats, from exile in Prague, prepared reports about the mood in Germany based on information provided by party members.

The general mood in Germany is characterized by a widespread political indifference. The great mass of the people is completely dulled and does not want to hear anything more about politics. Thus, for example, the *Anschluss* with Austria did not produce anything like the enthusiasm and lasting effect as the reintroduction of conscription three years before. One should not be misled by the general grumbling. Nowadays people grumble everywhere about everything but nobody intends this grumbling to represent a hostile attitude to the regime. One can now experience grumbling in public: in trams, in restaurants etc. and in general nobody is prepared to defend the regime. But it is also generally true that no one regards the grumbling as an attack on the regime itself, as a political statement against the dictatorship. People and regime do not identify themselves with one another. People feel themselves to be objects of the present form of government and no longer have the idea that one day they could again be subjects. The attitude of the Western powers has made a decisive contribution to this general depoliticisation ...

Quoted in J Noakes and G Pridham, (eds) *Documents on Nazism 1919–1945*,
Jonathon Cape, London, 1974, p 581.

Source B: The Swing Movement

Extracts from a Hitler Youth internal report on a swing festival in Hamburg during February 1940.

The dance music was all English and American. Only swing dancing and jitterbugging took place. At the entrance to the hall stood a notice on which the words 'Swing prohibited' had been altered to 'Swing requested'. The participants accompanied the dances and songs, without exception, by singing the English words. Indeed, throughout the evening they attempted only to speak English; at some tables even French.

The dancers were an appalling sight. None of the couples danced normally; there was only swing of the worst sort. Sometimes two boys danced with one girl; sometimes several couples formed a circle, linking arms and jumping, slapping hands, even rubbing the backs of their heads together; and then, bent double, with the top half of the body hanging loosely down, long hair flopping into the face, they dragged themselves round practically on their knees. When the band played a rumba, the dancers went into wild ecstasy. They all leaped around and joined in the chorus in broken English. The band played wilder and wilder items; none of the players was sitting down any longer, they all 'jitterbugged' on the stage like wild creatures. Several boys could be observed dancing together, always with two cigarettes in the mouth, one in each corner ...

D Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition and Racism in Everyday Life*, Penguin,
London, 1987, p 166–167.

Questions

1. Identify the perspective of Source A.
2. Evaluate the usefulness of Source A to a historian of Nazi Germany.
3. What is the main contention of Source B?
4. Using Sources A and B and your wider knowledge explain the forms of opposition to the Nazi regime during the period between 1933 and 1939.
5. To what extent were the Nazis able to eliminate opposition in the period 1933 to 1939? In your response, make specific use of any three sources from this chapter.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Identify six forms of resistance. Rank these examples in order of the impact on the Nazi regime and explain your choice in one paragraph.
 2. Evaluate the distinction between political and personal opposition to the regime.
 3. Why would there be so few images of opposition to the Nazi regime?
-

Conclusions

The social and cultural history of Nazi Germany highlights the way in which the regime sought to permeate all aspects of everyday life. Party language emphasised the creation of a new society built on the principle of race – if nothing else, they wanted a revolution. The six years of peace before the outbreak of war in 1939 were not sufficient to bring about the social transformation that the movement sought. But the social impacts of the war would radicalise and intensify the National Socialists' campaigns for social transformation and mobilisation.

Politically, the Nazi revolution was more complete, as demonstrated by the lack of organised political resistance to the seizure and consolidation of power. Once they were invited to share power with conservative nationalists as the Weimar democracy disintegrated, the National Socialists were able to permanently destroy the republic from within. Although they never claimed a parliamentary majority in a free election, the Nazis were able to legislate their opponents and the republic out of existence. This seizure of power and the coordination of society established one of the most brutal dictatorships of the 20th century and set a path towards a catastrophic conflict that would reshape Europe and the world.

Further reading

M Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History*, Hill & Wang, London, 2001.

M Burleigh and W Wipperman, *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991.

R Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, Penguin, London, 2005.

I Kershaw, *The Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in the Third Reich*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987.

D Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition and Racism in Everyday Life*, Penguin, London, 1987.

Weblinks

German History in Images and Documents

<https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org>

German Propaganda Archive

<https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/>

Activities

Bringing it together

- Summarise the impact of the Nazi regime on German society between 1933 and 1939 in one paragraph. Expand the paragraph by adding one fact or event for each point. Expand on your paragraph again by adding one reference to one primary source of evidence.
- Create a timeline of the impact of the Nazi regime on German society. Include 20 key dates, 10 images and five primary sources. Share your timeline with the class in small groups.
- Undertake further research into one persecuted community in the Third Reich and prepare a three-page summary report that outlines the reason, form and impact of persecution. You should identify the responsible leaders and institutions of the regime and include four images and a summary of key laws relevant to the persecution.
- Compare Nazi Germany with another dictatorship. Using a summary table, compare the German dictatorship with one of Russia, Italy or Japan. The categories for comparison are:
 - long-term factors influencing the emergence of the dictatorship
 - short-term factors contribution to the establishment of the dictatorship
 - methods of gaining power
 - ideological characteristics
 - key leaders and their roles
 - methods of rule
 - impacts on society.
 Summarise the distinctions and similarities between the two regimes.
- In an extended paragraph, essay or report format, evaluate the Nazi regime as a form of dictatorship. Particularly consider the distinction between an authoritarian or totalitarian regime introduced in Chapter 2.

Endnotes

- Extract from Hitler's Speech at the Opening of the House of German Art in Munich (18 July 18 1937), German History in Documents website, accessed on 28 March 2021.
- M Burleigh and W Wipperman, *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p 153.
- I Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship*, 3rd edn, Arnold, London, 1993, pp 157–159.
- D Peurkert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition and Racism in Everyday Life*, Penguin, London, 1987, p 168.

Chapter

6

The search for peace and security in the world 1919–46



The destruction of World War I was unprecedented. Unsurprisingly, proceedings at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919–20 placed emphasis on both defining the terms of the peace and creating a new order: the Wilsonian Order of collective security, intended to prevent future wars (see also Chapter 1). The League of Nations was central to this system. Envisaged as an institution of open and transparent international relations, the League showed early promise. In little over a decade after its establishment, however, its underlying weaknesses were apparent. Japan, Italy and Germany were aggrieved by the terms and conditions of the peace conference and sought revisions. In 1939, only 20 years after the establishment of the League, it had failed. The ambitions of Japan and Germany had triggered a conflict that exceeded the magnitude of World War I by all measures. The alliance that was established to defeat fascism and militarism characterised itself as the United Nations. It was from this unlikely partnership of liberal democracies and the communist Soviet Union that a new system of international cooperation emerged in 1946.

Timeline 6.1: The rise and decline of the League of Nations 1918–39

- 1918** • 8 January: Wilson delivered his Fourteen Points speech to the US Congress.
 - 1919** • 18 January: The Paris Peace Conference started.
 - 1920** • 10 January: The League of Nations was established.
 - 1920–21** • Washington Naval Conference held.
 - 1922** • The Permanent Court of International Justice was established.
 - 1926** • Germany joined the League of Nations.
 - 1930** • London Naval Treaty was signed.
 - 1931** • Japan invaded Manchuria (China).
 - 1933** • Japan left the League of Nations.
 - Germany left the League of Nations.
 - 1934** • Soviet Union joined the League of Nations.
 - 1935** • Italy invaded Abyssinia (Ethopia).
 - 1937** • Japan invaded China.
 - Italy left the League of Nations.
 - 1939** • The Soviet Union was expelled from the League of Nations.
-

Intentions and authority of the League of Nations

The vision of Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States from 1913 to 1921, was central to the formation of the League of Nations. Wilson's Fourteen Points, proclaimed in early 1918, effectively became the terms for peace in Europe and the framing document for the Paris Peace Conference (see Chapter 1). The immediate business of the Peace



FIGURE 6.1 Woodrow Wilson and Raymond Poincaré, then-President of France, 1919

Conference was to arrange formal negotiations that would conclude the war. The Armistice signed on 11 November 1918 was only a ceasefire and did not bring permanent closure to the fighting. The war could have continued even after the Armistice, so formal peace treaties were needed. In defining the peace, the victors (Britain, France, Italy and the United States) determined that Germany was responsible for starting the war. They also constructed a new map of Europe, distributed the colonies of the defeated powers among themselves and forced the defeated nations to agree to reparations.

The negotiation of the treaties, dominated by the French, British and the United States, dealt with the past. The conference was, however, also forward-looking. Driven by Wilson's vision, the delegates also agreed to establish an international institution, the League of Nations. This organisation was devised to prevent future conflicts. Rather than a never-ending series of treaties, the League of Nations embodied a vision of collective security as the path to a world without wars.

Collective security

Collective security was not a completely new approach to international relations. In the early 19th century, the Concert of Europe was formed after the Napoleonic Wars (1803–15), and embodied similar principles. This system was based on maintaining a balance between powers in Europe and avoiding any single nation dominating the continent. At moments of crisis, conferences would be held to negotiate a solution. This system largely prevented major wars between multiple nations during the 19th century. By the late 19th century, however, the Concert of Europe system was breaking down. The emergence of nationalism and imperialism, the impact of industrialisation and the growth of global empires had generated increased competition between the European powers. Arms races and a complex web of alliances and treaties created a fragile international order that quickly disintegrated after the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914 and descended into full-blown war within months. The United States observed this scenario unfold from across the Atlantic.

The League of Nations model of collective security, however, differed markedly from the earlier example. The Covenant of the League of Nations, which was embedded in the Treaty of Versailles, created a permanent international organisation, based initially in London and then in Geneva, Switzerland, that would provide a standing administration. Member nations committed to:

- using peaceful means to resolve international tensions
- work towards disarmament
- disclosing all treaties and agreements between nations
- using economic and trade boycotts as a method of exerting international influence.

These principles clearly highlighted a very different approach to international relations than was reflected in the more ad hoc character of the Concert of Europe.

The League's responsibility was also broader. In addition to providing a forum to prevent war, it also aimed to support international development and cooperation. These aims are evident in other aspects of its activities, including:

- oversight of the former colonies of the defeated Ottoman and German empires through a mandate system until they were deemed suitably developed for independence
- an international court of justice
- the delivery of programs through the League of Nations' Health Bureau to combat diseases, such as malaria
- anti-slavery programs
- international labour organisation
- a commission to provide support and repatriation for refugees.

The intentions of the League of Nations were therefore broad but its primary focus was on the prevention of war. Collective security (the cooperation between member states) was a key element and was supported by the requirements that member states make their agreements public, committed to disarmament and used mediations, sanctions and legal processes to settle disputes.

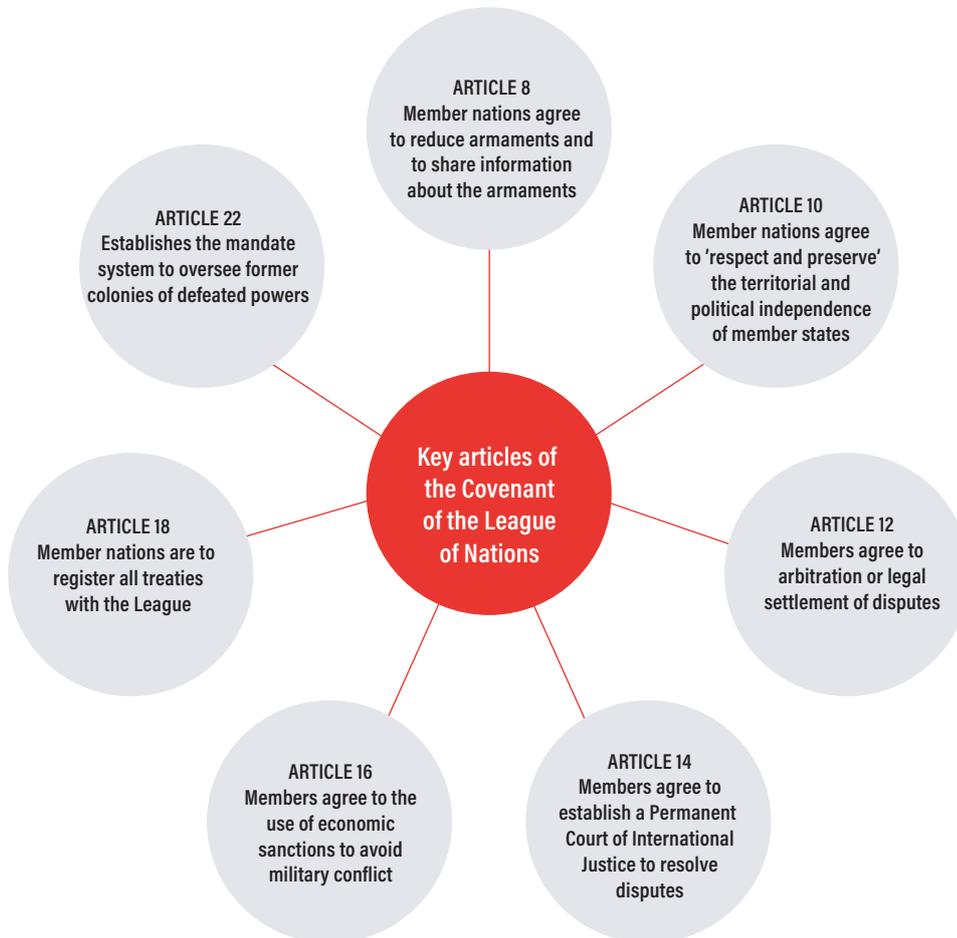


FIGURE 6.2 Key articles of the Covenant of the League of Nations

Membership of the League

There were 42 founding member nations of the League. Despite Wilson's leading role at the Paris Conference and as an advocate for the League, the United States did not join. Wilson's political opponents in Washington refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, which included the League's founding document. This left the leadership of the League in the hands of two 'established' **great powers**, Britain and France, who had indicated some uncertainty about the project during negotiations. Italy and Japan, while also considered great powers, had been dissatisfied with territorial arrangements reached by negotiations (see Chapter 1). The Japanese also felt humiliated by the blocking of a proposed racial equality clause in the League's Covenant – the move against this clause had been initiated by the Australian Prime Minister Billy Hughes. Other notable absences from the League included Germany and the USSR. The absence of key powers, and the disappointment of others, would have a profound impact on the authority of the League in the long term and limit its ability to achieve its aims.

great powers

the dominant political powers of a particular historical period



FIGURE 6.3 The Palais Wilson, Geneva, the original headquarters of the League of Nations. Today it is used as the Headquarters of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights.

TABLE 6.1 Membership of the League of Nations

Year joined	Countries joining the League of Nations	Major countries leaving the League of Nations
	Founding members:	
1920	Argentina, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, British Empire, (including the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and South Africa), Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, El Salvador, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Italy, Japan, Liberia, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Persia, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Siam, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia	
1920	Austria, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Finland, Luxembourg, Albania	
1921	Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania	
1922	Hungary	
1923	Irish Free State, Abyssinia	
1924	Dominican Republic	
1926	Germany	
1931	Mexico	
1932	Turkey, Iraq	
1933		Japan, Germany
1934	Soviet Union, Afghanistan, Ecuador	
1937	Egypt	Italy
1939		Soviet Union (expelled)

Initial success

In the 1920s the League enjoyed a number of successes. These included the resolution of territorial disputes associated with the peace treaties negotiated in Paris, such as in Upper Silesia, an area contested between Germany and Poland. It also included the determination of Albania's borders, and oversight of the administration of the Saar region of Germany under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Other major accomplishments included:

- dealing with refugee crises in Turkey and Europe
- undertaking actions to limit trade in opium and sexual slavery
- issuing Nansen passports to more than 450 000 stateless people
- settling a dispute between Finland and Sweden over the Åland Islands in 1920
- reaffirming Albania's borders when Yugoslavia invaded in 1921
- mediating the war between Greece and Bulgaria in 1925.

The League of Nations Peace Ballot in Britain, 1934

The Peace Ballot of 1934–35 was a nationwide survey in Britain conducted in 1934. It included questions that clearly illustrated the attitudes of the British public's attitude to the League of Nations, collective security, disarmament and the arms trade. Approximately 11 million (roughly one-third) of the British voting public participated. They showed a high level of enthusiasm for the League and its endeavours, even as its effectiveness had begun to wane.

TABLE 6.2 Results of the League of Nations Peace Ballot

Question	Yes	No
1. Should Great Britain remain a Member of the League of Nations?	11 090 387	355 883
2. Are you in favour of all-round reduction of armaments by international agreement?	10 470 489	862 775
3. Are you in favour of an all-round abolition of national military and naval aircraft by international agreement?	9 533 558	1 689 786
4. Should the manufacture and sale of armaments for private profit be prohibited by international agreement?	10 417 329	775 415
5. Do you consider that, if a nation insists on attacking another, the other nations should combine to compel it to stop:		
a. by economic and non-military measures	10 027 608	635 074
b. if necessary, military measures:	6 784 368	2 351 981

Harold Nicolson, 'British Public Opinion and Foreign Policy', *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 1. (January, 1937), pp 57–8.

Importantly, by the middle of the 1920s, the League had become a major forum for international relations. While the Soviet Union and the United States were not members, they still worked closely with the League. The United States, for example, hosted and participated in the Washington Naval Conference in 1921–22. Britain and France also made the League the focus of their international diplomatic activities, as did Germany once it joined in 1926. The Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1929, initiated by France and the United States and signed by Germany, Britain, Italy and several other powers, is an example of the spirit of the League influencing international relations. While also outside the League's formal activities, this commitment highlights how much the world wanted to renounce war as a method in international relations.

During the 1930s, however, the authority of the League diminished. The economic crisis of the Great Depression, the increasing assertiveness of Italy, Japan and Germany, and the absence of key global powers combined to diminish its effectiveness. The 1932–34 World Disarmament Conference, in which 60 member nations participated, reached no meaningful outcome aside from triggering Germany's departure from the League. Hitler, no doubt disingenuously, had proposed that all nations should disarm. When this proposal was rejected, Hitler withdrew Germany from the League in an insincere rage. The failure of the World Disarmament Conference, the British Foreign Office noted, 'would have incalculable consequences for Europe and the League.'

The League's ability to enforce its rulings was limited. It had no army. Its major weapon, economic sanctions, was difficult to coordinate and in the economic crisis of the 1930s was complicated to use. Moreover, the disappointed nations could simply walk out, as the eventual departures of Japan (1933), Germany (1933) and Italy (1937) showed. The tendency for Britain and France to reach agreements outside the League system also reduced the organisation's authority. The **revisionist** nations became increasingly bold in asserting their demands, and a series of treaties, agreements and non-aggression pacts meant that by the late 1930s the League could only watch from a drastically weakened position as the second great conflict of the 20th century unfolded. The case studies of Japan and Germany's foreign policy ambitions and the response of other powers during the 1930s highlight the limits of collective security and the League's authority.

revisionist

seeking to change or amend an established agreement; in this context it applies to the actions of nations seeking to revise the terms of the Paris Peace Conferences

Source Study 6.1 The intentions and authority of the League of Nations

Source A: Extracts from Covenant of the League of Nations

THE HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES,

In order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security

- by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war,
- by the prescription of open, just and honourable relations between nations,
- by the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments, and
- by the maintenance of justice and a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations in the dealings of organised peoples with one another,

Covenant of the League of Nations, at The Avalon Project website, Yale Law School, accessed on 11 April 2021.

Source B: Report by the US lawyer, Raymond B. Fosdick

Fosdick was an outspoken internationalist and member of the working group who set up the League of Nations. He stepped down when the United States refused to join the League in November 1919.

In spite of the failure of the United States to ratify the compact, the League of Nations is alive. It is a going concern. Its machinery is being completed, and its influence is spreading. All the countries that were neutral during the war have joined, including Spain, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Switzerland. Every country in South America, except Ecuador, is now a member of the League ...

... the League is rapidly assuming its duties. Through commissioners it has taken over the control of Danzig and the Saar Valley Basin, in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles; it has started the organization of the Court of International Justice; it has assumed its responsibilities

for the minority peoples of Poland under the terms of the Polish treaty; it is advising and supporting the International Labor Office which has been constituted under its aegis. Its finances, guaranteed by its constituent members, are now on a satisfactory budget basis. Already the Council of the League, which is its executive committee, has held meetings in London and Paris, while the Assembly, representative of all the member nations, will hold its first conference at a comparatively early date ...

A visitor at the League's headquarters in London is struck, not only by the variety of work that is being undertaken, but by its practical applicability to matters of vital concern. In one department, treaties and agreements are being registered and published, marking the end of the evil days of hidden diplomacy. In another section, studies are being made of the movement of raw materials and coal, and plans are being formulated for more equitable distribution. Still another section is at work on problems and conventions relating to international communications, such as wireless and cable despatches ... Henceforth the world can be wise before the event rather than after it ...

RB Fosdick, *The Atlantic*, June 1920, *The Atlantic* website, accessed on 11 April 2021.

Source C: An extract from Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back: Europe: 1914–1949*

After its foundation in January 1920 the League [of Nations], comprising forty-eight member states by the end of that year with its headquarters in Geneva, sought to work for international cooperation, to protect ethnic minorities, and to do everything possible to mitigate the humanitarian crisis in central and eastern Europe. But most important of all was the commitment to uphold the post-war international settlement. This would prove a pipe-dream. Without military might to intervene, notions of an effective multi-national framework of collective security were illusory. And, for all that it was intended to be a truly global organization, the League remained in practice a largely European affair, dominated especially by the interests of Britain and France. Wilson's political opponents in the USA would ensure that America, which was meant to be the League's key player, was not even a member.

I Kershaw, *To Hell and Back: Europe: 1914–1949*, Penguin, London, 2015, p 115.

Questions

1. With reference to Source A, describe the intentions of the League of Nations.
2. What is the perspective of Source B?
3. What is the value of Source B for a historian studying the League of Nations?
4. Explain, with reference to Source C, the limits of the authority of the League of Nations.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Define 'collective security.'
2. What were the main features of the Wilsonian system created after World War I?
3. How representative of world interests was the League of Nations? Was this a strength or a limitation?
4. Summarise the aims of the League of Nations and identify the mechanisms available to the League to implement these aims.
5. Explain the limitations of the League of Nations' authority.

Japanese ambitions in Asia

Timeline 6.2: Japan and the international order 1904–45

- 1904–05 ▪ Japan defeated Russia.
- 1914–18 ▪ Japan participated in World War I as a member of the Allied Powers.
- 1919–20 ▪ Japan participated in the Paris Peace Conference and was a foundation member of the League of Nations.
- 1920–21 ▪ The Washington Naval Conference was held.
- 1931 ▪ The Mukden Incident initiated Japan's invasion of Manchuria.
- 1932 ▪ Japanese forces established the Manchukuo puppet government.
▪ Militarists held increasing influence in Japanese politics.
- 1933 ▪ Japan withdrew from the League of Nations.
- 1936 ▪ Japan entered the Anti-Comintern Pact with Nazi Germany.
- 1937 ▪ Japan launched its invasion of China.
- 1940 ▪ June: Japan occupied French Indochina.
▪ September: Japan joined the Tripartite Pact with Italy and Germany.
- 1941 ▪ 7–8 December: Japan attacked the United States Pacific Naval Base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and launched its invasion of South-East Asia.
▪ The United States declared war on Japan. Germany declared war on the United States.
- 1945 ▪ 2 September: Japan surrendered.

With the ascension of the Meiji Emperor in 1868, Japan commenced a process of rapid modernisation and industrialisation. By the first decade of the 20th century Japan had become an imperial power of global standing, a member of the 'great power club' which was dominated by Europeans at the time. The Japanese Empire included Korea and modern Taiwan and, following the Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05), a sphere of influence in China. In addition to being the first Asian power to defeat a European power in a modern war, Japan had also become a treaty partner of Britain, another first for an Asian power. During World War I, Japan joined the Allied Powers but its combat role was limited. The Japanese navy protected Allied shipping and Japan used the opportunity to expand its influence by occupying German territories in the Pacific and interests in China. In cooperation with the United States, Japanese forces were also involved in the intervention in Siberia against Bolshevik forces during the Russian Civil War (1918–21), a step that built upon its earlier encroachment on Russia's interests in East Asia.

Limiting Japanese influence

As noted in Chapter 1, Japan participated in the Paris Peace Conference but left it dissatisfied. The Japanese government had sought authority over former German colonies in the Pacific, territories it had occupied during the conflict. While it gained some of these colonies, the outspoken Australian Prime Minister Billy Hughes orchestrated a campaign to limit the Japanese sphere of influence to north of the equator. This granted Australia mandate authority over the former colonies of New Guinea, Nauru, the Bismarck Islands and Bougainville. Japan's attempt to gain territory from German possessions in China were also rebuffed. In addition, Japan's campaign to include a racial equality clause in the Covenant of the League of Nations was dismissed. These disappointments alienated many influential Japanese leaders and temporarily disrupted Japan's increasing influence in China and the Asia-Pacific region.

From the early 1920s to the early 1930s the Japanese government became more dissatisfied with collective security, developed more independent and expansionist policies and began to cooperate more with powers outside the League. A key point on this path was the 1920–21 Washington Naval Conference. While the conference was not a formal League of Nations initiative, it focused on arms limitation and the reduction of tension between powers in East Asia, one of the League's core ideals. Three major interrelated treaties resulted from the conference, essentially overturning the Anglo-Japanese Treaty which had bound Japan and Britain together in an alliance since 1902. Domestic factors also influenced the shift, including the increasing influence of militarists on the government, economic pressures and the impact of the 1923 earthquake. The outcomes summarised in Table 6.3 were perceived as diminishing Japan's standing in the international community.

TABLE 6.3 Washington Naval Conference outcomes

Treaty	Signatories	Agreements	Outcomes
The Five-Power Treaty	United States, Britain, Japan, France, Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited the relative size of each nation's navy Required scrapping vessels and limited building of new capital ships Outlawed expansion of naval bases in the Pacific region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased building of small classes of naval vessels
The Four-Power Treaty	United States, Britain, France, Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement between signatories to consult about conflicts in East Asia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rationale for the lapse of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance
The Nine-Power Treaty	United States, Britain, Japan, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signatories required to respect territorial integrity of China Signatories recognised Japan's dominance in Manchuria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restricted Japanese engagement in China Japan was to remove troops from Siberia A subsidiary between Japan and China returned some territories to China

Challenging collective security

While collective security initially limited Japanese expansion, it pursued increasingly assertive policies during the late 1920s and 30s, largely due to a combination of the Great Depression, the increasing influence of militarism and nationalism in politics and the perception of being rejected by the other great powers. Japan wanted to maintain its great power status and desired economic security and political dominance in East Asia. Japan feared containment, a closing-in of strategic options because of pressures applied by other powers. This included US economic interests in China and the Philippines and its prominence in the Pacific. It also included Britain's maritime empire and colonies in South and South-East Asia, French possessions in Indochina and, to a lesser extent, Japan's longstanding competition with Russia and the Soviet Union for influence in China and Siberia.

Japanese policy initially focused on consolidating their position and influence in China, which they mostly viewed in economic and territorial terms. Importantly, China was politically unstable during the interwar years. While China was formally governed by the nationalist Kuomintang under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, in reality, local warlords and the Communist Party controlled considerable territory. Japan exploited this in Manchuria, where they assassinated the local warlord in 1928 and in 1931 used a staged bombing, known as the Mukden Incident, near a Japanese-owned railway line as a rationale

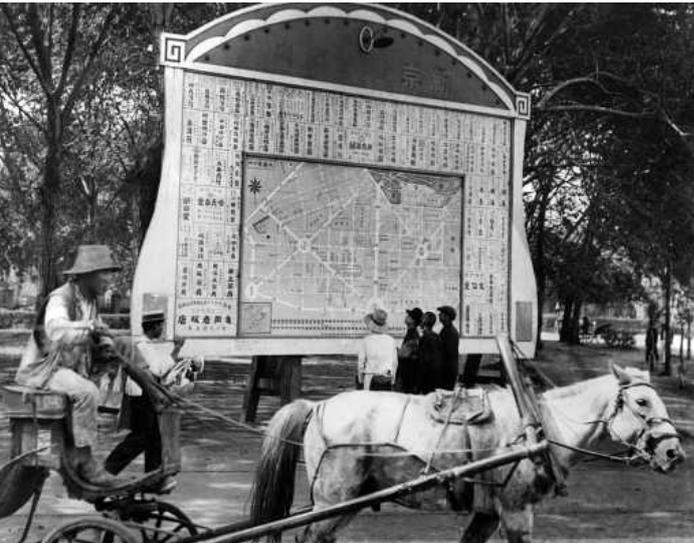


FIGURE 6.4 A billboard detailing Japanese plans for the new city of Hsingking, Manchukuo, c. 1934



FIGURE 6.5 The brutality of the Japanese occupation of China was marked and public. Heads of Chinese 'mutineers' in Harbin were customarily hung in public places. This photo was taken c. 1937.

for invading Manchuria. The plot, orchestrated by the Japanese Kwantung Army, was followed by invasion and occupation of Manchuria. After the occupation, the Japanese treated the region as a colony, settling as many as 500 000 people, exploiting the region's rich resources and, in 1932, establishing a brutal puppet state, Manchukuo.

Unsurprisingly, China protested to the League of Nations, who initiated an investigation. The investigation took more than a year and the findings rejected the Japanese claim of self-defence and demanded that Japan return Manchuria to China. In 1933 the Assembly of the League of Nations voted 42 to 1 in support of the recommendations put forward by the investigation. Japan was the only opposing vote and withdrew from the League in protest in March 1933. In the first test of the League of Nations by a major power and member state, collective security had failed.

Expansion in China

Now free of the League, Japan pursued its aim of increasing its influence over China. Between 1933 and 1937 Japan undertook minor advances, absorbing areas neighbouring Manchuria and attacking the port city of Shanghai. In 1937 Japan initiated a full-scale invasion. Chinese resistance was initially ineffective because of its political divisions. The Japanese gained control of much of north-eastern China and, by 1941, had also captured many of the major ports in the south. The conflict was notable for its brutality, in particular at the capital Nanjing where, according to some estimates, Japanese forces massacred as many as 200 000 civilians.

Establishing connections

In 1936 Japan signed the Anti-Comintern Pact with Nazi Germany. This agreement drew two revisionist states together in opposition to the Soviet-led Communist International.

In 1935 the Comintern World Congress had declared Japan and Germany to be threats to peace. This coincided with the USSR's engagement with the Western Powers in an attempt to revitalise collective security. Although it was largely symbolic, the Anti-Comintern Pact included a secret protocol where the parties agreed they would not negotiate treaties with the USSR. Italy joined the pact in 1937 and it later expanded to include Hungary, the puppet state of Manchukuo and Spain. The Anti-Comintern Pact broadened to become the Tripartite Pact, the alliance agreement of the Axis Powers, in 1940.

In spite of Nazi Germany's ideological opposition to communism, in 1939 it eventually reached an understanding with Stalin's USSR by signing the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact. Japan, which had been engaged in border skirmishes with the Soviets between 1932 and 1939, took the opportunity to establish a non-aggression pact just months before Nazi Germany reneged on its agreement and invaded the USSR in June 1941.



FIGURE 6.6 The signing of the Tripartite Pact, 27 September 1940, formalised the relationship between Italy, Japan and Germany.



FIGURE 6.7 Japanese and German officers inspect the Maginot Line, built to defend France, during 1940. In practice the Axis alliance rarely entailed direct cooperation but there were visiting delegations.

The international response to Japan's expansionary war in China was limited until 1940 and by this point the League was redundant. Between 1937 and 1940 the United States, Britain and the Netherlands were the major suppliers of military equipment and resources to support the Japanese war effort in China. It was only as the impact of the European war began to have consequences in Asia that meaningful pressure was applied on the Japanese. Following the defeat of France by Nazi Germany in June 1940, the Japanese government initiated negotiations to position troops in the French colony of Indochina (now Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia). While concessions were granted in September, Japanese forces moved in and established effective control over the region. This move partly reflected the underlying sentiments of the Japanese policy framework of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. The response of the United States was decisive: it halted the export of resources vital for the Japanese war effort in China.

The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere

Japanese policy in the 1930s was increasingly shaped by the idea of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. The policy set out a vision of Asia as a unified bloc working, under Japanese leadership, towards a collaborative and prosperous future. The policy was hostile to Western imperial powers, advocating in propaganda the idea of 'Asia for Asians'. This framework shaped the message of the Japanese as they 'liberated' European colonies and recruited local populations in their war efforts. In reality, the Japanese were rationalising their territorial expansion and securing markets and supplies for manufacturing.



FIGURE 6.8 The USS *Oklahoma*, 7 December 1941. The attack on Pearl Harbor failed to achieve its ambition of destroying the American Pacific fleet in port. Within months many ships were again at sea.

The shift in US foreign policy towards Japan prompted the radicalisation of Japanese strategic goals. The economic needs of markets and resources had driven Japanese expansion into China, but the US trade blockade made it more urgent for Japan to secure oil, rubber and metals. Without these, the campaign in China would become impossible. To that end, Japan simultaneously launched a surprise attack on the US Pacific fleet at the base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and an invasion of European colonies in South-East Asia, including Malaya, Singapore and the Dutch East Indies. These were later followed by invasions of New Guinea and Burma and some attacks on the Australian mainland.

The attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 was a calculated strategic risk. The aim was to destroy the United States' fleet so that Japan could dominate the Pacific Ocean,

create a defensive perimeter and buy time to acquire resources from the newly conquered territories. While it was successful in the short term, Japan's aggression provoked a powerful reaction from the United States and its allies, turning the conflicts in Europe and the Asia-Pacific into a global struggle, ending in Japanese military defeat in 1945.

In summary, Japanese ambitions in the 1920s and 30s were shaped by the underlying forces that had characterised its development from the Meiji restoration in 1868. In the early 20th century it was the only Asian great power and closely aligned with Britain. After repeated humiliations following World War I – first at the Paris Conference and then at the Washington Naval Conference – and a growing sense of encirclement by the Western powers, attitudes in Japan shifted. The increasingly powerful voice of militarists challenged and then dismissed collective security and pursued actively expansionary policies to establish markets and dominance in China. This eventually led to Japan's increased isolation, gravitation towards other revisionist states such as Germany, and ultimately the pursuit of a strategic goal that drew the powerful United States into World War II.



FIGURE 6.9 The expansion of the Japanese Empire from the 1920s to 40s. Note the land-based (by China and the Soviet Union) and maritime (by Britain and the United States) blocks to Japan's territorial expansion.

Source Study 6.2 The ambitions of Japan in Asia

Source A: Extract from *The Making of Modern Japan*, by Kenneth Pyle

From the time of the [Meiji] Restoration down to the 1930s, Japan was motivated by a sense of insecurity, both physical and cultural, and by ambition for national power, respect, and equality. Those motives, intertwined and often inseparable, made up the peculiar nationalism that impelled its historic advance.

K Pyle, *The Making of Modern Japan*, 2nd edn, D.C Heath and Company, Lexington, 1996, p 181.

Source B: Japanese nationalist Konoe Fumimaro, 1919

Anglo-American pacifism has nothing to do with justice or humanity but is a do-nothing-to-rock-the-boat formula in favour of those trying to maintain the status quo ... any consideration of our international position ought rather to make people in Japan as well as in Germany, call for breaking up the status quo ...

Konoe Fumimaro, 'Against a Pacifism Centered on England and America', (*Ei-Bei hon'i no heiwashugi o haisu*), 1918, in *Japan Echo* 22, special issue (1995), p 14, 1919.

Source C: An extract from the memoirs of Joseph C. Grew, *Ten Years in Japan*, 1944

Grew was the American ambassador to Japan between 1932 and 1941.

Nobody could miss the political significance of Japan's decision to quit the League of Nations. It marked a clear break with the Western powers and prepared the way for Japan's later adherence to the Axis [with Nazi Germany and Italy]. But the immediate consequence of Japan's departure from the League was not a swing toward extremism either in domestic or foreign affairs. Quite the opposite. Having made their hostile political gesture toward the Western powers, the leaders of Japan took a line that looked almost like appeasement – at any rate as far as the United States was concerned. But in spite of its apparent moderation, Japanese foreign policy remained unyielding on essentials: the Naval Limitation Treaties were not renewed, more Japanese troops poured into China. But events did not move fast enough to suit the militarists. The longer the period of calm, the more intense the storm.

JC Grew, *Ten Years in Japan*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1944, p 75.

Source D: Japan's case in the League of Nations dispute. Address delivered at the Ninth Plenary Meeting, 6 December 1932.

Japan is a loyal supporter of the League of Nations ... we have striven to avoid war for many years under provocations that, prior to the drafting of the Covenant, would certainly have brought it about ... when the incident of September 18th, 1931, took place. We wanted no such situation as has developed. We sought in Manchuria only the observance of our treaty rights and the safety of the lives of our people and their property ...

While the situation was developing in Manchuria, efforts were made in Europe and America to rally what is called 'world opinion' against Japan. The craft of propaganda, in which our Chinese friends are particularly adept, was put into effective use in shaping world opinion against Japan before the facts were fully known.

... as for Japan and China in particular, we look for the time to come when these two nations of the distant East will realise the common origin of their culture and traditions and the common interests of their existence, and will co-operate with a sense of mutual understanding and respect, in the policy of upholding peace in the Far East, thereby serving the cause of world peace, in and with the League of Nations.

Yosuke Matsuoka, Japan's case in the Sino-Japanese dispute as presented before the Special session of the Assembly of the League of Nations, Japanese Delegation to the League of Nations, Geneva, 1933, p 10.

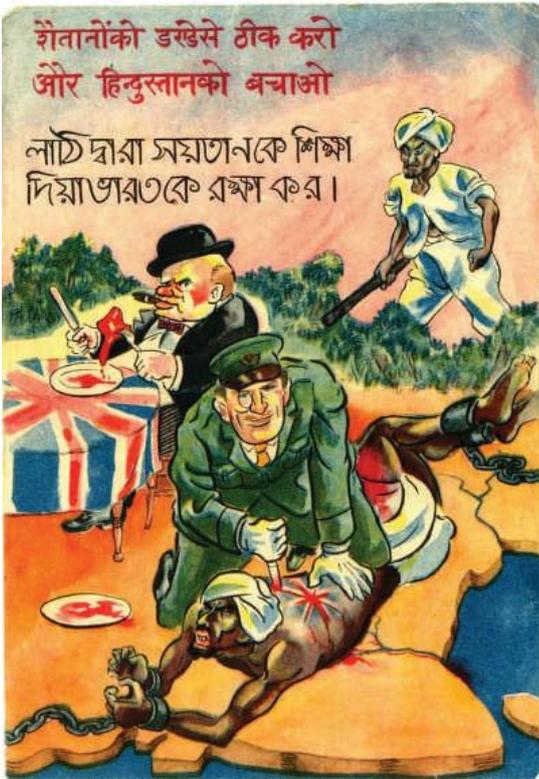
Source E: Japanese wartime propaganda poster

FIGURE 6.10 A Japanese wartime poster designed to appeal to Indian people

Questions

1. According to Source A, what were the long-term forces motivating Japan following the Meiji restoration?
2. How might Source A, Source B and Source C be useful to a historian studying the ambitions of Japan during the 1920s and 30s?
3. Closely examine Source B.
 - a. What is Prince Konoe's main point in this extract?
 - b. What is the perspective of this source?
4. Summarise Joseph Grew's interpretation of the significance of Japan's decision to leave the League of Nations in 1933 provided in Source C.
5. Identify the key ideas expressed in Source E.
6. Using Source D and one other source, outline Japan's ambitions in the Asia-Pacific following World War I.

REVISION QUESTIONS

1. Explain the idea of encirclement and evaluate this as a factor on influencing Japanese ambitions during the interwar years.
 2. Identify Japan's ambitions in China and the Asia-Pacific region. Explain what factors limited their ability to achieve these goals between 1919 and 1936.
 3. List the five most significant steps taken by Japan between 1930 and 1941 to achieve its ambitions in Asia. Identify the most important and explain your choice in one paragraph.
 4. Find one cartoon reflecting on Japanese actions in Asia during the 1930s, describe the example, assess whether the representation is positive or critical, and write a summary of its main message. Share the image and commentary with members of your class.
-

German ambitions in Europe

While Japan was the first nation to formally leave the League of Nations, the experience of Germany in the interwar years also highlights a range of challenges to the principles of collective security. Marginalised from negotiations at Paris and excluded from the League until 1926, the Weimar Republic largely focused on revisions to the reparations through the conventional channels of international relations. Once the Nazi regime was established in 1933, Germany's revisionism became increasingly **unilateral**, aggressive and, from 1938, expansionary. When evaluating Nazi Germany's foreign policy, however, it is important to note that while the broad goals – revision of the treaty, unifying German peoples, and territorial expansion – were consistent with the party's ideology, pragmatic factors such as economic needs and opportunity influenced their timing and methods. Because of this, historians are divided over the degree to which Hitler and the Nazi Party had a coherent 'plan' for Europe.

unilateral

to act independently, particularly in relation to international affairs

Timeline 6.3 German ambitions in Europe 1918–45

- 1918 ▪ Germany was defeated in World War I.
- 1919–20 ▪ The Paris Peace Conference was held, Germany signed the Treaty of Versailles.
- 1922 ▪ The Treaty of Rapallo is signed between Weimar Germany and the Soviet Union.
- 1924–29 ▪ Weimar Germany endeavoured to revise the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.
- 1926 ▪ Germany joined the League of Nations.
- 1929 ▪ The Great Depression commenced.
- 1933 ▪ The National Socialists seized power and established the Nazi regime.
 - Germany left the League of Nations.
 - Nazi Germany accelerated secret rearmament.
- 1935 ▪ Germany reintroduced conscription and announced the establishment of an air force, the *Luftwaffe*.
- 1936 ▪ March: Germany remilitarised the Rhineland.
- 1937 ▪ Germany signed the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan.
 - November: Hitler met with senior military leaders to discuss war preparations.
- 1938 ▪ March: Anschluss with Austria.
 - September: The Munich Conference, between Germany, Italy, Britain and France, permitted Nazi Germany's integration of the Sudetenland.
- 1939 ▪ March: Germany annexed Czechoslovakia.
 - May: Germany established the Pact of Steel with Fascist Italy.
 - 23 August: Nazi–Soviet Non-Aggression Pact was signed.
 - September: Germany invaded Poland; Britain and France declared war on Germany; the Soviet Union invaded Poland. World War II commenced in Europe.
- 1940 ▪ April–May: Germany invaded Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium and France.
 - September: Germany, Italy and Japan signed the Tripartite Pact.
- 1941 ▪ Germany invaded the Balkan states and supported Italy in North Africa.
 - July: Germany invaded the Soviet Union.
 - December: Japan attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor; Germany declared war on the United States.
- 1945 ▪ 8 May: Germany surrendered.

Weimar policies

The impact of the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles on Germany are considered in detail in Chapter 1. Broadly, most Germans, particularly those on the political right, saw the peace as an unfair *diktat*. The terms of the Treaty of Versailles had restricted the German army to 100 000 troops, forbidden it to maintain an air force, forbidden union with Austria, established a demilitarised zone in the Rhineland, placed the resource-rich Saarland under international control for 15 years and removed territories from Germany's control. Alsace-Lorraine was returned to France and some areas in Eastern Europe became part of the newly re-formed nation of Poland. Germany also lost all its colonies and, perhaps the most frustrating of all, the war guilt clause (Article 231 of the Treaty) attributed responsibility for the war to Germany alone and so the requirement to pay reparations.

Domestically the Treaty of Versailles had significant impacts on Germany. Signatories to the treaty were assassinated and a shadow army, the Black Reichswehr, was supported by the Army to circumvent some of the demilitarisation imposed by the treaty. The hyperinflation of 1923 was a direct result of government responses to the French occupation of the Ruhr, following Germany's failure to make reparation payments. It was also during this period that the Weimar Republic and the Soviet Union signed the Treaty of Rapallo in 1922. The two outlier nations agreed to a reciprocal economic relationship of resources in exchange for supplies because they were both excluded from the League's system of collective security. More problematic was the secret parallel agreement that enabled the Germans to develop weapons and train troops in the Soviet Union in violation of the terms of the Versailles Treaty. In 1930 there was also a limited program of secret naval rearmament that contributed to the collapse of the Müller government.

In the period of stability that followed the hyperinflation, and largely under the guidance of Gustav Stresemann (first as Chancellor and then Foreign Minister from 1923 to 1929), German efforts to revise the terms of the treaty followed mostly conventional negotiations with other powers. Stresemann was a moderate nationalist, and in 1924 he initiated the negotiations of the Dawes Plan, a revision of the reparations payments. This lowered the value of payments for the next five years, reducing the immediate burden on the German economy. Payments would then increase once Germany's economy had recovered. The Dawes Plan also included loans of two hundred million US dollars and the removal of French troops from the Rhineland. Under Stresemann's management, a further revision to reparations was made under the Young Plan in 1929. This agreement reduced the total amount owing to 112 billion marks from the earlier 132 billion marks. With the onset of the Depression, repayments were suspended.



FIGURE 6.11 Former Chancellor and later Foreign Minister, Gustav Stresemann, negotiated revisions of reparations and led Germany back into international relations.



FIGURE 6.12 French troops in the Ruhr requisition an iron pipe as a form of reparations payment, c. 1923.

In 1925 Stresemann also played a key role in the negotiations of the Locarno agreements. In this system of seven treaties, Germany accepted the borders revised by the Treaty of Versailles. The League of Nations Court of International Justice established a process of arbitration of disputes between Germany, Belgium, France, Czechoslovakia and Poland. These developments allowed Germany to build relationships with its neighbours and it was admitted to the League of Nations in 1926. In recognition of this, Stresemann and the French Foreign Minister were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their roles in the negotiations.

Nazi ambitions

While Stresemann's cautious initiatives gradually restored Germany to the international stage, the establishment of the Nazi regime in 1933 changed Germany's foreign policy directions and challenged collective security. The first step was Hitler's participation in the 1932–34 International Disarmament Conference, which was sponsored by the League of Nations and included participants from the United States and the Soviet Union. Rather surprisingly, in October 1933 Hitler advocated that all nations should disarm. If that was not agreeable, then Hitler demanded that Germany be allowed to rearm. When the demands were rejected, Germany withdrew from the conference and the League of Nations. Following Japan's departure only months before, Germany's departure discredited the authority of the League and set the tone for future German initiatives.

Hitler's demand for general disarmament was, of course, a ploy. It was utterly out of keeping with the Nazi movement's long-held positions, including its hostility to Germany's forced disarmament, the terms of the Versailles Treaty, its ideological aspirations to unify all Germans and its general goal of acquiring *Lebensraum* ('living space'). These ambitions had figured prominently in National Socialist policy and statements from its earliest days and had been articulated clearly by Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, speeches and other Nazi publications. In *Mein Kampf*, for example, Hitler examined foreign policy over several chapters. Some of the most important points are identified in Table 6.4.

TABLE 6.4 Some of the key ideas about German foreign policy included in *Mein Kampf*

Theme	Summary from <i>Mein Kampf</i>
Nationalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '... foreign policy is only a means to an end, and that end is solely the promotion of our own nationality.' • Hitler expressed his belief that the Jews were working against these German interests. • '... the aim of a German foreign policy of today, must be the preparation for the reconquest of freedom for tomorrow.'
Allies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitler identified Britain and Italy as potential German allies in Europe.
War and violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That 'force of arms' is the only way to recover lost territory.
<i>Lebensraum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aim of foreign policy is 'to secure for the German people the land and soil to which they are entitled on this earth.'¹

Hitler's observations are generalisations that critique the Versailles Treaty and the League of Nations system, and note the role of the Jews in weakening Germany, the need for rearmament and the unifications of the German people and territorial expansion. They are not, however, a plan.

Some scholars have interpreted them as an orderly scheme. The historian Andreas Hillgruber, for example, summarised the ideas expressed in *Mein Kampf* as a staged plan, the *Stufenplan*:

1. military build-up, revision of the Versailles Treaty and an alliance with Italy and Britain
2. war with France and its eastern European allies
3. the invasion of the Soviet Union and the destruction of the Judeo-Bolshevik threat.

Hillgruber expands on these steps with a discussion of Hitler's second book which, while written in 1928, was not published until after World War II. Hillgruber suggests that there was actually a fourth step in Hitler's plan: world domination following a war with the United States.²

In general terms this summary of aims and ambitions works. However, it describes broad ideas, rather than a detailed and specific plan to achieve the goals discussed. Although Hitler succeeded in rearming Germany and revising many aspects of the Treaty of Versailles, he failed to create an alliance with Britain, failed to defeat the Soviets, and failed to achieve the fourth step of defeating the United States and dominating the world.

An understanding of Nazi ambitions needs to consider how Hitler adapted to the circumstances that evolved during the 1930s. He was, for example, forced to respond to internal factors including the economy, the ideas of other leaders, prominent groups, the armed forces and other influential elements of the regime. He was also forced to respond to external factors, most notably the positions of other powers such as Britain, France and the Soviet Union. These factors combined to constrain the opportunities open to Hitler and often meant that short-term pressures reshaped short-term aims.

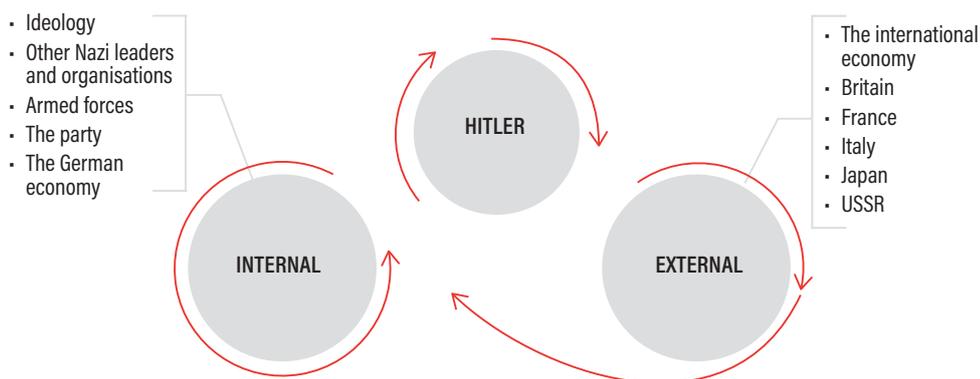


FIGURE 6.13 Factors influencing German ambitions in Europe

Reversing Versailles, 1933-38

The first step on the path towards implementing the broad ambitions of Nazi foreign policy was undoing the restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles and the League system. Reparations payments had already been suspended before the Nazi seizure of power. The regime did not renew them. Once in power, the steps they took were incremental, starting with Germany's withdrawal from the World Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations. Operating outside the League treaty system, in January 1934 Germany and Poland agreed to a declaration of non-aggression that also settled some border disputes. This initiative was well received by Britain and the United States, but of concern to France and the Soviet Union.

More significant was Germany's unilateral remilitarisation under Hitler's leadership. From 1933, the Nazi regime commenced the process of secret rearmament. This included training pilots for the then-banned air force and the development and manufacture of weapons, particularly aircraft and shipping. In March 1935 Germany publicly proclaimed its militarisation by reintroducing conscription for the army, expanding it to 300 000 troops and announcing the formation of the air force, the *Luftwaffe*. Britain's response was to



FIGURE 6.14 German troops enter Cologne, in the Rhineland, on 7 March 1936.

reach a naval agreement with Germany, restricting the size of *Kriegsmarine* to 30 per cent of the size of the British navy. The agreement, interestingly, was registered with the League of Nations. The economic impact of rearmament, particularly after 1936 with the introduction of the Four-Year Plan, contributed significantly to Germany's economic recovery from the Great Depression.

In 1936 Germany again challenged the treaty terms by sending troops into the Rhineland. The region had been demilitarised under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, to provide a buffer zone between Germany and France, the Netherlands and Belgium. Germany's occupation had the potential to spark an international incident. Hitler later reflected that had the French responded militarily then Germany would have withdrawn. Instead, the reactions of the other powers were mixed. France was unsettled about the reoccupation but was not prepared to follow a military path. Britain discouraged intervention and recognised its limited capacity to reverse the situation. At the League of Nations, the Soviet Union protested, but

was not ready to take aggressive action against Germany. The economic power of Germany, largely driven by rearmament, and the sluggish global economy meant the League ultimately took no steps against the move. Hitler claimed that he had no further territorial ambitions in Europe and called for non-aggression pacts with Britain and France. Such statements highlight the complexity of Nazi Germany's ambitions during the 1930s.

Dismantling the treaty and undermining collective security intensified as Germany pursued more assertive steps after 1936. While initially cautious, Fascist Italy began to work more closely with Nazi Germany. This eventually led to a formal alliance, as a result of Italy's alienation from the international system following its 1935 invasion of Abyssinia. Together they supported the Nationalist forces of the authoritarian dictator Franco in the Spanish

Civil War. The relationship was formalised by signing the Pact of Steel in May 1939, with Italy and Germany agreeing to support each other in the event of war. Italy also joined Germany and Japan in 1937 as a member of the Anti-Comintern Pact. These agreements would, ultimately become the foundation of the Tripartite Pact, signed in 1940, between Germany, Italy and Japan.

In Berlin during November 1937, Hitler laid out his policy objectives in more detail at a meeting with military and foreign policy leaders. The summary notes of the meeting, known as the Hossbach Memorandum, detail that Hitler's aim was a series of localised conflicts to secure economic resources followed by war with Britain and France in five to six years. The importance of this document is disputed by historians. Some, such as Hillgruber, consider it a definitive plan. Others, including Tim Mason and Ian Kershaw, read it as evidence of the complex interaction between economics, the army, ideology and personalities that drove the Nazi regime.



FIGURE 6.15 Hitler and Mussolini, June 1940

TABLE 6.5 German and British defence expenditure, 1933–39, as proportion of Gross National Product (GNP is a measure of the total production of a national economy)

Britain		Germany	
Year (Financial)	Defence expenditure as a percentage of GNP	Year	Defence expenditure as a percentage of GNP
1929–30	2.7		
1930–31	2.7		
1931–32	2.8		
1932–33	2.8	1933	3.2
1933–34	2.7	1934	3.4
1934–35	2.8	1935	5.5
1935–36	3.0	1936	7.6
1936–37	3.9	1937	9.6
1937–38	5.1	1938	18.1
1938–39	8.9		

Adapted from HW Richardson, *Economic Recovery in Britain*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1967, p 215 and AS Milward, *The German Economy at War*, Athlone Press, London, 1965, p 16.

TABLE 6.6 Average annual unemployment, Germany, 1932–38

Year	Number of unemployed
1932	5 575 500
1933	4 804 400
1934	2 718 300
1935	2 151 000
1936	1 592 700
1937	912 300
1938	429–500

Anschluss and the end of appeasement

The German-Italian alliance, a counterbalance to the British and French partnership, became more significant when Germany began to make territorial claims. On 12 March 1938, Germany annexed Austria in the *Anschluss*, an action expressly forbidden by the Versailles Treaty. This unification with Austria had been a long-stated goal, part of unifying all German peoples into a single state. However, it is worth noting that Austria had not historically been a part of Germany, even though most Austrians were ethnically German. Economic motives have also been identified as influencing the timing of the Anschluss. Austria provided a partial solution to the labour shortage in Germany that had resulted from the rearmaments program, as well as modest industrial and iron and steel capacity.³ Mussolini, in exchange for a settlement on the South Tyrol (one of Italy's grievances from the Paris Conference), supported the action. Britain and France barely responded.



FIGURE 6.16 German police enter Tyrol, a region of western Austria, in March 1938.

appeasement

to satisfy a demand; in this context it refers to satisfying German demands in the lead-up to World War II



FIGURE 6.17 Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister of Great Britain, clutching the scrap of paper that promised 'peace in our time' on his return from the Munich Conference.

sphere of influence

in international affairs, a region over which one nation holds economic or political hegemony

In late 1938 Hitler made a further territorial demand. Capitalising on local unrest and the alleged persecution of the ethnic German communities of the Sudetenland on the western borders of Czechoslovakia, Hitler sought the region's inclusion into the Reich. In a flurry of diplomatic activity between the leaders of Britain, France, Italy and Germany, Hitler secured his demand for the Sudetenland and averted a potential war through the Munich Agreement signed on 30 September. Believing Hitler to be a reasonable and honest man, the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain proclaimed the agreement, 'Peace in our time'. In March 1939 Nazi Germany then annexed the rest of Czechoslovakia, making a mockery of the Munich Agreement and any remaining hopes for genuine collective security. The British and French governments began to accelerate their rearmament programs in response and abandoned their policy of **appeasement** of Nazi Germany.

To war

Nazi Germany's next steps were again cautious, as they were mindful of the complexity of the balance of powers and the need to avoid a major conflict. Poland, the party of a non-aggression pact with Germany, became Hitler's next target. The establishment of Poland after World War I had integrated large areas of Imperial Germany into a region known as the Polish Corridor. Hitler wanted its reincorporation into the Reich. Britain and France, however, now recognised that Nazi Germany's assurances were largely worthless and warned Hitler that they would protect the security of Poland against any German aggression.

The Soviets, long fearful of Germany's ambitions and desperate to avoid a major war, sought to establish partnerships with Britain, France and Poland to contain Nazi Germany. British and French politicians remained too suspicious of the USSR, whom they considered to be their long-time ideological opponents, and Soviet diplomats were ignored or openly rebuffed by the Western powers. In a final move to avoid war, the USSR began to entertain a closer alliance with Nazi Germany. The world was shocked by the eventual announcement of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact on 23 August 1939. Despite their obvious hatred for each other, the pact served the immediate interests of both dictatorships. The USSR could avoid an immediate conflict with Germany, and Hitler had a more favourable opportunity to make his move on Poland, because he was convinced that, despite their warnings, Britain and France would do nothing to protect Poland. Trade between the two dictatorships was also a bonus which supported both economies. In a secret protocol, they also agreed to recognise **spheres of influence** – western Poland and Lithuania to Germany and eastern Poland, Estonia and Latvia to the Soviets.

On 1 September 1939 Germany invaded Poland. The Soviet Union invaded from the east on 17 September and took control of its designated sphere of influence, as the Polish Army collapsed. By 6 October, the unlikely partners divided Poland between them.

Shifting ambitions

Hitler, having dismissed Britain and France, was surprised when both declared war on Germany on 3 September. What was meant to be a localised conflict had become the widespread war Hitler had planned to avoid. While Britain and France could do little to prevent the invasion of Poland, Germany was forced to improvise their war plan – they changed strategic priorities and supported their allies as the war unfolded. After a period

of stand-off in the 'Phony War' (September 1939–April 1940), Germany invaded Norway and Denmark in April 1940, followed by the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and France in May. In these campaigns, the German military accomplished startling victories, leaving France defeated by June.



FIGURE 6.18 German territorial expansion in Europe to late 1942

Improvising again, Germany commenced an air campaign designed to lay the foundations for a land invasion of Britain in July and failed. To support failing Italian efforts in the Balkans and North Africa, Nazi Germany entered these theatres in 1941. In June 1941, they launched a surprise attack on the Soviet Union in direct breach of the non-aggression pact signed in 1939. In the shadows of this conflict, they perpetrated a radical form of racial war that culminated in the Holocaust and the death of approximately six million European Jews. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Germany declared war on the United States. Germany and the other Axis Powers, Italy and Japan, held the advantage until 1943. The coordinated economic and human resources of the Allied Powers, however, overcame this advantage and culminated in the defeat of Germany on 8 May 1945.

Between 1933 and 1939 Nazi Germany largely worked towards the accomplishment of some very broad ambitions. Modest initial steps enabled the Nazi regime to incrementally undermine the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. These increments included rearmament, the reoccupation of the Rhineland and the territorial acquisitions of Austria and Czechoslovakia. The pressures of the economy and the actions of other powers, however, influenced many decisions including the timing of important developments. This is particularly evident after 1937 as the pace of events changed rapidly. As outlined in the *Hossbach Memorandum*, Hitler had originally planned to secure resources and only fight small wars, but the conflict became increasingly difficult to contain. These changes to Germany's plans highlight that while it is possible to argue that Nazi Germany had broad ambitions, the interplay between domestic and international circumstances forced the Nazi leadership to deviate from these aims to achieve more immediate short-term goals.

Source Study 6.3 German ambitions in Europe

Source A: Extracts from the *Hossbach Memorandum*, 10 November 1937

Minutes of a Conference in the Reich Chancellery, Berlin, November 5, 1937,
FROM 4:15 to 8:30 P.M.

Present:

The Führer and Chancellor

Field Marshal von Blomberg, War Minister,

Colonel General Baron von Fritsch, Commander in Chief, Army,

Admiral Dr. H. C. Raeder, Commander in Chief, Navy,

Colonel General Göring, Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe,

Baron von Neurath, Foreign Minister,

Colonel Hossbach.

The Führer began by stating that the subject of the present conference was of such importance that its discussion would, in other countries, certainly be a matter for a full Cabinet meeting, but he – the Führer – had rejected the idea of making it a subject of discussion before the wider circle of the Reich Cabinet just because of the importance of the matter. His exposition to follow was the fruit of thorough deliberation and the experiences of his 4 1/2 years of power. He wished to explain to the gentlemen present his basic ideas concerning the opportunities for the development of our position in the field of foreign affairs and its requirements, and he asked, in the interests of a long-term German policy, that his exposition be regarded, in the event of his death, as his last will and testament.

The Führer then continued:

The aim of German policy was to make secure and to preserve the racial community [*Volksmasse*] and to enlarge it. It was therefore a question of space.

The German racial community comprised over 85 million people and, because of their number and the narrow limits of habitable space in Europe, constituted a tightly packed racial core such as was not to be met in any other country and such as implied the right to a greater living space than in the case of other peoples. If, territorially speaking, there existed no political result corresponding to this German racial core, that was a consequence of centuries of historical development, and in the continuance of these political conditions lay the greatest danger to the preservation of the German race at its present peak ... Germany's future was therefore wholly conditional upon the solving of the need for space, and such a solution could be sought, of course, only for a foreseeable period of about one to three generations.

Before turning to the question of solving the need for space, it had to be considered whether a solution holding promise for the future was to be reached by means of autarchy or by means of an increased participation in world economy.

Autarchy:

Achievement only possible under strict National Socialist leadership of the State, which is assumed; accepting its achievement as possible, the following could be stated as results:

A. In the field of raw materials only limited, not total, autarchy.

1. In regard to coal, so far as it could be considered as a source of raw materials, autarchy was possible;
2. But even as regards ores, the position was much more difficult. Iron requirements can be met from home resources and similarly with light metals, but with other raw materials – copper, tin – this was not the case.
3. Synthetic textile requirements can be met from home resources to the limit of timber supplies. A permanent solution impossible.
4. Edible fats – possible.

B. In the field of food the question of autarchy was to be answered by a flat ‘No’.

The memorandum continues, providing an overview of European affairs. It then identifies three possible scenarios.

Case 1: Period 1943–1945.

After this date only a change for the worse, from our point of view, could be expected.

The equipment of the Army, Navy, and Luftwaffe, as well as the formation of the officer corps, was nearly completed. Equipment and armament were modern; in further delay there lay the danger of their obsolescence. In particular, the secrecy of ‘special weapons’ could not be preserved forever. The recruiting of reserves was limited to current age groups; further drafts from older untrained age groups were no longer available.

Our relative strength would decrease in relation to the rearmament which would by then have been carried out by the rest of the world. If we did not act by 1943–45 any year could, in consequence of a lack of reserves, produce the food crisis, to cope with which the necessary foreign exchange was not available, and this must be regarded as a ‘waning point of the regime.’ Besides, the world was expecting our attack and was increasing its counter-measures from year to year. It was while the rest of the world was still preparing its defenses [sich abriegeln] that we were obliged to take the offensive.

Nobody knew today what the situation would be in the years 1943–45. One thing only was certain, that we could not wait longer.

On the one hand there was the great Wehrmacht, and the necessity of maintaining it at its present level, the aging of the movement and of its leaders; and on the other, the prospect of a lowering of the standard of living and of a limitation of the birth rate, which left no choice but to act. If the Führer was still living, it was his unalterable resolve to solve Germany’s problem of space at the latest by 1943–45. The necessity for action before 1943–45 would arise in cases 2 and 3.

Case 2:

If internal strife in France should develop into such a domestic crisis as to absorb the French Army completely and render it incapable of use for war against Germany, then the time for action against the Czechs had come.

Case 3:

If France is so embroiled by a war with another state that she cannot ‘proceed’ against Germany.

...

HOSSBACH

Certified Correct:

Colonel (General Staff)

The Hossbach Memorandum, 10 November 1937, at The Avalon Project website, accessed on 12 April 2021.

Source B: Dr Seuss appeasement cartoon

'Remember . . . One More Lollypop, and Then You All Go Home!'

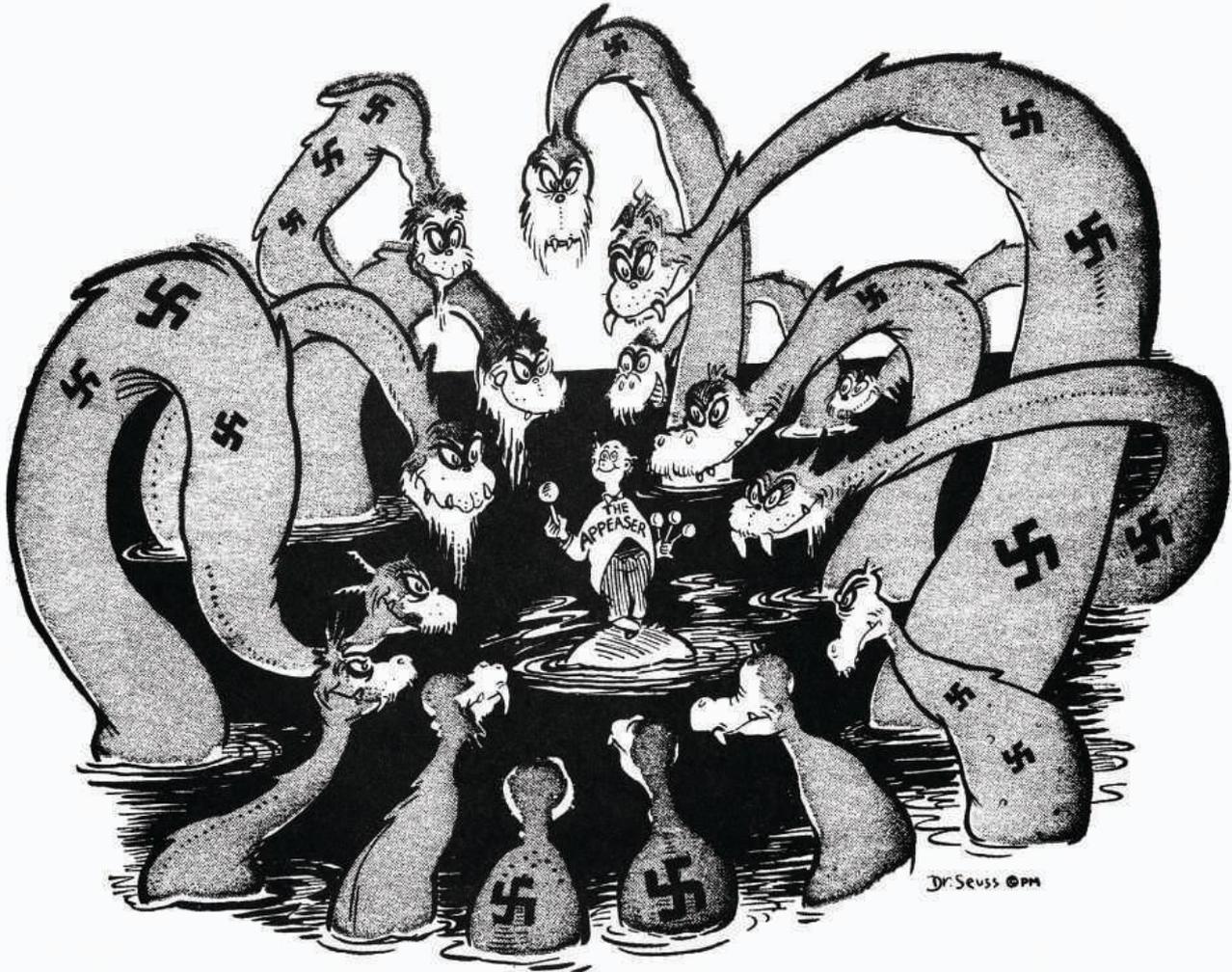


FIGURE 6.19 Dr Seuss, 1941

Source C: Communication from the German Government to the British Government, 3 September 1939

The German Government have received the British Government's ultimatum of the 3rd September, 1939. They have the honour to reply as follows:

1. The German Government and the German people refuse to receive, accept, let alone to fulfill, demands in the nature of ultimata made by the British Government.
2. On our eastern frontier there has for many months already reigned a condition of war. Since the time when the Versailles Treaty first tore Germany to pieces, all and every peaceful settlement was refused to all German Governments. The National Socialist Government also has since the year 1933 tried again and again to remove by peaceful negotiations the worst rapes and breaches of justice of this treaty. The British Government have been among those who, by their

intransigent attitude, took the chief part in frustrating every practical revision. Without the intervention of the British Government – of this the German Government and German people are fully conscious – a reasonable solution doing justice to both sides would certainly have been found between Germany and Poland. For Germany did not have the intention nor had she raised the demands of annihilating Poland. The Reich demanded only the revision of those articles of the Versailles Treaty, which already at the time of the formulation of that Dictate had been described by understanding statesmen of all nations as being in the long run unbearable, and therefore impossible for a great nation and also for the entire political and economic interests of Eastern Europe. British statesmen, too, declared the solution in the East which was then forced upon Germany as containing the germ of future wars. To remove this danger was the desire of all German Governments and especially the intention of the new National Socialist People's Government. The blame for having prevented this peaceful revision lies with the British Cabinet policy.

Communication from the German Government to the British Government, 3 September 1939,
at The Avalon Project website, accessed on 12 April 2021.

Source D: Historian Volker Ullrich

There was a relative calm over Europe for the whole of 1937. Hitler used the respite to decide upon his next foreign-policy moves. Goebbels's diaries reveal how parallel to the intensification of anti-Semitic measures at home, Hitler gradually became more radical in trying to realise his ambitions abroad. In late January 1937, while delivering a broad summary of his foreign policy over lunch in the Chancellery, Hitler expressed his hope that Germany would have 'six years yet' before the decisive battle.

V Ullrich, *Hitler: A Biography: Volume I*, Ascent, London, 2017, p 690.

Questions

1. Summarise three of the main points made in Source A.
2. Evaluate Source A as evidence of Nazi German foreign policy in the 1930s.
3. What is the main message of Source B?
4. What are the value and limitations of Source B for a historian studying the ambitions of Germany in Europe?
5. Evaluate Source C as historical evidence of Germany's ambitions in Europe in the 1930s.
6. Using Sources A, B, C and D, outline the factors that influenced Nazi Germany's ambitions in Europe between 1933 and 1939.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Define 'revisionism', '*Lebensraum*' and 'rearmament'. Write one paragraph explaining Nazi foreign policy that includes all three terms.
2. Prepare a mind map documenting German ambitions in Europe between 1919 and 1939.
3. Evaluate the significance of ideology in developing an understanding of the Nazi regime's ambitions in Europe and the influence of three other factors in an extended response format.
4. Find a newspaper article or cartoon reflecting on German rearmament, the *Anschluss* or the Sudetenland Crisis (the Munich Conference). Describe the key message and explain how this message is conveyed. Share your article or cartoon with class members.

Intentions and authority of the United Nations

The experiment of the Fourteen Points, collective security and the League of Nations had failed by 1936. The absence of major powers, notably the United States, the Soviet Union and Germany, at the outset was a considerable weakness. But this was not the system's only flaw. As World War II played out, the Allied Powers planned the establishment of a new international system to replace the League, though it still shared the same fundamental aim: to prevent future conflicts. This new system built on the model of the League of Nations, but responded to the interwar experiences and the brutal nature of the war in Asia and Europe. The new system, the United Nations Organization, was the ultimate outcome.

Timeline 6.4: Establishing the United Nations 1919–46

- 1919–20 ▪ Paris Peace Conference was held.
- 1920 ▪ The League of Nations was established.
- 1939 ▪ World War II commenced.
- 1941 ▪ August: The Atlantic Charter was signed.
- 1942 ▪ 1–2 January: The Declaration by United Nations was signed.
- 1944 ▪ July: The Bretton Woods Conference was held.
 ▪ August–October: Washington Conversations on International Peace and Security
- 1945 ▪ 25 April: United Nations Conference on International Organization commenced.
 ▪ 25 June: The Charter of the United Nations was signed.
- 1946 ▪ April: The League of Nations was dissolved.



FIGURE 6.20 The Palace of Nations, Geneva, the headquarters of the League from the mid-1930s. Today the palace is the European headquarters for several United Nations agencies.

An emerging proposal

The first step towards the establishment of a new international system emerged in August 1941, when Britain and its Empire largely faced Nazi Germany alone. The British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, met with the United States President, Franklin D Roosevelt, on a US ship in the Atlantic Ocean. Although the United States was not yet a combatant nation, together they articulated a general plan, the *Atlantic Charter*, for the post-war international system. Several of the terms, such as national self-determination and disarmament, mirrored points already made by Woodrow Wilson in the Fourteen Points. Other aspects were broader. For example, there was greater emphasis on economics and the need to ensure prosperity to prevent future wars. This included reducing trade barriers and increasing economic cooperation. Within days this broad agreement gained the acceptance of the Inter-Allied Council, a grouping of European governments in exile, that included Poland, Yugoslavia, the Free French, the Soviet Union and others.



FIGURE 6.21 Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin at the Yalta Conference in 1945. The Big Three met frequently during World War II to discuss wartime strategy and plan for the post-war international order.

The Declaration by United Nations, based on the Atlantic Charter, followed at the meeting of the United States, Britain, the USSR and China on New Year's Day in 1942. On 2 January, a further 22 nations committed to the proposal, including the British dominions and European governments in exile. The declaration was the foundation document of the alliance system that underpinned the Allied war effort. It committed the signatories to the general principles of the *Atlantic Charter* and to working collectively to defeat the nations of the Tripartite Pact – Germany, Japan and Italy.

Wartime planning

As the senior parties to the declaration, the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union revisited the planning for the post-war order at meetings of the Big Three as the war progressed. At the Washington Conversations on International Peace and Security in August–October 1944, the major powers established a framework for an international institution that would work for peace, support cooperation between nations, and resolve economic, social and humanitarian problems. Although these ideas were refined in subsequent meetings, the basis and aims of the modern United Nations had now been defined by the major powers.

Other negotiations, such as the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference, also occurred during the war. This conference, in July 1944, was attended by 44 nations and together they planned a new international economic system to prevent future conflicts and support reconstruction after the war. In its final statement, known as the Bretton Woods Agreement, this conference established the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. These institutions were designed to limit currency fluctuation, support open trade between nations and provide funding for economic development. Importantly, they remain active global institutions under the umbrella of the United Nations Organization and continue to play a key role in development and financial systems.

The end of the League

As Europe progressed to war, the League of Nations relocated its headquarters from Geneva. The Palace of Nations stood empty for the duration of the conflict. Powerless and redundant, as the war that it was meant to prevent raged on, it was superseded by the emerging United Nations. The League met for the final time in April 1946. Its facilities, including the Palace of Nations and the Palais Wilson, passed into the custodianship of the United Nations and the buildings now function as headquarters for European operations and the High Commission for Human Rights, respectively.

The establishment of the United Nations

The formal process for establishing the United Nations as a global institution commenced as Soviet forces engaged in street fighting in Germany during the Battle for Berlin, in the dying moments of the Third Reich. On 25 April the United Nations Conference on International Organization commenced in San Francisco. Over the next two months, delegates negotiated the Charter of the United Nations, defining its structure, powers and authority. Some elements of the United Nations resembled the structure of the League of Nations. The United Nations included a General Assembly of all member nations, a permanent administrative headquarters and an International Court of Justice. The United Nations also shared the common purpose of maintaining global peace.

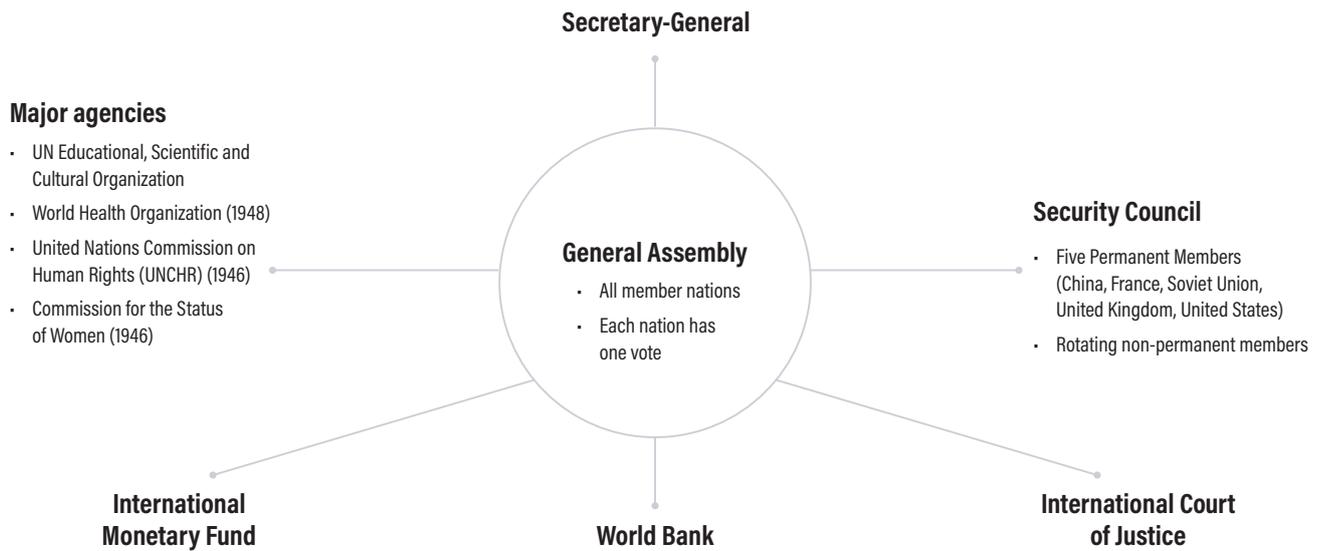


FIGURE 6.22 Early structures of the United Nations

The United Nations, however, differed from the League in several important ways. At its foundation it enjoyed the support of the Great Powers, with the United States, the Soviet Union and China joining Britain and France as the permanent members of the Security Council. Other nations held rotating fixed terms as Security Council membership. This gave the new institution greater authority than the League to act in a decisive manner. That said, the defeated powers, Germany, Italy and Japan did not gain full membership until decades had passed. The United Nations also had the power to initiate military action to intervene in national conflicts and support peacekeeping actions. The wider functions of the United Nations extended further into the fields of human rights, economics, development, health, science and culture. While the League shared some of these concerns, the authority of the United Nations and its longevity has meant its impact has been more extensive.



FIGURE 6.23 A sculpture in the forecourt of the United Nations, New York, symbolically illustrates the purpose of the United Nations.

The success of the United Nations, when compared to the League, is self-evident. Since the adoption of the Charter by the 51 founding members on 25 June 1945, it has endured for over 75 years. Although the organisation has experienced challenges in that time, such as the Korean War, it has continued to play a key role in working towards the maintenance of peace. As a global body and through its subsidiary organisations, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, UNESCO and the World Health Organization, it has been actively engaged in addressing the complex issues of genocide, pandemics, decolonisation, peacekeeping, development, trade and humanitarian programs. Moreover, that no conflict has escalated into a global war during the life of the United Nations must, in part, be seen as a consequence of its greater authority and success.

Source Study 6.4 The intentions and authority of the United Nations

Source A: The Atlantic Charter, 14 August 1941

The President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, representing His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, being met together, deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world.

First, their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other;

Second, they desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned;

Third, they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them;

Fourth, they will endeavor, with due respect for their existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all States, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity;

Fifth, they desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing, for all, improved labor standards, economic advancement and social security;

Sixth, after the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want;

Seventh, such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans without hindrance;

Eighth, they believe that all of the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons must come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measure which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armaments.

The Atlantic Charter, 14 August 1941, The Avalon Project website, accessed on 12 April 2021.

Source B: Extracts from the Charter of the United Nations, June 1945

PREAMBLE

WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED

- to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
- to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
- to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
- to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

AND FOR THESE ENDS

- to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and
- to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and
- to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and
- to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples ...

United Nations Charter, United Nations website, accessed on 4 April 2021.

Questions

1. Identify the key ideas included in the Atlantic Charter (Source A).
2. How might a historian use Source A when studying the intentions of the United Nations?
3. What are the similarities and differences between the Atlantic Charter (Source A) and the Charter of the United Nations (Source B)?
4. 'The Charter of the United Nations (Source B) is only valuable for studying the intentions of the United Nations, not its authority'. Assess this statement with close reference to the evidence provided by Source B.
5. Using Sources A and B, explain the intentions of the United Nations.
6. How different was the United Nations from the League of Nations? In your response, make specific use of evidence from any three sources provided in this chapter.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Identify three similarities and three differences between the stated aims of the League of Nations and those of the United Nations.
 2. Explain the relationship between the wartime Allied Powers and the formation of the United Nations.
 3. Describe the key advantages that the United Nations had over the League of Nations.
-

Further resources

J Hanhimaki, *The United Nations: A Very Short Introduction*, 2nd edn, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2015.

P Kennedy, *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present and Future of the United Nations*, Vintage Books, New York, 2007.

A Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy*, Penguin, London, 2007.

Weblinks

Total Digital Access Project: League of Nations
lontad-project.unog.ch

United Nations Digital Library
digitallibrary.un.org

Activities

Bringing it together

1. Create an integrated and annotated timeline of the League of Nations, and Japanese and German foreign policy initiatives between 1919 and 1939.
2. In groups of two or three, prepare a presentation that responds to one of the following:
 - Compare the intentions and authority of the League of Nations and the United Nations.
 - Compare the ambitions of Japan in the Asia-Pacific and Germany in Europe during the 1930s.

In your presentation, make specific use of two primary sources in support of your argument.
3. Identify three key failures of the League of Nations (including examples that illustrate these failures) and then identify in what ways these failures were addressed in the formation of the United Nations (also identifying examples that illustrate success).
4. Outline arguments with these views:
 - a. The main reason the League of Nations failed was the United States' refusal to join.
 - b. The main reason the League of Nations failed was its reliance on economic sanctions.

Endnotes

- 1 A Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Manheim translation, Houghton Mifflin, New York, 1943, pp 609, 610, 625, 626, 652.
- 2 A Hillgruber, *Germany And The Two World Wars*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, USA, 1981, pp 50–54.
- 3 A Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy*, Penguin, London, 2007, pp 245–246.

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The 1919 Paris Peace Conference ended a war and founded the League of Nations to prevent future conflicts. It established new nations and appeared to make Europe a stronghold of democracy. The Paris Peace Conference also contributed to disaffection, dictatorships and an even bloodier conflict. Investigating the sources is the key to understanding this duality.

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