

TWENTIETH CENTURY 1

GERALDINE CARRODUS / LUKE CASHMAN
PAM CUPPER / SHANE HART
ANDREW A. PYRCZ / NATALIE SHEPHARD
RACHEL TOWNS / STEPHEN WHITE

BETWEEN THE WARS



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HTV

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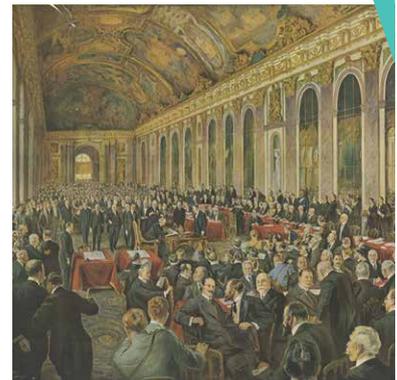
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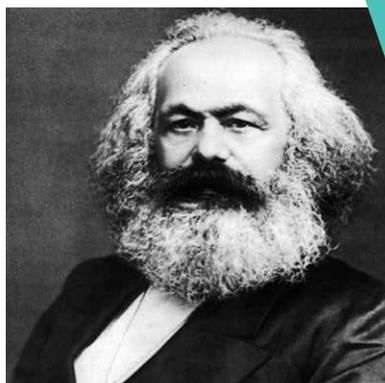
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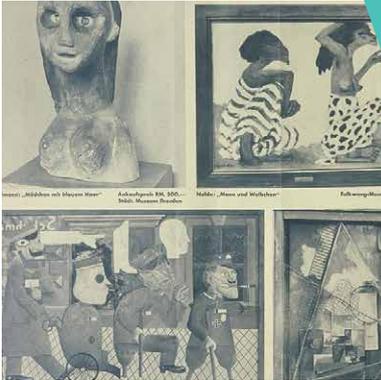
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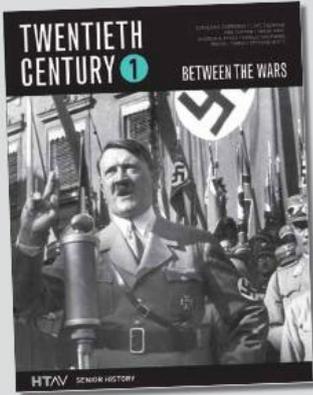
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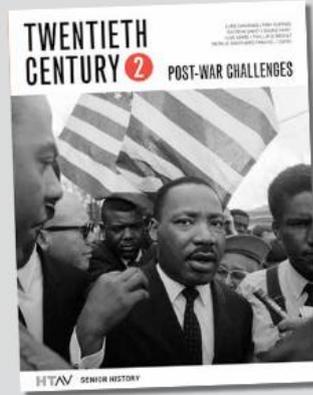


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USING THIS SERIES



1 Twentieth Century 1: Between the Wars



2 Twentieth Century 2: Post-War Challenges

TEXTBOOK FEATURES

OVERVIEW spread for each chapter containing key information and an inquiry task

KEY QUESTIONS

- How did the economic situation in Germany at the end of World War I cause problems for the Weimar Republic?
- What was the role of the military and the Nazi Party in 1933?
- What lessons did Hitler learn from the Weimar Republic?
- Why did so many people vote for the Nazi Party?
- How did Hitler consolidate his dictatorship?

IN THIS CHAPTER

- THE END OF THE WAR
- THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC
- THE RISE OF THE NAZI PARTY
- THE NAZI PARTY TAKES POWER
- THE NAZI PARTY TAKES POWER
- THE NAZI PARTY TAKES POWER

KEY EVENTS

- 1918: November Revolution
- 1919: Weimar Constitution
- 1920: Nazi Party Program
- 1923: Beer Hall Putsch
- 1933: Hitler becomes Chancellor
- 1933: Reichstag Fire
- 1933: Enabling Act
- 1933: Hitler becomes Führer

KEY PLAYERS

- PAUL VON HINDENBURG**: German President
- ADOLF HITLER**: Nazi Party Leader
- FRITZ BAER**: Nazi Party Member
- ERIK NEHR**: Nazi Party Member

KEY TERMS

- CHANCELLOR**: The head of the legislative body in the Weimar Republic, similar to a prime minister.
- REICHSTAG**: An abbreviation of Reichsversammlung (Reichstag and Reichsrat), the national assembly of the Weimar Republic.
- WEIMAR CONSTITUTION**: The constitution of the Weimar Republic, which was the first democratic constitution in Germany.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING questions throughout (levelled for different student abilities)

PRACTICE EXAM style questions

Focus on HISTORICAL SKILLS

HITLER'S TRIUMPH: HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Later generations of historians adopted the traditional and deterministic approach to Hitler's rise to power, as they tried to explain his actions in terms of his personality and the impact of his childhood. These interpretations were challenged by the work of historians like E. E. Schattschneider and Hans Mommsen. They argued that Hitler's rise to power was the result of a combination of factors, including the economic situation in Germany, the political system, and the role of the military and the Nazi Party.

ACTIVITIES

- Read the text and think about the different interpretations of Hitler's rise to power.
- Discuss the different interpretations with your classmates.
- Write a short paragraph explaining your own interpretation of Hitler's rise to power.

Colourful TIMELINES

TIMELINE 1932-1939

- 1932**: Reichstag elections; Hitler becomes Chancellor.
- 1933**: Enabling Act; Hitler becomes Führer.
- 1934**: Night of the Long Knives; Hitler consolidates power.
- 1935**: Nuremberg Laws; Hitler's foreign policy.
- 1936**: Hitler's foreign policy; Anschluss.
- 1937**: Hitler's foreign policy; Munich Agreement.
- 1938**: Anschluss; Munich Agreement.
- 1939**: Invasion of Poland; Start of World War II.
- AFTER 1939**: Continuation of World War II.

HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING

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SOURCE ANALYSIS tasks for primary and secondary sources (both written and visual)

WEB RESOURCES identified with different icons in the margins. Follow the instructions at the URL below to access these and other web resources on twentieth century history and historical thinking skills.

To access web resources for this title, go to historyed.com.au/course/view.php?id=9



Weblink



Video



Audio



Interactive



Activity sheet /
More info



Quiz

Colourful **MAPS** and **DIAGRAMS**

The study of Twentieth Century History at the senior level is guided by historical thinking concepts developed by Seixas, van Drie and van Boxtel, Levesque and others.

Historical knowledge comprises both **substantive knowledge**, which refers to historical content or subject matter (i.e. what happened in the past?) and **procedural knowledge**, which refers to the process or skills involved in understanding that subject matter (i.e. what do the sources of evidence say and what should I conclude from them?). Together, substantive and procedural knowledge give students the depth of understanding required to excel in history.

Historical inquiry begins with **historical questions**. Students ask and are asked substantial questions about people and events from the past, including their **significance** and contribution to what came later. Students assess **continuity and change** and the different types of change that occurred. They examine the relationship between **cause and consequence** and consider the **ethical dimensions** of history. As they do this, students should be aware that they bring a twenty-first-century perspective to their studies and that their values and beliefs are not necessarily the same as those who lived in the past.

The key part of historical thinking and practice is **analysing sources** – primary and secondary – to reach conclusions and **construct arguments**. Generally speaking, primary sources indicate the **historical perspectives** or viewpoints of people at the time, while secondary sources indicate the **historical interpretations** of historians or commentators who are looking back at past events.

Historical perspectives are a reminder that people rarely share the same experience or opinions at a given point in history, while historical interpretations show how historians have different views on the importance or meaning of past events. Understanding these contrasting experiences and viewpoints is an important part of appreciating the complexity and contestability of history – one should approach the evidence with an open mind and 'listen' to what a source is communicating before forming a conclusion.

In this book we have included many activities designed to develop and enhance students' substantive and procedural knowledge in history. But above all, we hope students will get swept up by the events of the Twentieth Century, as it is story-telling that lies at the heart of history.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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IDEOLOGY AND CONFLICT

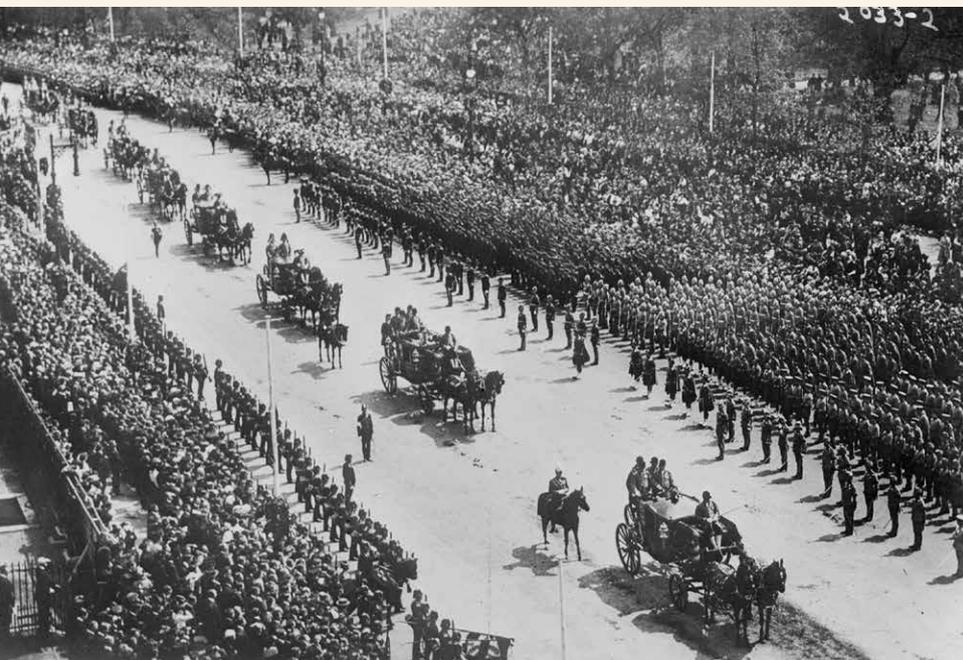
What impact did the treaties which concluded World War I have on nations and people?

What were the dominant ideologies of the period?

What impact did the post-war treaties, the development of ideologies and the economic crisis have on the events leading to World War II?

THE WORLD BEFORE 1914

Barbara Tuchman: 'The muffled tongue of Big Ben tolled nine by the clock as the cortege left the palace, but on history's clock it was sunset, and the sun of the old world was setting in a dying blaze of splendor never to be seen again.'¹



KEY POINTS

- At the start of the twentieth century, vast areas of the world were part of European empires.
- In 1914, Britain had 55 colonial territories; France 29; the Netherlands 21; and Germany 10.
- Germany was a relative latecomer to European power, only unified in 1871.

KEY TERMS

Empire

A group of states or countries ruled over and 'owned' by another country.

Colony

Foreign territory ruled by another country.

Imperialism

The practice of building an empire.

Old World

The countries of Europe, which were considered to have old customs and traditions.

New World

Countries such as Australia and the United States of America, which were not bound by old customs and traditions.

SOURCE 1

Photographs from the funeral of King Edward VII, 20 May 1910.



FUNERAL OF KING EDWARD VII

INTRODUCTION

On 20 May 1910, the gun carriage bearing the coffin of King Edward VII of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland was taken from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Hall. The funeral procession marked a significant moment in history, one of the largest gatherings of European royalty. Nine European monarchs rode with the casket, along with numerous princes and dukes, 'forty more imperial or royal highnesses.'² It was the last time that so many royal families met before their world was shattered by World War I and its aftermath.

Although it was 1910 rather than 1900, the funeral of Edward VII in some ways marked the end of the nineteenth century. For Europe, the last century seemed one of peace and certainty. The new century promised hope, but change and uncertainty. Within eight years of Edward VII's funeral procession, many of the kings, emperors, princes and dukes who attended no longer ruled empires; some of those empires had disappeared, and several of the men themselves were dead.



The Congress of Vienna, 1819.

SOURCE 2

HISTORIAN BARBARA TUCHMAN REFLECTS ON THE DEATH OF KING EDWARD VII

There was a general sense as of an anchor slipping away and of a recognized order of things gone. People somehow felt that the familiar royal bulk had stood between England and change, between England and outside menaces ... When he died people expected times would now get worse. "I always felt," said one Edwardian, "that he kept things together somehow."

Barbara Tuchman, The Proud Tower: A portrait of the world before the war 1890–1914, (Papermac, 1966), 391.

ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What does Tuchman mean when she described the death of King Edward VII as 'an anchor slipping away'?
2. According to Tuchman, what security had King Edward VII provided during his reign?

EUROPE AFTER NAPOLEON

The Napoleonic Wars ended in 1815 with Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, and the Congress of Vienna sought to rebuild peace and order in Europe. The dominant powers at Vienna were Austria-Hungary, Russia and Prussia, which were determined to re-establish the rule of monarchs across Europe. They were united in their ambition to suppress any attempts to question their rule. The Congress saw France as the main threat to 'peace and order,' so the map of Europe was redrawn to ensure France's power was limited while the powerful empires retained a balance of power.

However, the Congress of Vienna failed to halt two strong sentiments that were developing during the nineteenth century: nationalism and liberalism. Nationalism—or pride in belonging to one's country—was demonstrated in the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires, where ethnic groups wanted freedom from their foreign

rulers and the right to form their own nations. Nationalism also motivated people who identified as 'Italian' or 'German' and wanted to form one united 'Italy' or 'Germany.'

Liberalism—the belief that people should be equal under the law and have individual liberties—encouraged demands for a share in government. These forces helped make 1848 'the year of revolutions,' with revolutions in almost every country in Europe. In every case, the 'middle class' played a prominent part, as they felt particularly frustrated by the lack of liberty.

The attempted revolutions of 1848 were quickly suppressed. By 1849 all of the revolutions had been defeated and European monarchies reasserted their dominance over the political systems in their empires. Nevertheless, nationalism did not die, and continued as a dominating influence throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century and up to and including World War I.

GERMANY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

At the end of the eighteenth century, the area of Germany was divided into more than 300 independent states, which often had differences in religion and language, as well as in culture and social structure. But the Napoleonic Wars had helped develop a sense of German unity, and this was strengthened during the nineteenth century. There was a series of agreements and special relationships between the German states, such as the *Zollverein*, a type of customs union that reduced barriers to commerce and trade within the union. The Prussian Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, is particularly identified as the leader of the ideal of German unification. German nationalism was stimulated by the unification of Italy, and encouraged by improved transport—especially railway development.

In the earlier part of the nineteenth century, Austria dominated central Europe, but Prussia challenged this dominance. Growing German unity, especially under Prussian leadership, increasingly challenged Austria's position. German states were united when Prussian troops defeated the French in 1871, and Wilhelm was proclaimed Kaiser—German Emperor—in Versailles Palace.

Between 1859 and 1870, the various Italian kingdoms and states united to form the new Kingdom of Italy. In 1871, Germany was also unified with the capture of Alsace-Lorraine from France and the proclamation of German emperor Kaiser Wilhelm.

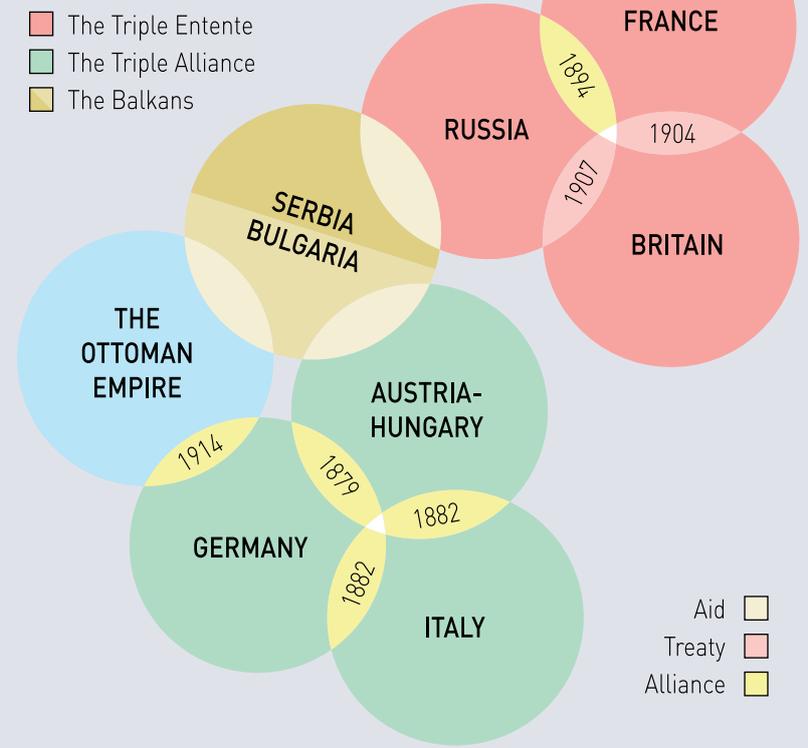
Although Western Europe was relatively peaceful in the forty years prior to the outbreak of World War I, underlying tensions persisted, with much antagonism and rivalry between European powers. After 1815, parts of the former Poland had been incorporated into Prussia, Austria and Russia, and Polish nationals naturally maintained their nationalism; Russia, in particular, tried to suppress any Polish nationalist rebellions.

France was sympathetic to Polish independence, which led to increasing tension between Russia and France.

Nationalism and rivalry between powerful empires also marked the Balkans, the area where the Ottoman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire intersected. People of Slavic ethnicity resented being subject to one or other of these empires and became increasingly determined to have their own nation. At the same time, other empires, especially the Russian Empire, saw this as an opportunity to reduce the power of Austria-Hungary.

These dreams of nationalism and the rivalries between once-powerful empires intensified in the years prior to World War I.

NATIONS PRE-WORLD WAR I



THE AGE OF EMPIRES

The first European colonies were established along the coastlines of Africa, Asia and the Americas from the sixteenth century, initially to provide ports for trade and replenishing food supplies. Over the next three centuries, these colonies were extended and the colonial powers moved inland. During the nineteenth century, this expansion concentrated on further parts of Africa and Asia (including

China), and the Pacific. By the end of the nineteenth century, European powers controlled large areas on all inhabited continents and on numerous islands.

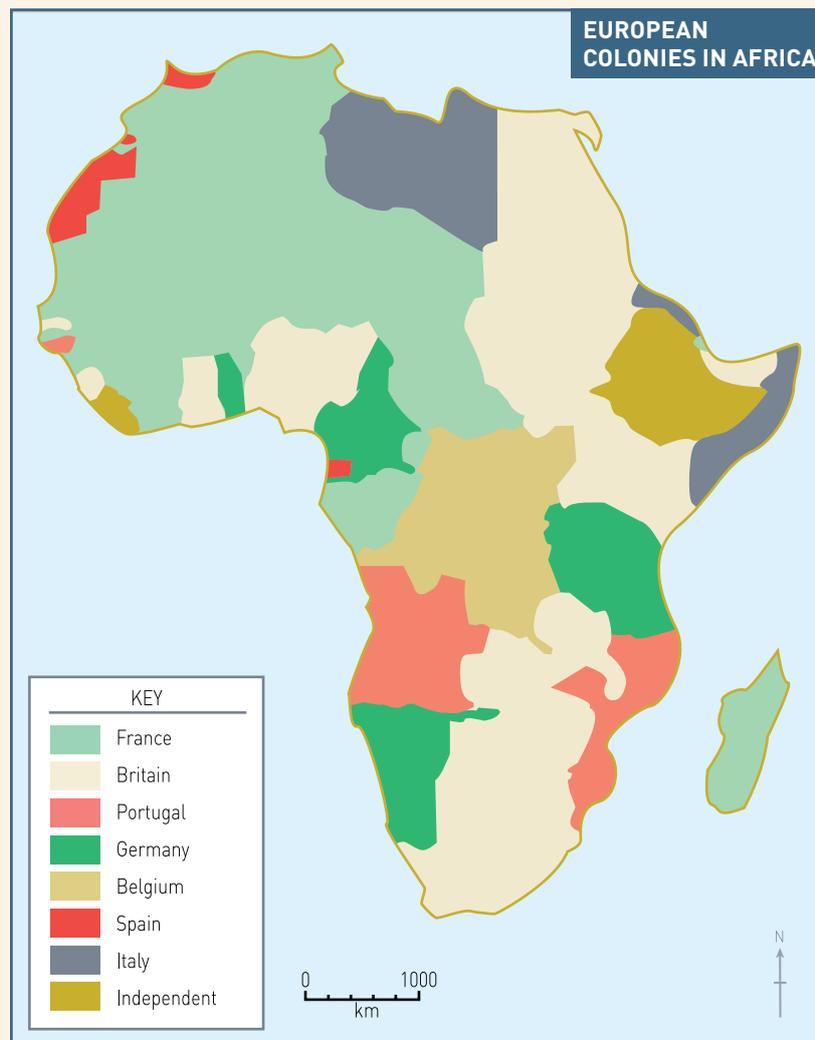
From 1880, Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Portugal made a 'scramble for Africa', and in fifteen years they 'took' over 90 per cent of that continent. They were motivated by several beliefs: that Africa's raw materials and subsequent

markets would greatly improve their trading power; that they had a moral or religious obligation to bring 'civilisation' and Christianity to Africans; and that colonial expansion brought national power and prestige.

At the end of the nineteenth century, this colonial expansion created tensions. Each colonial power was anxious to improve—or at least maintain—its area of dominance and felt threatened by other European powers eyeing their areas of influence. For example, Britain and France wanted to maintain their colonies in Africa, and resented German attempts to establish its own 'place in the sun.' In the South Pacific region, Australia was concerned by German expansion into countries such as New Guinea.

SOURCE 3

EUROPEAN COLONIES IN AFRICA



SOURCE 4

GERMAN HISTORIAN, HANS DELBRÜCK, 1896

In the next decades vast tracts of land in very different parts of the world will be distributed. The nation which goes away empty-handed will lose its place in the next generation from the ranks of those Great Powers which will coin the human spirit. Did we found the German Empire to see it disappear under our grandchildren?

Harry Mills, The Road to Sarajevo, (Macmillan, 1983), 15.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

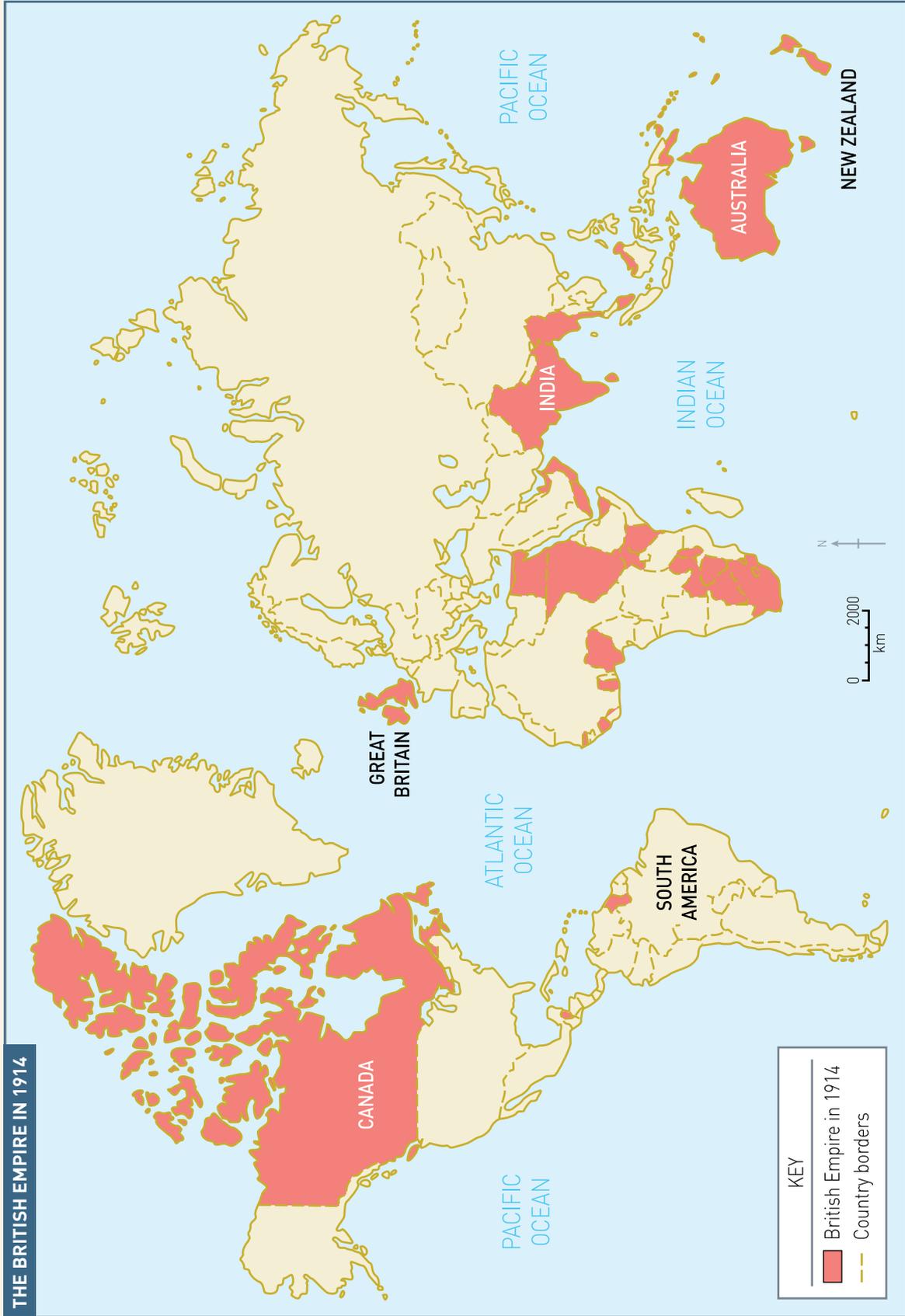
1. What value does Hans Delbrück see in a nation controlling vast tracts of land?
2. What would have been Hans Delbrück's attitude towards the map depicted in Source 3?

SNAPSHOT

SOURCE 5

BRITISH EMPIRE IN 1914

THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN 1914



PEACE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY?

From 1871, most of Europe was at peace, and improvements in agriculture and industrialisation brought improved living standards to many people in Western Europe. Half the population of Western Europe now lived in towns and cities, and Britain was even more urbanised. Although migration to cities often brings enormous social problems, the movement from rural to urban living in the latter part of the nineteenth century was accompanied by significant improvements in science, medicine and engineering. Cities such as London and Berlin had low death rates in the 1900s, and many of their inhabitants enjoyed a high standard of living. It is estimated that an Englishman in 1914 was about four times better off than his great-grandfather in a similar social position had been in 1801.

There were no wars fought in Western Europe between 1871 and 1914, and there was a sense that this was 'normal.' There were many wars fought in that period, including in the Balkans region of Europe, as well as wars between European powers in and between their colonies. But Western Europe itself was free of warfare.



↑ SOURCE 6

Life in London, 1914.

ACTIVITIES

MAP EXERCISE

1. School students in the late 1800s to early 1900s were often taught that the 'sun never sets upon the British Empire.' Classrooms typically displayed a map similar to that depicted in Source 5. How does the map help explain that 'the sun never sets upon the British Empire'?
2. In 1914, approximately what fraction of Africa was British colonial territory?
3. To which empires did the rest of Africa belong?

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What was the key difference in feelings of security between the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century?
2. What motivated European powers to undertake a 'scramble for Africa' after 1880?
3. Complete the following statement, using evidence from this Snapshot: 'In the 40 years from 1871, Western Europe enjoyed ...'

TURNING POINTS

Explain why the funeral of King Edward VII in 1910 marked a watershed or historical turning point, separating two distinct eras. Support your response with reference to primary sources or historical interpretations.

WORLD WAR I

H.G. Wells / Woodrow Wilson: 'This is a war to end all wars.'



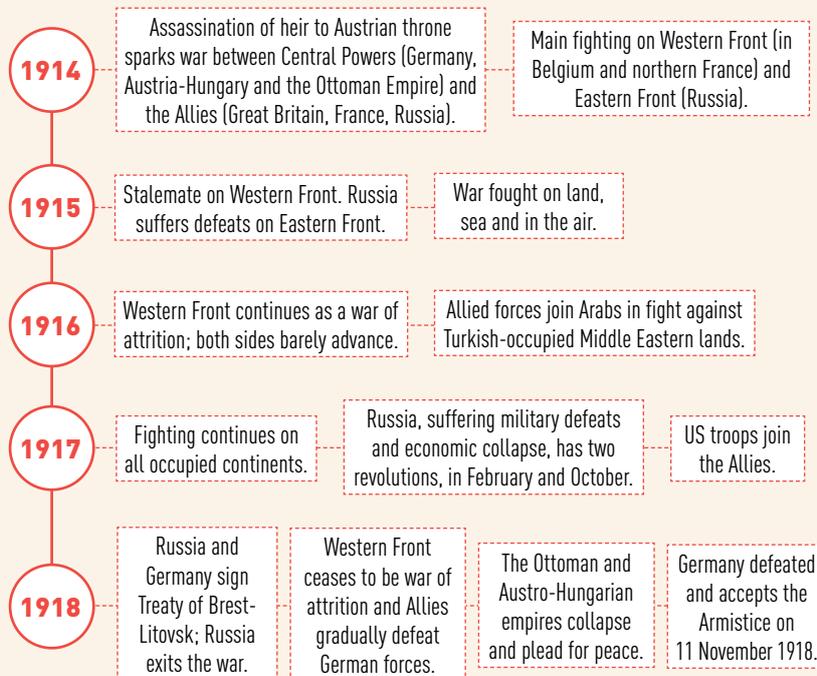
↑ SOURCE 1

The Gallipoli campaign in 1915.

KEY POINTS

- World War I officially commenced with Britain's declaration of war against Germany on 4 August 1914.
- World War I was fought between the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire) and the Allies (formed by France, Britain and Russia).
- Over fifty countries were directly involved in World War I, over 65 million troops were mobilised, over 7 million troops were killed. It is estimated that total casualties number 35 to 37 million people.
- Fighting ceased on 11 November 1918, with the signing of the Armistice.

KEY EVENTS



INTRODUCTION

On 12 August 1914, *Punch* magazine published the cartoon 'Bravo, Belgium!' showing a small Belgian farmer standing up to an aggressive German 'brute.' The British cartoon left the reader in no doubt that Belgium deserved support to resist Germany's attempt to apply its plan (the Schlieffen Plan) to invade France via Belgium. But this event, which ushered in World War I, was the final playing out of long-term tensions and disputes between European powers.

These tensions had intensified during the last decades of the nineteenth century, and by mid-1914 had led to two armed camps: the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy) and the Allies (formed by France, Britain and Russia). When the heir to the Austrian throne was assassinated in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, each European nation started to manoeuvre towards war. World War I officially commenced with Britain's declaration of war against Germany on 4 August 1914.

Few imagined that this war would last four years and involve every inhabited continent, be fought on the seas and in the air, and result in millions of deaths.

The war was fought mostly in Europe. The Western Front was characterised by long lines of trenches; the Eastern Front was longer but less defined. The major European powers were supported by their allies across the world; for example, Australia immediately supported the 'mother country'—Great Britain—and sent troops to German New Guinea and to other



SOURCE 2

'Bravo, Belgium!' Cartoon printed in the British magazine, *Punch*, 12 August 1914.

SOURCE ANALYSIS

ACTIVITY

1. Describe the physical appearance in the cartoon of:
 - Germany
 - Belgium.
2. What features of the cartoon suggest German aggression or brutality?
3. What features suggest Belgium bravery?
4. In the context of August 1914, what does the gate with the sign 'no thoroughfare' mean?
5. Describe the buildings in the distance. What do they represent, and why has the cartoonist drawn them in this way?
6. What emotions does the cartoonist want the reader to have towards:
 - Germany?
 - Belgium?

SOURCE 3

QUEEN MARY, IN A LETTER TO HER AUNT

God grant we may not have a European War thrust upon us, & for such a stupid reason too, no I don't mean stupid, but to have to go to war on account of tiresome Serbia [Serbia] beggars belief.

25 July 1914

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What did Queen Mary see as the cause of World War I?
2. What was Queen Mary's view of Serbia?
3. Consider the date of Queen Mary's letter. Using the timeline in this book, explain why the Queen could still have hope that a European War would not be 'thrust upon us.'

THE LANGUAGE OF WORLD WAR I

- Words and phrases such as 'no man's land', 'going over the top,' 'balkanisation,' 'dogfight,' 'shell shock,' and 'stab in the back' entered the language or gained greater currency during World War I. Many are still used today.
- The first use of the word 'Anzac' was probably made by a clerk working with the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps in Egypt in late 1914, when he asked for someone to 'throw me the ANZAC stamp.'

German colonies in the Pacific. In October 1914, Ottoman Turkey entered the war on the side of Germany and Austria-Hungary. British, French, Australian and New Zealand troops fought the Ottomans at Gallipoli in 1915 and later in the Turkish-occupied Middle East. At sea, Germany and Britain, with their respective allies, tried to disrupt each other's trade routes to prevent supplies and reinforcements reaching the enemy. Submarines, which had previously been small and generally limited to coastal defence, were modified to improve their military value. In the air, planes expanded their role from reconnaissance to playing a vital role in land battles.

The once-great European powers Russia and Austria-Hungary collapsed under the stress of years of warfare. Germany was defeated in 1918; the Allied naval blockade successfully cut food and supplies to Germany, while the entry of the United States into the war in 1917 strengthened the Allied side. The effective use of new technology, especially the tank, enabled the Allies to break through the German lines on the Western Front.

Fighting ceased on 11 November 1918, with the signing of the Armistice. During 1919 and 1920, peace treaties were negotiated for all combatant nations. The war marked the end of empire for Russia, Austria-Hungary and the Ottomans, the end of monarchy in Germany, and the formation of new nations such as Yugoslavia and Poland.

CAUSES OF WORLD WAR I

LONG-TERM CAUSES

Most historians see the long-term causes of World War I as being nationalism, imperialism, militarism and the system of alliances between European powers in the years before 1914.

Nationalism

Nationalism explained why newly-formed Germany wanted to assert its power at the end of the nineteenth century; nationalism also helped explain France's resentment of increasing German power. Nationalism lay behind the various ethnic groups within the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires who wanted independence.

Imperialism

In the nineteenth century, European powers extended their empires into Africa. This resulted in wars, initially fought on African soil, but inevitably causing friction between the European powers in Europe itself.

Militarism

From the first years of the twentieth century, European powers, especially Britain and Germany, entered an 'arms race', with each country vying for more weapons of greater power. The Melbourne *Age* newspaper described this militarism as a 'mad competition' with disastrous consequences, 'the day of Armageddon.'¹

Alliances

The system of alliances that developed from 1880 meant that, by mid-1914, Europe had fallen into two 'camps': France, Britain

and Russia formed the Triple Entente, and Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy formed the Triple Alliance.

SHORT-TERM CAUSE ('SPARK')

Long term tensions often need a 'spark' to set off a conflagration.

The spark came on 28 June 1914, when the heir to the Austrian throne, Franz Ferdinand, was

assassinated in Sarajevo. Austria-Hungary blamed Serbia. One by one, the European powers aligned themselves either with Austria-Hungary, seeking revenge, or with Russia, supporting Serbia.

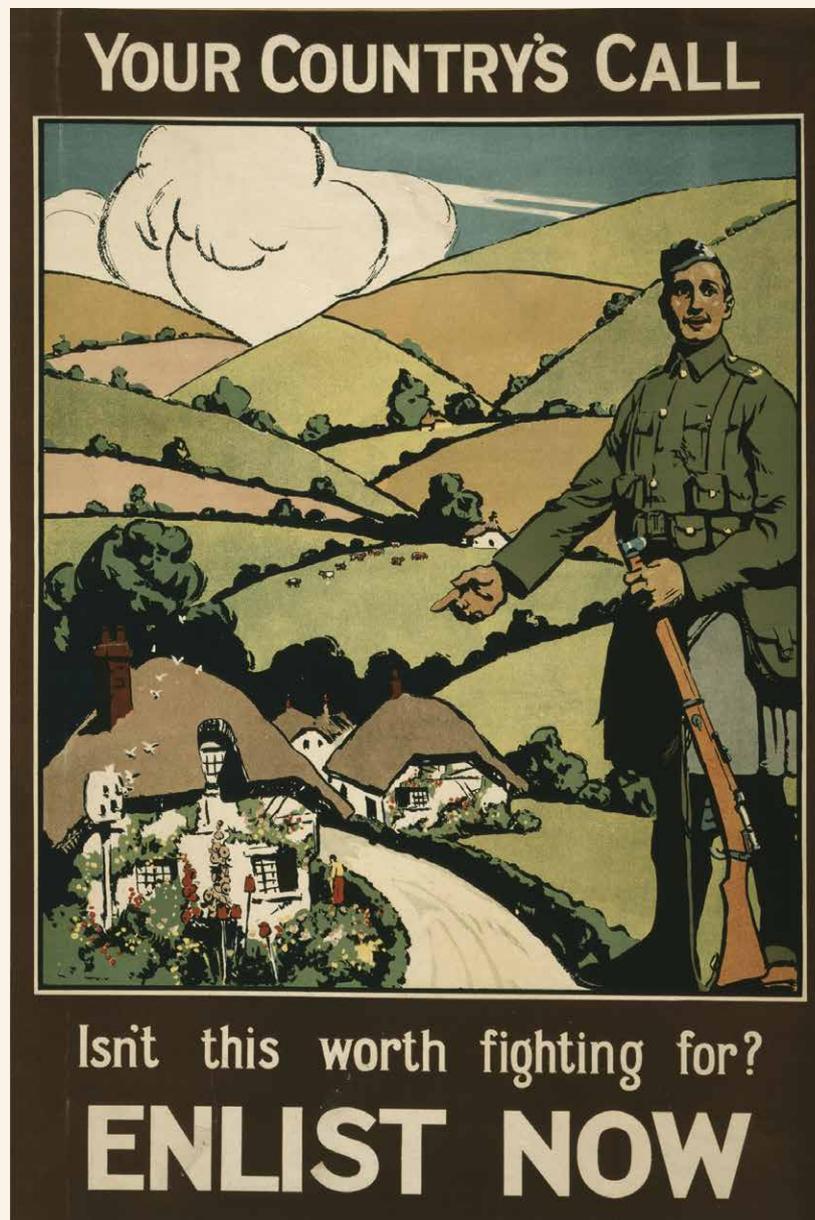
On 28 July, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, which then asked for Russia's help.

After Russia mobilised its troops on 30 July, Germany honoured

its alliance with Austria-Hungary and declared war on Russia on 1 August. France, allied to Russia, also mobilised.

On 2 August, Germany presented an ultimatum to Belgium: grant safe passage through Belgium so German troops could attack the French, or be considered an enemy of Germany. Belgium rejected the ultimatum and, when German troops crossed the Belgian border on 3 August, Britain used the terms of the 1839 Treaty of London to support Belgium against invasion.

On 4 August, Britain declared war against Germany, and World War I officially began. Most of Europe was at war and, within days, European colonies and former colonies, including Australia, declared their support for either the Allies or the Central Powers.



WWI PROPAGANDA POSTERS

SOURCE 4

World War I recruitment poster. Recruitment posters were produced by all combatant nations to encourage young men to enlist.

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. To which nationality is this poster directed? How do you know?
2. What aspects of the country are identified as 'worth fighting for'?
3. What does the poster imply will happen if young men, such as the one in the poster, do not enlist to fight?

ACTIVITY

THE COST OF WORLD WAR I

↓ SOURCE 5

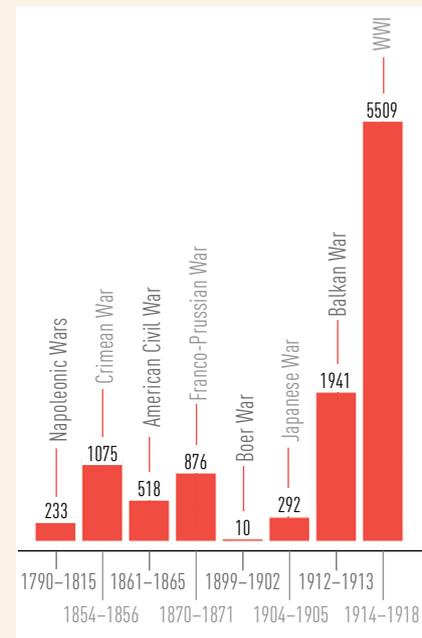
HISTORIAN TONY HOWARTH DESCRIBES THE COST OF WORLD WAR I

If you want to know how many died, you will have to put up with guesses. We know that Britain and her Empire suffered nearly 950 000 deaths, France 1 400 000, Germany, 1 800 000. We estimate that Turkey lost 300 000 people—though it may have been twice as many as that, or three times. Maybe two million Russians died, or maybe it was four or even six million. In Petrograd they didn't count deaths as carefully as in London or Paris—and for the Russians the Great War was followed by the Civil War. Who's to say for certain whether Ivan [typical Russian soldier] was killed by the Germans, the Austrians, the Bulgars, the Turks, the Reds or the Whites? ... the exact figures, even if we had them, could not tell us any more than this—that in the Great War, Europe was sick, and that recovery would take a long, long time.

From Tony Howarth, Twentieth Century History: The World Since 1900 (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1985), 43

↓ SOURCE 7

LOSSES PER DAY COMPARATIVE



Figures from Harry Mills, Twentieth Century World History in Focus (London: Macmillan, 1984), 25. Mills references it to Purnell's History of the Twentieth Century, 1968.

↓ SOURCE 6

TROOPS MOBILISED AND CASUALTIES IN THE WAR OF 1914–18

NATION	POPULATION	TROOPS MOBILISED	TROOPS TOOK THE FIELD	KILLED AND DIED	WOUNDED LESS DIED OF WOUNDS	MISSING AND 'PRISONERS'	TOTAL BATTLE CASUALTIES	RATIO % OF TOTAL BATTLE CASUALTIES TO TROOPS MOBILISED
British Empire	391 844 691	8 485 926	7 756 791	897 780	2 085 377	266 700	3 249 857	37:31
French Republic	39 700 000	8 194 150	-	1 457 000	2 300 000	47 800	4 235 000	51:68
Russia	182 182 600	15 123 000	-	664 890	3 813 827	3 950 000	8 428 717	55:73
Italy	36 546 437	5 615 000	-	650 000	947 000	600 000	2 197 000	39:13
United States	102 017 312	4 355 000	2 040 000	51 606	234 300	4 500	290 406	6:44
Japan	78 152 244	800 000	-	300	907	3	1 210	0:15
Belgium	7 571 387	267 000	-	13 716	44 686	34 659	93 061	34:85
Serbia	4 615 567	707 343	-	45 000	133 148	152 958	331 106	46:81
Montenegro	436 789	50 000	-	3 000	10 000	7 000	20 000	40:00
Romania	7 508 009	750 000	-	335 706	120 000	80 000	535 706	71:43
Greece	4 821 300	261 890	-	5 000	21 000	1 000	27 000	10:31
Portugal	5 957 566	191 362	109 229	7 222	13 751	12 318	33 291	17:40
Totals	861 353 902	44 800 671	-	4 131 220	9 723 996	5 587 138	19 442 354	43:39
Germany	68 000 000	13 387 000	4 183 000	1 061 740	5 397 884	771 659	7 231 283	54:02
Austria	52 290 556	7 800 000	-	1 200 000	3 620 000	2 200 000	7 020 000	90:00
Turkey	21 273 900	2 850 000	-	325 000	400 000	250 000	975 000	34:21
Bulgaria	5 517 000	1 200 000	-	87 500	152 390	27 029	266 919	22:24
Totals	147 081 466	25 237 000	-	2 674 240	9 570 274	3 248 688	15 493 202	-

A.G. Butler, The Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914–18, Vol. III (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1943), 868.

SOURCE 8

THE FINANCIAL COST

A ruined medieval church in Montfaucon, France.



THE COST OF WORLD WAR I



The direct economic losses of World War I amounted to over 180 billion dollars.



In France, where much of the fighting occurred on the Western Front, 21 000 square kilometres of agricultural land was destroyed.



In France, 1500 schools, 1200 churches, 377 public buildings and 1000 industrial plants were destroyed.



As a result of the costs of war, Britain was forced to increase taxation from six pence in one pound (in 1914) to thirty pence in one pound (in 1922).



All the defeated countries were financially ruined, while most of the victors were half-bankrupt.

Sources: figures taken from Harry Mills, *Twentieth Century World History in Focus* (London: Macmillan, 1984), 25, 27.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Why are casualty figures for Russia so hard to calculate?
2. Why does Howarth believe casualty figures, even accurate ones, are of little use in understanding the cost of World War I?
3. Which country mobilised the most troops in World War I?
4. What percentage of troops mobilised became battle casualties for:
 - the British Empire?
 - Russia?
 - United States?
 - Germany?
 - Austria?
5. Which country suffered the greatest percentage of battle casualties?
6. Using the information provided in Source 6, which country do you think suffered most during World War I? Explain why you selected that country.
7. Outline why Source 7 helps to explain the phrase that was used to describe World War I at the time, 'the war to end all wars.'
8. Sources 5 to 8 contain various statistics on war casualties, financial costs and material costs of World War I. Which statistics do you find most useful in helping you understand the cost of the war? Write a short paragraph that sums up the usefulness of each type of statistic and explains why you think one type of statistic is more helpful than others.

MAKING THE PEACE

'As the peacemakers met in Paris, new nations emerged and great empires died. Excessively ambitious, the Big Four set out to do nothing less than fix the world, from Europe to the far Pacific. But facing domestic pressures, events they could not control, and conflicting claims they could not reconcile, the negotiators were, in the end, simply overwhelmed—and made deals and compromises that would echo down through history.'

RICHARD HOLBROOKE

INTRODUCTION

Following World War I, with civilian populations close to starvation, with millions of soldiers in prisoner-of-war camps and national governments close to collapsing, the world turned its attention to negotiating a post-war settlement at the Paris Peace Conference. In an unprecedented situation, the transition from a world at war to a world that would attempt to prevent future conflicts would prove to be extremely difficult.

Following the armistice with the Central Powers, the leaders of thirty-nine nations met in Paris in order to work out appropriate punishments for the defeated countries. They

were to decide upon such issues as the redrawing of national boundaries, the limitation of arms and the fixing of appropriate reparations. They also examined US president Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points. The centrepiece of Wilson's Fourteen Points was an organisation designed to prevent future wars: the League of Nations.

After months of discussion, argument and compromise, the Treaty of Versailles was signed with Germany in June 1919. This treaty was despised by many, and this affected the commitment of many nations to the League of Nations.





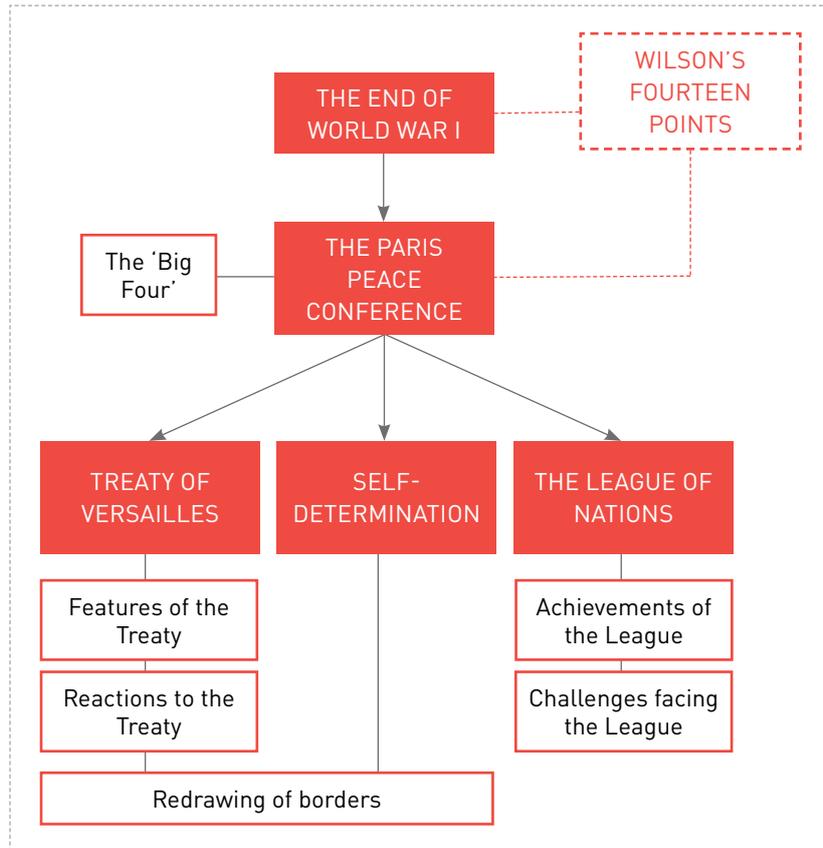
A German prisoner and British soldier share a cigarette.

OVERVIEW

KEY QUESTIONS

- Why did 39 nations meet in Paris in January 1919?
- What were the aspirations of the Big Four as they began meeting in Paris?
- What were the main features of the Treaty of Versailles and the other peace treaties?
- How were old empires broken up as a result of war and the peace treaties?
- How was the map of the world redrawn?
- What was the League of Nations? How important was it in planning for future peace?
- How did the peace treaties affect the victorious and the defeated countries?

IN THIS CHAPTER



KEY EVENTS

1918

8 JANUARY

Woodrow Wilson delivers Fourteen Points

11

NOVEMBER

Germany signs armistice; WWI ends

1919

28 JUNE

Treaty of Versailles signed



1920

16 JANUARY

First session of League of Nations, Paris

1925

17 JUNE

Geneva Protocol bans use of mustard gas and chemical weapons in international armed conflict



1926

8 SEPTEMBER

Germany admitted to League of Nations

1933

27 MARCH

Japan withdraws from League of Nations

21 OCTOBER

Germany withdraws from League of Nations

KEY PLAYERS

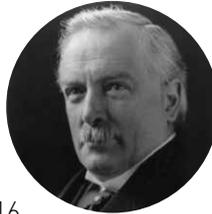
WOODROW WILSON (1856–1924)

- In 1916 was re-elected president of the United States with the slogan 'He kept us out of the war.'
- Following the sinking of the *Lusitania*, Wilson argued that the United States could not remain neutral and asked Congress to declare war on Germany.
- Wilson used his influence early in 1918 to plan for peace, proposing his Fourteen Points, which he believed would create a new world order.
- After Germany signed the armistice based on his Fourteen Points, Wilson spent six months in Paris. His time away from the US cost him dearly and in the end both Congress and the Senate rejected both the Versailles Treaty and joining the League of Nations.



DAVID LLOYD GEORGE (1863–1945)

- At the outbreak of World War I was the minister for munitions and the secretary for war in Britain's Asquith government.
- He questioned Asquith's handling of the war, and became prime minister on 7 December 1916.
- Lloyd George was a strong prime minister and at the Paris Peace Conference he moderated Wilson's idealism and Clémenceau's determination to make Germany pay—and to a large extent shaped the final agreements.



GEORGES CLÉMENTEAU (1841–1929)

- Was nicknamed 'The Tiger' for his fierceness.
- From 1909, in opposition to then prime minister of France Aristide Briand, he vigorously attacked Germany and argued for greater military defence in the event of war.
- Was appointed prime minister for the second time in 1917.
- At the Paris Peace Conference, he insisted that Germany was punished. Despite the Paris Peace Treaty, Clémenceau was widely criticised in France and Belgium for being too lenient.
- In 1929 he published his autobiography, *In the Evening of my Thought*, in which he correctly predicted a renewed war with Germany in 1940.



KEY TERMS

ARMISTICE

A truce; an agreement from opposing sides to stop fighting.

REPARATIONS

Making amends for a wrong one has done by providing compensation by payment (or other assistance) to those who have been wronged.

REPATRIATIONS

The process of returning a person to their place of origin. This includes the process of returning refugees or military personnel to their place of origin.

TREATY

A formal agreement between one or more nations related to peace, alliance, commerce or other international matters.

SELF-DETERMINATION

The process by which a country determines its own statehood and forms its own government. The concept originated in ancient Mesopotamia and ancient Greece, but it was particularly important at the end of the 'war to end all wars.'

HISTORICAL INQUIRY: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

Some historians have argued that Wilson's ideals of a better future were flawed from the start. Others argue that the national priorities affected the ability of leaders to bring the ideals of the League of Nations to fruition. As you work through this chapter consider these questions:

1. Was the League of Nations a naïve idea that had no chance of success in 1919?
2. How would Europe and the Middle East have been different if there had been greater agreement and less compromise between the participants at the Paris Peace Conference?

THE END OF THE WAR

WOODROW WILSON, 22 JANUARY 1917: 'Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor's terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at an intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory upon which terms of peace would rest, not permanently, but only as upon quicksand. Only a peace between equals can last.'

World War I came to an end with the signing of the armistice (or ceasefire) on 11 November 1918. However, planning for the end of the war had been in the minds of the leaders of the key nations for several years. Although the USA did not enter the war until April 1917, US president Woodrow Wilson had set out his agenda for peace as early as January 1917 with his 'Peace Without Victory' address to the US Senate. It was evident at this stage that Wilson's main focus was not victory or punishment, but on making sure that such a terrible war could not occur again.

➔ SOURCE 1.01

Signing the armistice in the Forest of Compiègne, France, 11 November 1918.



DID YOU KNOW?

The British confectionary company Bassetts created a sweet called Victory Babies; they were so popular that they are still produced and we now know them as Jelly Babies. Production halted during World War II (1939–1945) because of a lack of sugar.

Wilson further refined his principles in the Fourteen Points that he outlined for the US Congress in January 1918, about nine months after the USA became involved in World War I. Wilson's Fourteen Points, with the League of Nations at their core, were to influence Germany's decision to agree to the armistice and to play a role in shaping the peace treaty: the Treaty of Versailles.

The end to World War I, just like its start, was swift and dramatic—as the events of October 1918 clearly illustrate (see timeline on the next page). The Western Front was far from quiet and the Allies began to push the Germans back towards German territory, not just by trenches and metres, but by kilometres each day. Looming defeat on the Western Front, combined with internal strife, made a German victory impossible—and this was obvious to German military command long before it was grudgingly accepted by the German kaiser, Wilhelm II. General Ludendorff and his supervisor, Paul von Hindenburg, convinced the kaiser that the army was 'becoming weaker by the day,' with 'irreversible troop

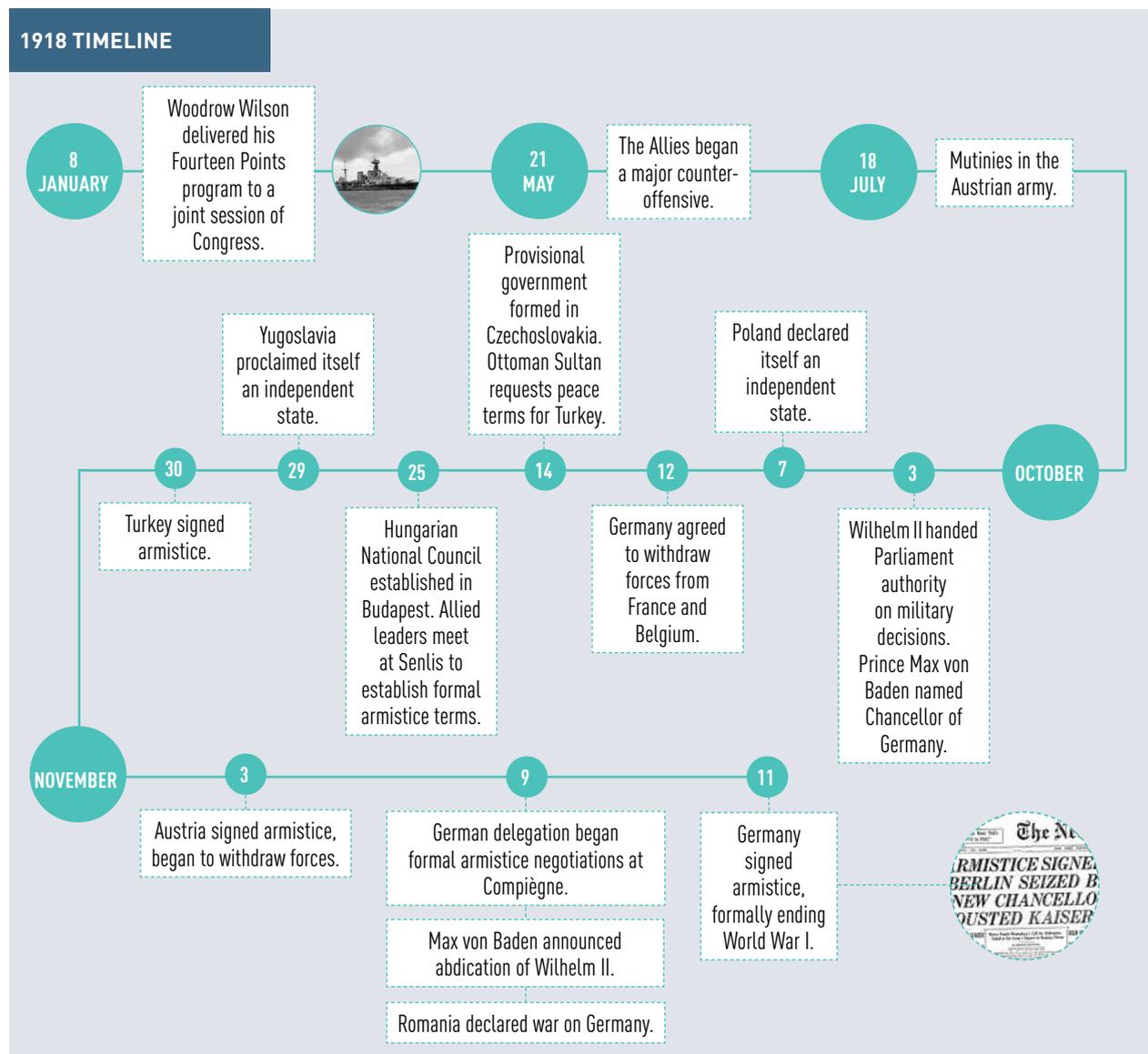
losses, declining discipline and battle readiness due to exhaustion, illnesses, food shortages, desertions and drunkenness.²² On 2 October 1918, General Ludendorff sent a military representative to Berlin with the message for the kaiser that ‘the war is lost and that the Armistice discussions should begin immediately.’²³

Many historians argue that Germans—and particularly civilians—never saw the armistice as surrender, but merely an agreement to bring the horrendous war to an end: the ‘peace without victory’ that Wilson had idealistically spoken of in January 1917. The main argument for this was that German civilians never fully experienced the horrors of war because no battles occurred within German territory. This is reflected in Erich Maria Remarque’s poignant 1923 novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Remarque captures the reality of the gulf between exhausted German soldiers and the unrealistic German civilians. When a young German soldier named Paul Bäumer reunites with his former teacher Kantorek, a civilian, Kantorek argues that ‘you boys need to just hurry up over there.’²⁴ There is more than just literature, however, as evidence of the German command’s desire to get out of the seemingly never-ending war.



↑ SOURCE 1.02

Remarque’s novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front*.





SOURCE 1.03

Paul von Hindenburg,
Kaiser Wilhelm II and
General Erich Ludendorff.

THE COMPLICATED PATH TO ARMISTICE

When the Germans initiated contact with Wilson to push for an armistice based upon Wilson's Fourteen Points, Wilson understood that his European allies would not accept this until a democratic state was created in Germany. Wilson had his own problems now: 'In London and Paris, he discovered that both Allies anticipating an immediate German collapse had no interest in an armistice based on the fourteen points.'⁵ France and Britain could invade a dispirited Germany alone but what would be the point? Would more war dead be needed to prove the point? Wilson even threatened to withdraw US troops and leave the war if France and Britain insisted on this pointless turn.⁶ Wilson's gamble worked. The Supreme War Council accepted a pre-armistice agreement on 4 November 1918, and a week later German officials signed the Armistice Agreement based on the Fourteen Points. Wilson had clearly reinstated his influence and power. These differing values foreshadowed the complications that would be faced at the Paris Peace Conference.

The armistice was merely a truce, a halt in fighting until the terms of a peace treaty could be determined. A month later in Berlin, Germany's new chancellor, the socialist Friedrich Ebert, announced to soldiers returning: 'I salute you who return unvanquished from the field of battle.'⁷ From a German perspective, it is easy to understand that the armistice was not seen as a surrender, because at the time of signing, their armies 'still stood deep in enemy territory in all fronts.'⁸ Germany had certainly lost the other Central Powers, who had already signed armistices with the Allies. However, Wilson's slogan of 'Peace without Victory' was certainly taken as a reality by many of the German people, and this would complicate matters when it came to drawing up terms at the Paris Peace Conference.

WILSON'S FOURTEEN POINTS

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1  No secret agreements.</p> | <p>8  France should be fully liberated and allowed to recover Alsace-Lorraine.</p> |
| <p>2  Free navigation of all the seas.</p> | <p>9  The borders of Italy should be redrawn along clearly recognisable lines of nationality.</p> |
| <p>3  An end to all economic barriers between countries.</p> | <p>10  Self-determination should be allowed for all those living in Austria-Hungary.</p> |
| <p>4  Commitment to reduce weapons.</p> | <p>11  Self-determination and guarantees of independence should be allowed for the Balkan states.</p> |
| <p>5  All decisions regarding the colonies should be impartial.</p> | <p>12  The Turkish people should be governed by the Turkish government. Non-Turks in the old Ottoman Empire should govern themselves.</p> |
| <p>6  The German Army is to be removed from Russia. Russia should be left to develop her own political set-up.</p> | <p>13  An independent Poland should be created, which should have access to the sea.</p> |
| <p>7  Belgium should be independent, as it was before the war.</p> | <p>14  A League of Nations should be set up to guarantee the political and territorial independence of all states.</p> |

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- Point 14 attempts to address the problem of secret agreements suggested in Point 1. Why do you think Wilson ordered his points the way he did?
- Which points specifically address the self-determination of nations? Do you see any glaring omissions from the points?
- The point that caused the most controversy in Britain was Point 2. Why do you think it was controversial?

ACTIVITY



WILSON GIVING HIS 'FOURTEEN POINTS' SPEECH



FULL TEXT OF WILSON'S SPEECH



FOURTEEN POINTS SPEECH - SOURCE ANALYSIS

TOWARDS A PEACEFUL FUTURE

Wilson's Fourteen Points struck a chord with political leaders, even those determined for revenge, such as Georges Clémenceau. However, their greatest resonance was with the people of Europe, who were exhausted by war, death and destruction. British historian Hew Strachan argues that Wilson's most significant audience was people, rather than governments. Equally, as a political scientist, Wilson knew that a peaceful Europe was only possible if Germany and the other Central Powers were not left humiliated. Wilson warned his colleagues as early as March 1918 that treating Germany severely could result in a vengeful response.

➔ SOURCE 1.04

'It's the only way out, Wilhelm!' Cartoon by EA Bushnell, 1918.



ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What is significant about the caption?
2. With whom does the cartoonist's sympathy appear to lie?
3. Who do you believe was the primary target of the Fourteen Points: the Imperial German government or everyday people? Give evidence to support your answer.

THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

The leaders of the victorious countries met at the Palace of Versailles near Paris on 18 January 1919. Thirty-nine nations were present and initially ‘the Supreme Council’ was a council of ten: two representatives each from the USA, Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan. For practical reasons, the council was scaled back to ‘the Big Four’: Lloyd George (Britain), Georges Clémenceau (France), Woodrow Wilson (USA) and Vittorio Orlando (Italy). The media demanded to be present, citing Wilson’s first point of no secret agreements, but such an arrangement would have been ineffective and was rejected.

The armistice had been in effect for two months but there were still many problems facing Europe. Much of Europe was starving and small revolutions in Hungary, Greece and Turkey were bubbling beneath the surface. Initially there was a desire to fix these issues as quickly as possible, but the conference got bogged down with disagreements. As historian Margaret MacMillan pointed out, ‘The peacemakers soon discovered that they had taken on the administration of much of Europe and large parts of the Middle East ... There was little choice: if they did not do it, no one would—or worse, revolutionaries might.’⁹ Across most of the world, economies were in tatters from World War I. There was excess food—particularly from Australia, New Zealand and Canada—and ships to transport this food. But who should meet the costs? The whole idea of an international government was a new concept and nations continued to put their own economic and political interests first.

BACKGROUND TO THE PEACE

To fully understand the implications for the peacemakers in Paris, we should first look at historical precedents. The leaders who met in Paris in 1919 were not the first leaders to attempt to plan for peace. In 1648, the Peace of Westphalia treaties ended the Thirty Years War. More importantly, it created the principle that still prevails: that all states are sovereign. The Thirty Years war was largely fought on German territory and the agreements for peace took almost a year to negotiate.

Equally, the Paris Treaty of 1815 after the Napoleonic Wars not only attempted to re-establish the power of kings, but was the first peace treaty that put forward agreements for reparations. Under the Paris Treaty, France was required to pay reparations to Prussia, Austria and Britain. A third treaty, the 1871 Treaty of Versailles reunified Germany under one emperor

after the Franco-Prussian War. It also stipulated that France pay five billion francs to Germany in reparations. The German army occupied areas of France until France paid in full, and the French were left humiliated by this defeat and by the treaty. The 1871 Treaty of Versailles occurred during Georges Clémenceau’s lifetime, which perhaps helps explain why France was so determined never to let Germany invade again.

The 1919 Paris Peace Conference was dominated by Woodrow Wilson, a political scientist and former president of Princeton University. He sought to transform ‘the war to end all wars’ into a platform of international cooperation and lasting peace. As this chapter explores, the outcomes were complicated because different countries had different agendas and conflicting ideas about self-determination, reparations and territorial claims.

THE BIG FOUR

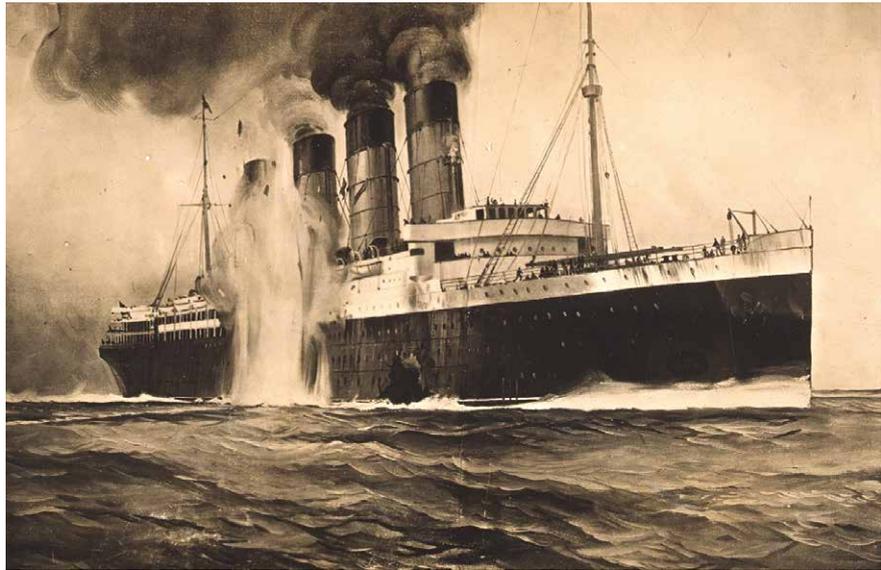
At the heart of the disagreements among the Big Four was that they had experienced different levels of loss and suffering as a result of the war. Consequently, they also differed about the degree to which Germany should be punished.

USA

Unlike the other nations making up the Big Four, the USA had not been severely impacted by the war. On 7 May 1915, a German submarine commander sunk *RMS Lusitania* off the Irish coast. Although the *Lusitania* was a British civilian cruiser, the sinking resulted in the deaths of up to 120 Americans—and this created strong anti-German feeling in the USA. However, it was not until April 1917 that the USA entered the war, following German resumption of the use of submarines to sink civilian ships, and the revelation of a German plan to invade the USA via Mexico. The USA lost between 115 000 and 130 000 people during the war, but endured no fighting on home soil. This experience, coupled with President Wilson's idealistic belief that future wars could be prevented, led the USA to take a conciliatory approach to the peace negotiations. Wilson argued strongly, through his Fourteen Points program and his proposal for a League of Nations, that the treaty should encourage democracy and should not aim to cripple Germany.

➔ SOURCE 1.05

A newspaper drawing from 1915, showing *RMS Lusitania* hit by torpedoes off Kinsale Head, Ireland.



FRANCE

France had suffered enormously during the war. Nearly two million French lives were lost in the conflict; this was over 4 per cent of the population. Moreover, much of the fighting took place on French soil, destroying buildings in hundreds of towns and cities and rendering millions of hectares of farmland useless. The French also still harboured resentment over their loss to Germany in the 1870 Franco-Prussian war. The majority of French people wanted a treaty that would make Germany pay, in terms of land, money and humiliation. They also wanted to make sure that Germany could not wage war against France again.

BRITAIN

Britain had a slightly less vengeful attitude towards Germany. The British Isles and their colonies had lost over one million citizens in the war, but there was little war destruction on British soil. Many people wanted a peace that would punish Germany, but others worried that a harsh treaty would make Germany more likely to start another war. There was also the issue of trade. Many British businesses and farmers were keen to re-establish trading links with Germany. British prime minister Lloyd George charted a course between Wilson's idealism and Clémenceau's determination to make Germany pay.

ITALY

Italy had been a member of the Triple Alliance before the war but did not join on Germany's side in 1914. Instead, Italy entered the war on the side of the Allies in April 1915. Over the next three and a half years, Italian forces fought on a southern front, causing Germany and Austria to divide their troops and resources three ways and weakening their fighting power. Italy also lost between one million and 1.2 million citizens in the conflict. Italian prime minister Vittorio Orlando attended the Paris Peace Conference confident that Italy would be suitably rewarded for its effort; however, very few of Italy's territorial demands were met.

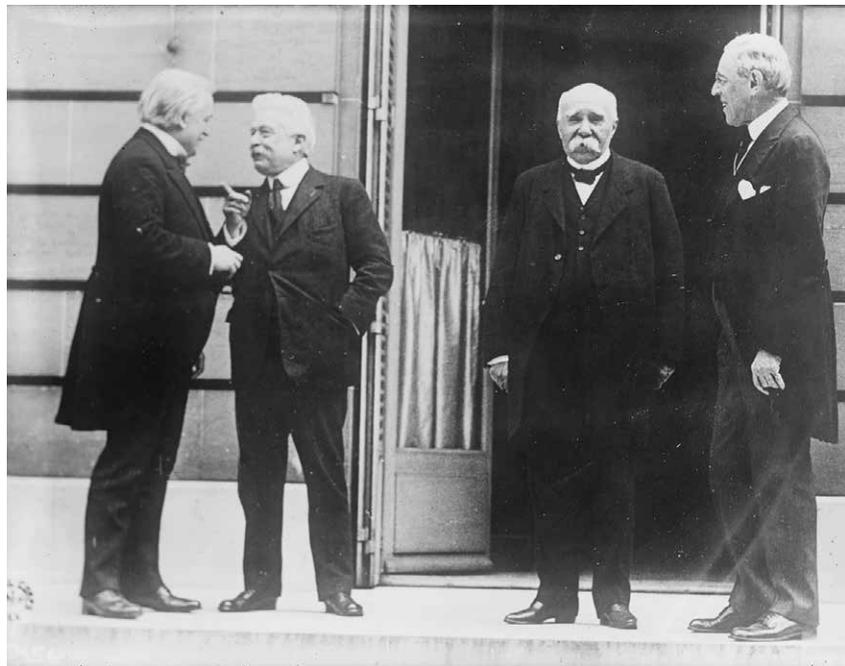
The Big Four met daily, and sometimes two or three times times a day. The other nations' delegates were put to work on subcommittees to work out reparations and other arrangements.

One notable absentee was Russia. It could be argued that Russia had saved France during the war when, as an ally, it had attacked Germany and created two fronts. However, following the Bolshevik Revolution in October 1917, Russia had withdrawn from the war and signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany. This treaty was very harsh on Russia, but in the eyes of the Allies, Russia had broken the terms of the Triple Entente, and had no place at the conference table. Some historians have argued that had Russia been invited, the outcomes may have been very different.

The last of Wilson's Fourteen Points was the creation of a League of Nations. Australian representative prime minister Billy Hughes joked that 'it was Wilson's toy, he would not be happy until he got it.' Wilson saw the League of Nations as the centrepiece of the peace treaty and the path to preventing future wars. Yet Clémenceau was more interested in discussing reparations and a treaty with the Germans. Lloyd George was stuck between Wilson's idealism and Clémenceau's push for making Germany pay. Orlando, as the conference continued, wanted only advances for the territory of Italy. With these conflicting agendas, the four argued, debated and, at times, ironically, came close to blows.

▼ SOURCE 1.06

Leaders of the Big Four at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919. From left: British prime minister David Lloyd George, Italian Premier Vittorio Orlando, French Premier Georges Clémenceau, and US president Woodrow Wilson.



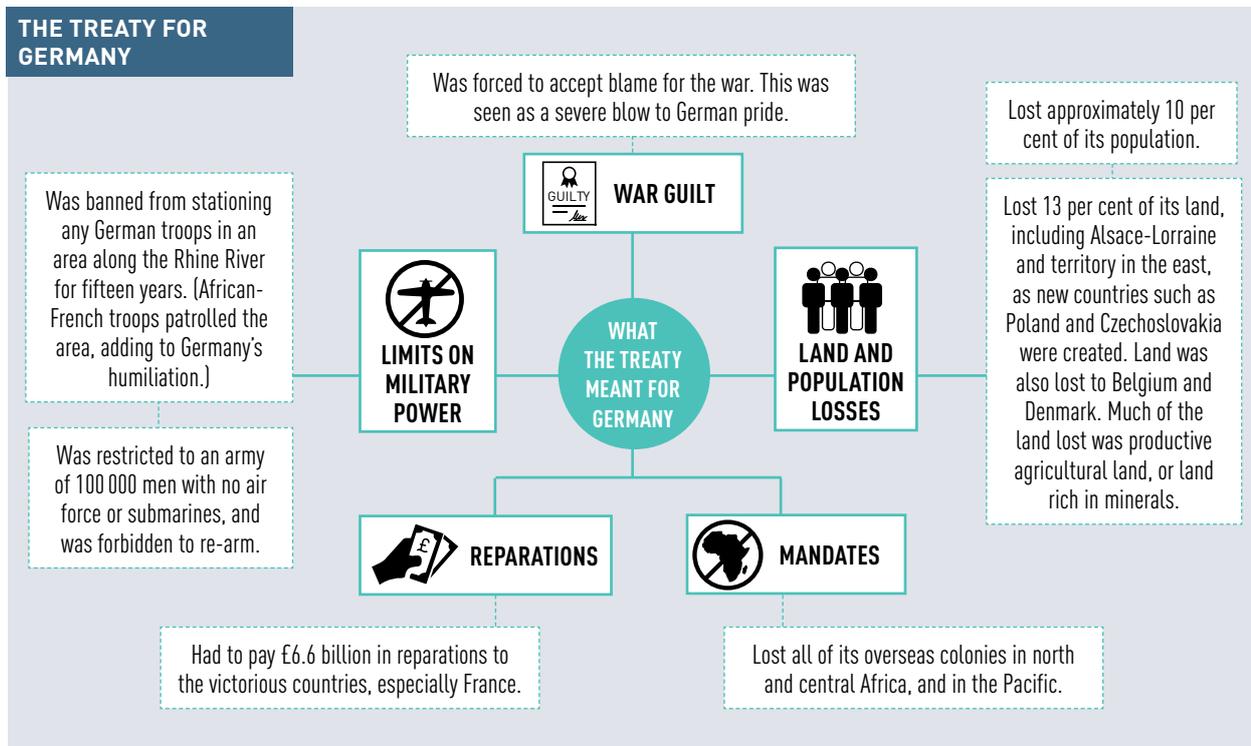
SOURCE 1.07

The headlines of this New York evening newspaper from 28 June 1919, after the Treaty of Versailles was signed, reveal Wilson's thoughts on the outcome.



THE SETTLEMENT WITH GERMANY: THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES 1919

On 28 June 1919, exactly five years after the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, two German representatives, Dr Herman Muller and Dr Johannes Bell, were ushered into the Hall of Mirrors to sign the Treaty of Versailles.



LOSS OF COLONIES: MANDATES

Following Italy's withdrawal from the Paris Peace Conference on 24 April 1919, the chief negotiating team became the 'Big Three': Wilson, Clémenceau and Lloyd George. They turned their attention to their major enemy: Germany. They agreed that Germany should hand over all of its colonies around the world to Allied Powers in the form of mandates. Under the mandate system, former German colonies were the responsibility of the League of Nations, but were to be administered by victorious allies. The French wanted Cameroon and Togoland and German rights in Morocco. The Italians had their eyes on Somalia. In the British Empire, South Africa wanted German South-west Africa (Namibia), Australia wanted New Guinea and some nearby islands, and New Zealand wanted German Samoa.¹⁰ Cynics referred this to the great land grab, as Allied leaders presented arguments for their own control of former German colonies.

In the end, France, England, Belgium, Italy and the Union of South Africa took mandates with 999-year leases over former German territories in Africa. Australia, New Zealand and Japan divided former German territories in the Pacific: Japan north of the equator; Australia and New Zealand to the south. To resolve an ongoing dispute between Australia and New Zealand over Nauru, England took over the mandate but divided profits from phosphate mining between the three nations, until Nauru achieved independence. All former mandates have since become independent.

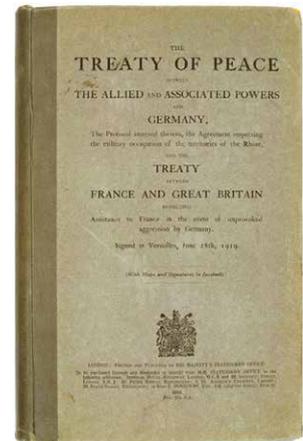
TERRITORIAL AND POPULATION LOSSES

One of the most significant and crippling features of the treaty was the stripping of up to 13 per cent of Germany's territory in Europe. The land handed over to Denmark, France, Belgium, Lithuania, Poland and Czechoslovakia was home to approximately 10 per cent of Germany's population, and they were areas rich in agricultural land and mineral deposits. All of these losses were damaging to Germany, but the most humiliating was the loss of Alsace-Lorraine to France. These territories had been won from France in the settlement at the end of the 1871 Franco-Prussian War. Germany was not only embarrassed by the loss of these states but was also strongly economically disadvantaged by the arrangement.

Germany also lost territory to the new Polish nation. In the final redrawing of boundaries, a corridor of land was transferred to Poland to give the new nation access to the sea. It could be argued this was not such a surprise, as it was accepted in the Fourteen Points that had been agreed on at Armistice Day. But the decision left East Prussia surrounded by Poland. More German territory was lost when the Sudetenland was incorporated into Czechoslovakia. The Sudetenland included a large number of Germans who actively protested in 1918 and 1919 that they did not wish to join Czechoslovakia. Germany was also forbidden to join with Austria.

REPARATIONS

With hindsight, it is easy to say that the victors should have been less concerned with making Germany pay and should have concentrated on getting Europe going again. But after a war that had brought destruction on such a scale and shaken European society so deeply, how could political leaders speak of forgetting? In any case, public opinion would simply not allow them to do so. 'Make the Hun Pay,' said the British. 'Let Germany Pay First,' said the posters covering Parisian walls.¹¹



📌 SOURCE 1.08

The cover of the Treaty of Versailles (in English). The text reads:

THE TREATY OF PEACE
BETWEEN THE ALLIED
AND ASSOCIATED
POWERS AND GERMANY,

The protocol annexed
thereto, the Agreement
respecting the military
occupation of the
territories of the Rhine,
AND THE TREATY
BETWEEN FRANCE
AND GREAT BRITAIN
RESPECTING

Assistance to France in
the event of unprovoked
aggression by Germany.
Signed at Versailles,
June 28th, 1919.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Paris Peace Conference also set up the International Labour Organization to establish international working conditions. German representatives were invited and the organisation continues today, meeting once a year in Geneva.

All the Big Three leaders at the Paris Peace Conference agreed that Germany should lose territory, but could not agree about the extent of financial reparations. A smaller Germany and a poorer Germany would be less of a threat to its neighbours. But if Germany were losing a lot of land, was it also fair to expect it to pay out huge sums in reparations? Striking a balance between the different expectations was not easy, especially as Wilson, Clémenceau and Lloyd George did not agree among themselves or, frequently, with their own colleagues. Putting a price tag on farms, factories, mines and ships sunk was easy, but what price could be put on a human life? What about women who were left widows after the war? Children who became orphans? Who should be punished? Should any Germans be tried as war criminals? Was it fair for a new German government to pay the price for the kaiser's decisions when the kaiser had fled Germany? These were all issues that the Paris Peace Conference attempted to deal with.

Clémenceau was determined to extract large financial payments from Germany; he ultimately won his case over Lloyd George and Wilson, who argued that Germany should not be crippled by reparations. The figure for reparations was set at £6.6 billion, an amount that was daunting to a German population now struggling with poverty and a bankrupt economy.

LIMITING GERMANY'S MILITARY POWER

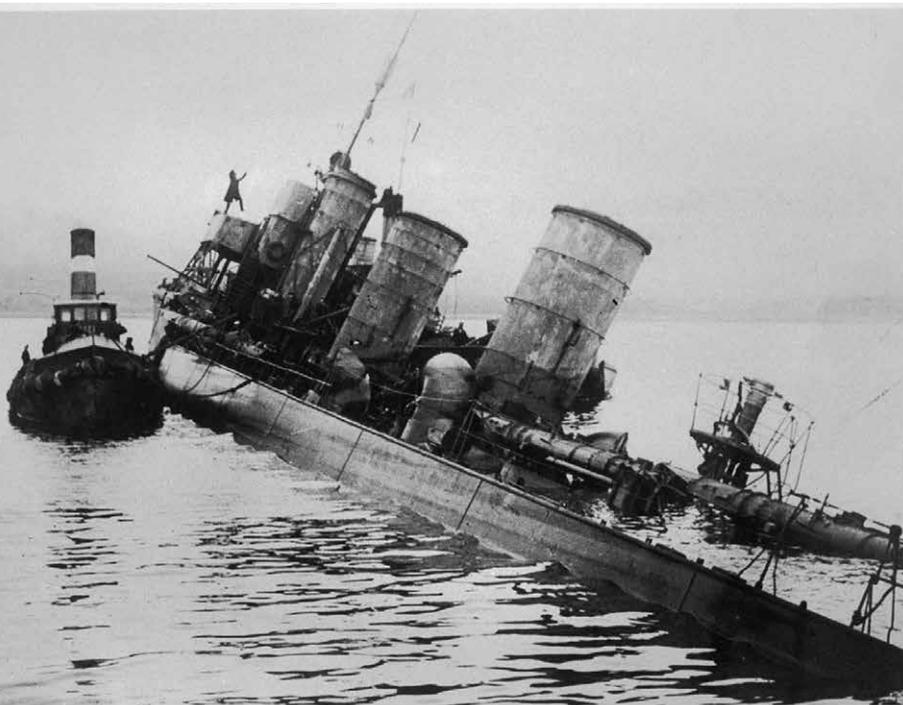
The arms race—especially between Britain and Germany—had been a major factor in the lead-up to World War I. It was clear to those at the Paris Peace Conference that disarmament—or a limitation of arms—was essential if future wars were to be prevented. Ultimately, the victorious leaders agreed that Germany's armed forces would be capped at an army of 100 000 men, which was large enough to prevent any revolutions. Conscription was forbidden, as was the development or manufacture of armaments. Most humiliating of all, the Rhineland along the border between Germany and France was to be a demilitarised zone, where no German troops were permitted.

Germany was forbidden to have an air force, tanks or to manufacture heavy guns, and its navy was limited to six battleships and no submarines. At the time of the armistice, the German fleet of seventy-four battleships had been forced to sail to Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands, off the west coast of Scotland. They were to remain there, under allied control, until a decision was made about their future. In June 1919, the German Naval Command scuttled the fleet because they couldn't stand the idea of handing their battleships over to the Allies. The scuttling of the ships did not help Germany's cause, and was actually seen by Clémenceau as an act of treachery. However, the British navy secretly saw it as a blessing. They had no interest in converting the German ships.

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📍 SOURCE 1.09

Scuttling the German fleet at Scapa Flow.



WAR GUILT

The Treaty of Versailles contained four hundred clauses. Article 231, known as the War Guilt Clause, was the most controversial. It required the German delegates to agree that Germany was principally responsible for beginning World War I.

Article 231 was added in order to get the French and Belgians to reduce the sum of money that Germany would have to pay to compensate for war damage. The article was seen as a concession to the Germans by the negotiators; however, it was bitterly resented by virtually all Germans, who did not believe they were responsible for the outbreak of the war. Article 231 was a constant thorn in the side of the Weimar Republic, whose leaders tried to meet the requirements of the Treaty of Versailles as well as build a new democratic nation.



left SOURCE 1.10

Cartoon published in the British magazine *Punch* on 19 February 1919. The caption reads: *German Criminal to Allied Police: 'Here, I say, stop! You're hurting me!' Aside: 'If I whine enough I may be able to wriggle out of this yet.'*

right SOURCE 1.11

'And this is no scrap of paper.' French military officer shows a German military officer the terms the 'German people must pay for all damage to civilians on land or sea or from the air.' *New York Herald*, 7 November 1918.

ACTIVITIES

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Identify the three nations represented in Source 1.10.
2. Why do you think US police are not shown in Source 1.10?
3. Explain why the Germans in both Source 1.10 and 1.11 are presented unfavourably.
4. Evaluate each cartoonists' attitude towards a German treaty.
5. These cartoons were published before the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. What do the captions suggest about British and French fears about how Germany should be treated?

SKILLS: PERSPECTIVES

To what extent do these cartoons capture the values of ordinary people at the time?

➔ SOURCE 1.12

ARTICLE 231 OF THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.

ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Why did Clémeanceau, Wilson and Lloyd George have such different attitudes at the Paris Peace Conference?
2. Why did the victors not get exactly what they wanted from the Paris Peace Conference?
3. What was the greatest oversight of the Paris Peace Treaty?

GERMAN REACTIONS TO ARTICLE 231

➔ SOURCE 1.13

Spoken by von Brockdorff-Rantau on June 1919, in response to Article 231.

COUNT VON BROCKDORFF-RANTZAU, LEADER OF GERMAN DELEGATION, SPEAKING TO THE ALLIES

The deeper we penetrated into the spirit of this Treaty, the more we became convinced of its impracticability. The demands raised go beyond the power of the German Nation ... We know the impact of the hate we are encountering here, and we have heard the passionate demand of the victors, who require us, the defeated, to pay the bill and plan to punish us as the guilty party. We are asked to confess ourselves the sole culprits; in my view, such a confession would be a lie ... We emphatically deny that the people of Germany, who were convinced that they were waging a war of defence, should be burdened with the sole guilt of that war.

➔ SOURCE 1.14

Adolph Hitler, 1923

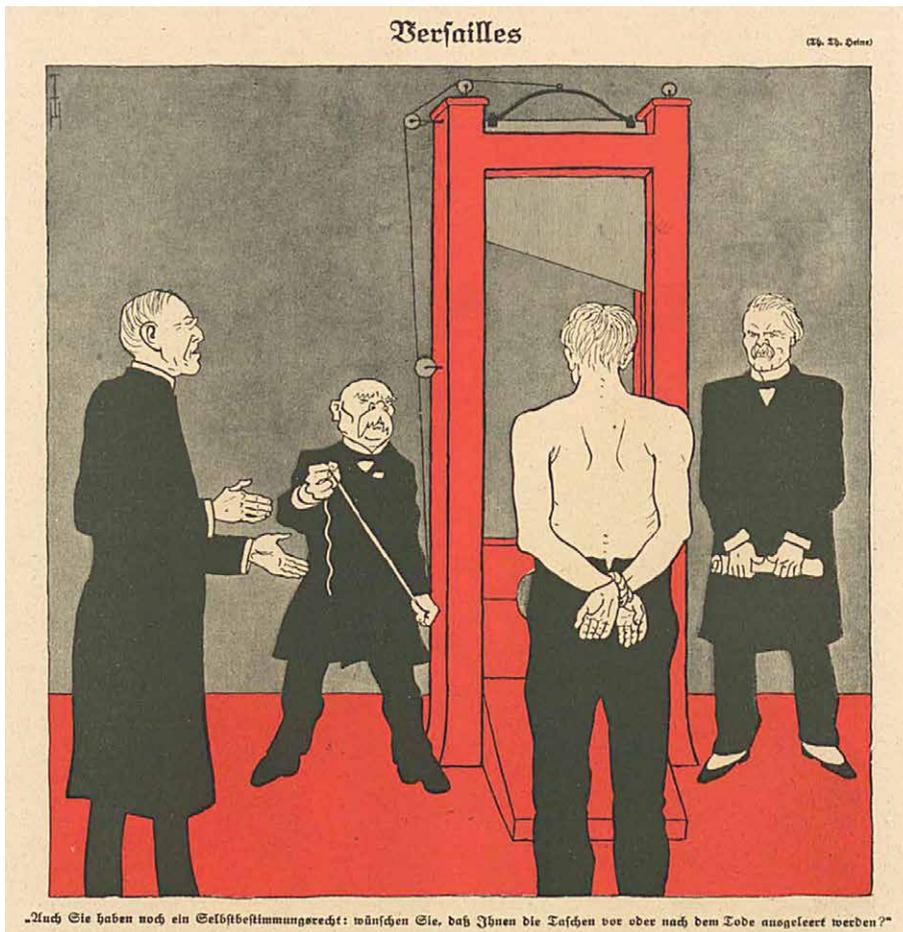
ADOLF HITLER IN *MEIN KAMPF*

It should scarcely seem questionable to anyone that the restoration of the frontiers of 1914 could be achieved only by blood. Only childish and naive minds can lull themselves in the idea that they can bring about a correction of Versailles by wheedling and begging ... No nation can remove this hand from its throat except by the sword. Only the assembled and concentrated might of a national passion rearing up in its strength can defy the international enslavement of peoples ...

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Identify von Brockdorff-Rantau's main criticism of Article 231.
2. What was Adolf Hitler's criticism, four years later? What consequences did his criticism have for Germany?
3. Explain what both Germans—who were political opposites—have in common in their criticism.
4. Contrast the differences between the responses of von Brockdorff-Rantau and Hitler.



SOURCE 1.15

'The Terms of the Versailles Treaty are Equivalent to Sending Germany to the Guillotine.'
Cartoon by Thomas Theodor Heine, published in the German satirical magazine *Simplicissimus*, 3 June 1919.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Identify the Big Three and suggest why France is controlling the guillotine.
2. Explain why the German figure is half-naked and has his hands tied.
3. Explain how and why the cartoonist has shown Wilson as a more reasonable figure.
4. Identify the intended effect of the cartoon on the German public.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

At the heart of the Treaty of Versailles was the establishment of the League of Nations. This was to be a worldwide organisation whose main purpose would be to avert future wars and provide a forum for the peaceful settlement of disputes. Germany had to agree to the establishment of the league as part of its acceptance of the Treaty of Versailles. However, Germany was not allowed to join the league.

On 25 January 1919, the Paris Peace Conference formally approved setting up a commission on the League of Nations. Wilson's vision was ambitious: to establish an international commitment to disarmament and an avenue for nations to resolve future conflicts. The commission was to be made up of

representatives from the Big Five. The USA, France, Great Britain, Italy and Japan would get two members each and, after some grumbling from smaller nations, five more members were accepted from other nations. Wilson hoped that, in future, wars could be prevented by nations approaching the League of Nations to resolve conflicts. 'If a state refused to accept a league decision, then the next step would be sanctions, economic or even military.'¹² Despite his enormous workload, Wilson insisted on chairing the commission himself.

A fortnight later the first draft of the Covenant of the League of Nations was presented to the Paris Peace Conference. France wanted the league to have 'more teeth' and to have its own military force. This proved to be the largest stumbling block, not from representatives at the Paris Peace Conference, but from the US government headed by Wilson. Wilson met strong opposition from the US Congress. Staunch Republican Senator Henry Cabot Lodge expressed the views of many Americans when he said, 'I am as moved by tributes to eternal peace as the next man, but are you ready to put soldiers and your sailors at the disposition of other Nations?' Despite enormous efforts by Wilson, who was loved more by Europeans than Americans, it was the US doubters who ultimately won the battle—and the USA did not join the League of Nations.

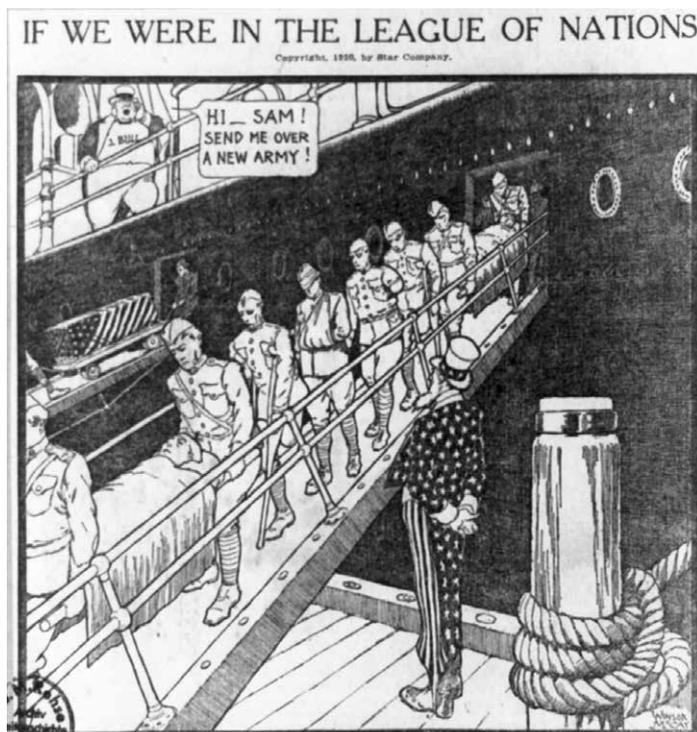
On 28 April 1919, a plenary session of the Paris Peace Conference approved the Covenant of the League of Nations. Under the Covenant, member states would have

to protect minorities; to improve working and health conditions and to oversee mandates—management of colonies of the defeated powers. The Covenant of the League of Nations was also included as part of all other treaties drafted with defeated powers. Historian Margaret MacMillan has argued that to get this 'toy' aboard, Wilson was forced to make compromises he himself would not have liked, such as awarding the German-speaking Tyrol to Italy, or placing millions of Germans under Czechoslovak or Polish rule, but '[in] time Wilson believed the League would grow and change over the years. In time it would embrace the enemy nations [as it did: Germany joined in 1926] and help them to stay on the paths to peace and democracy.'¹³

The Japanese wanted a Racial Equality Bill and this was passively rejected by Billy Hughes, Australia's prime minister, who argued that nations should control their own affairs with immigration. Wilson, in an attempt to appease Hughes—who was the most cantankerous representative at the conference—argued that the Racial Equality Bill could only be approved if supported unanimously. Despite a vote of 11–6, the Racial Equality Bill proposed by Japan was rejected. The political handling of this alone put the relationship between Japan and Australia at risk.

▼ SOURCE 1.16

'If We Were in the League of Nations.' Uncle Sam (US) watching wounded, crippled and dead soldiers come off ship. John Bull (UK) on the ship says, 'Hi Sam! Send me over a new army!'



ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What criticism is captured in the cartoon and the caption?
2. Identify the figures in the cartoon.
3. Where do the sympathies of the cartoonist lie?

SELF-DETERMINATION

US SECRETARY OF STATE ROBERT LANSING: 'When the President talks of self-determination, what does he have in mind? Does he mean a race, a territorial area or a community? It will raise hopes which can never be realised, it will I fear cost thousands of lives. In the end it is bound to be discredited to be called the dream of an idealist who failed to realize the danger until it was too late.'¹⁴

Self-determination was clearly one of the most inspiring and contentious issues to be discussed. Seven of Wilson's Fourteen Points related to the idea that nations should be able to rule themselves and determine their own futures. These items addressed the self-determination of Italians (point 9), Austrians (point 10), Hungarians (point 10), The Balkan states (point 11), the Turkish (point 12) and the Poles (point 13). But what of the Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Czechs, Slovaks, Finns, Armenians, Greeks, Palestinians and Egyptians? The list grew larger every day at the Paris Peace Conference.

There was general agreement that one of the reasons behind World War I was that smaller nations, such as Serbia, wanted self-determination from larger empires. Indeed, the Allied Powers of France, Great Britain and Russia had been able to rally support from their peoples by declaring that this was a 'just' war that was to give the oppressed nationalists what was rightfully theirs.¹⁵ But Wilson may not have been prepared for the consequences of this idea, as shown by the comment of his own secretary of state Robert Lansing (see the quote above). According to academic Guntram Herb, 'Russia [not invited to Paris] also advocated national self-determination; however it wanted the principle applied universally, that is, not only in Eastern Europe, but also in the rest of the world'.¹⁶

The ideal of self-determination raised issues from nations or aspiring nations all over the world. However, the more the conference delved into self-determination, the more problems were faced. Two attempts to be heard at the conference highlighted the complications: the questions of self-determination for the Irish nationalists and for the Vietnamese. Wilson insisted that the issue of Irish nationalism was purely a domestic matter for the British, while Ho Chi Minh's petition asking for Vietnamese independence from France 'never even received an answer'.¹⁷

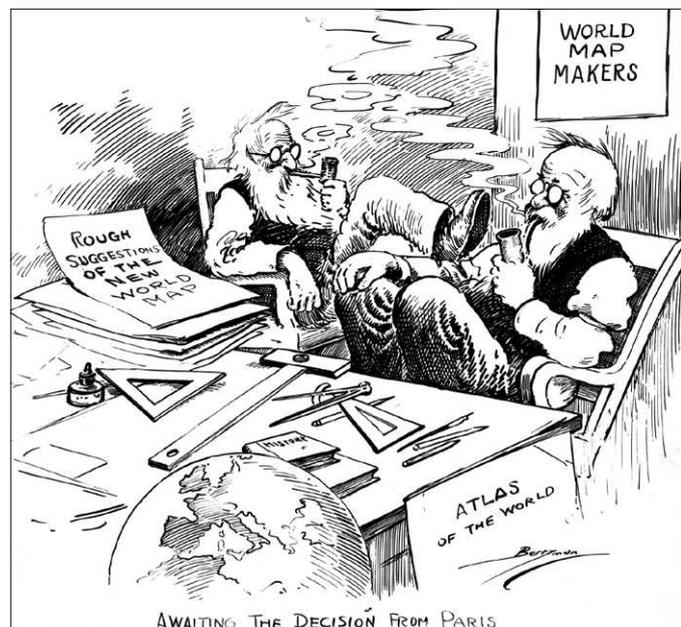
It was clear that Wilson's proposal about national self-determination had created as many problems as it solved. As if he understood that he had opened a can of worms, Wilson later told Congress, 'When I gave utterance to the words that all nations had a right to self-determination, I said them without the knowledge that nationalities existed which are coming to us day after day.'¹⁸ The issue of self-determination proved to be the greatest cause of contention at the conference and later the League of Nations. For the Estonians, Latvians, Armenians, Lithuanians, Kurds, Ukrainians and numerous other nationalities, the Paris Peace Conference was a disappointment. It promised so much but, in their eyes, delivered so little.

DID YOU KNOW?

During World War I, prisoners of war from Ireland were approached by the Germans and presented with the option of starting a brigade to fight the British. The Germans proposed landing the prisoners of war on Irish soil and supporting them with arms. The hope was to create a third front and get the upper hand on the British.

▼ SOURCE 1.17

Mapmakers waiting on a final decision from the Paris Peace Conference before redrawing the map of Europe.



THE HALL OF MIRRORS

GEORGE CLÉMENTEAU: 'In the end, it is what it is: above all else it is the work of human beings and as a result, it is not perfect. We all did what we could to work fast and well.'

On 4 May 1919, the Treaty of Versailles was sent to the printers and the German representatives were summonsed to Paris. When the 180-strong German delegation arrived, they were surprised at their treatment. A heavy military escort collected them from the train station and took them to their hotel, where their luggage was unceremoniously dumped in the courtyard and they were told to carry it to their rooms themselves. The delegation led by Count Brockdorff-Rantzau arrived in good faith, believing that Wilson and his Fourteen Points would present them with a mild peace treaty. They even believed that Germany, along with the United States, France and England, would work together to block Bolshevism in the East.

The symbolism of signing the treaty in the Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles was deliberate. The French were forced to sign the 1871 Treaty of Versailles in this location, and the choice of venue reinforced the German belief that France was after revenge. Indeed, even Lloyd George snapped an ivory paper knife in two after hearing Clémenteau's opening speech in which he stated 'You asked us for peace. We are disposed to grant it to you.' Brockdorff-Rantzau had prepared two speeches and was unsure which to deliver. He delivered his address sitting down and then the delegation retired to their hotel to contemplate the signing of the treaty. The initial German response was, as Wilson later stated, 'the most tactless speech I have ever heard.'



BROCKDORFF-RANTZAU'S SPEECH

▼ SOURCE 1.18

Versailles, 7 May 1919

BROCKDORFF-RANTZAU'S SPEECH IN RESPONSE TO THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

Gentlemen, we are deeply impressed with the great mission that has brought us here to give to the world forthwith a lasting peace. We are under no illusion as to the extent of our defeat and the degree of our powerlessness. We know that the strength of the German arms is broken. We know the intensity of the hatred which meets us, and we have heard the victor's passionate demand that as the vanquished we shall be made to pay, and as the guilty we shall be punished.

The demand is made that we shall acknowledge that we alone are guilty of having caused the war ... but we emphatically deny that the people of Germany, who were convinced that they were waging a war of defence, should be burdened with the sole guilt of that war. [...] In the past fifty years the imperialism of all European states has

constantly poisoned the international situation. The policy of retaliation, the policy of expansion, and a disregard of the right of national self-determination have played their part in that illness of Europe which came to its crisis in the world war.

[...]

Gentlemen, the sublime idea of deriving from the most terrible catastrophe in history the greatest of forward movements in the development of mankind, by means of the League of Nations, has been put forth and will make its way. But only by opening the gates of the League of Nations to all who are of good will can the goal be attained, and only by doing so will it be that those who have died in this war shall not have died in vain.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Does Germany accept responsibility for its part in World War I? Identify words and phrases that support your answer.
2. What is Germany's main criticism of this treaty?
3. What evidence is there that Germany is committed to a League of Nations and a lasting peace?

Brockdorff-Rantzau and the German delegation were shocked at the terms of the treaty. The shock was echoed in Germany. Why should Germany lose 13 per cent of its territory and 10 per cent of its population? After all, had Germany lost the war? Why should Germany alone be made to disarm? Why—and this question became the focus of German hatred of the treaty—should Germany be the only country to take responsibility for the Great War? Most Germans still viewed the outbreak of hostilities in 1914 as a necessary defence against the threat of barbaric Slavs to the East. From the German perspective, the treaty was a dictated peace. If they refused to sign, the naval blockade would continue and Germans would die of starvation or, worse, the war would start again, this time with Germany in a far weaker position.

The scuttling of 74 German naval ships, days before Germany was to sign the treaty or face a military invasion, did not assist Germany's rejection of the Treaty. Brockdorff-Rantzau told the German assembly that he believed the Allies were bluffing, but equally his untimely resignation on 20 June 1919, just three days before the deadline, complicated matters. Following rigorous debate, the German National Assembly voted in favour of signing with the exception of the 'war guilt' clause.

The day of the signing was 28 June 1919; ironically, this was the anniversary of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo in 1914. The two German delegates, Foreign Minister Herman Muller and Minister for the Colonies Johannes Bell, were unknown to most of the other delegates. They signed along with 21 other countries in the Hall of Mirrors. The world's media and film crews were present to witness the occasion. At the end of 'six months that changed the world,' the absences often spoke louder than the signatories. General Foch of France chose to inspect arrangements in the Rhineland. He declared on that day, 'Wilhelm II lost the war ... Clémenceau lost the peace.'¹⁹ He also described the Treaty of Versailles as 'no more than a twenty year truce.' Sadly, Foch's prediction was true, almost to the date. In addition the Chinese seats in the Hall of Mirrors were empty because China was refusing to sign the treaty, in protest against the decision to award Shantung to Japan.

ACTIVITY

EXTENSION

Write a paragraph arguing whether you agree or disagree with Wilson that Brockdorff-Rantzau's speech was tactless.



SIGNING OF
THE TREATY OF
VERSAILLES

SOURCE 1.19

The signing of the Treaty of Peace at Versailles, June 28th, 1919, by J Finnmore.



REDRAWING MAPS

The maps of Europe and the Middle East were drawn and redrawn repeatedly at the conference. New nations emerged from the empires of the nineteenth century. Older nations, including Poland and Czechoslovakia, were restored to their ancient borders. But the pleas of neighbouring peoples—Lithuanians, Latvians, Ukrainians and Estonians—for self-determination were ignored. Romania had entered the war to gain territory, but had withdrawn from the war and signed the Treaty of Bucharest with Germany in May 1918. Romania subsequently



PERSPECTIVES:
TREATY OF
VERSAILLES



FEATURES OF POST-
WWI TREATIES

re-entered the war on the allied side, declaring war on Germany on November 10, the day before Armistice Day. Many historians argue that this was to bolster their claims for territory in the post-war treaties. Clémenceau considered these actions treacherous. However, geography proved to be Romania's greatest attribute. The Allies were fearful of Bolshevik revolution spreading and were prepared to

TREATIES WITH OTHER DEFEATED NATIONS

For a variety of reasons, the treaties signed with other defeated nations were nowhere near as harsh as that with Germany. All of the Central Powers had abandoned Germany before Armistice Day and signed armistices with the Allies. Unlike Germany, the other defeated powers saw the signing of the armistice as

a surrender. Turkish, Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian troops all were defeated and signed the armistice on their own territory. The catchphrase 'Payment, punishment and prevention' was replaced with an attempt on the part of these nations to distance themselves from Germany.

NATION	TREATY	OUTCOME/ISSUES
Austria	Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye (10 September 1919) US-Austrian Peace Treaty (25 August 1921) (This was a separate treaty, as the USA never ratified the Paris treaties)	Austria was forbidden to unite with Hungary and Germany. Its independence struck a sympathetic nerve with Wilson. Land lost to Romania, Poland, Italy and Czechoslovakia. Reparations to be paid for two years. Austria received considerable help in the form of loans and aid. Was the first Central Power to join the League of Nations. Army reduced to 35 000.
Hungary	Treaty of Trianon (4 June 1920)	Hungary was complicated by a diversity of ethnic minorities and languages. Hungary appealed to Wilson to keep its historic boundaries. Yet it lost land to Romania, Italy and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Fear of spreading Bolshevik revolutions complicated matters and the fear of harsh reparations worked in Hungary's favour. Hungary was scheduled to make annual payments in gold and materials. Economic situations changed and the Allies suspended reparations in the 1930s, to begin again in 1944. Army reduced to 30 000.
Bulgaria	Treaty of Neuilly (27 November 1919)	Lost land to Greece (thus losing access to the Mediterranean Sea), Romania, Kingdom of Serbs Croats and Slovenes (present-day Macedonia and Serbia). Ordered to pay £100 million. Army reduced to 20 000.
Ottoman Empire	Treaty of Sèvres (10 August 1920) Treaty of Lausanne (24 July 1923)	The philosophy of 'The sick man of Europe has come to his own end'. Land lost to Armenia (although this was ignored after signing), Greece, France (Syria and Lebanon) and Great Britain (Palestine, Mesopotamia and Yemen). A possible Kurdish state was never finalised. Army reduced to 50 700. Navy reduced. Turkish War of Independence followed, with wins over Armenian, Greek and French armies, forming present-day Turkey and forcing a new treaty. Formalised boundaries of Turkey: Turkey agreed to no further claims on Cyprus (Article 20), Egypt and Sudan (Article 17), Syria and Iraq (Article 3). (Armenian and Kurdish homelands ignored.)

strengthen Romania by transferring territory from Hungary. The Balkans were temporarily winners by gaining territory for Yugoslavia (a name that emerged from 'Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes'), but the ethnic minorities and the drawing of borders created problems that would last for the rest of the century.

The Middle East was more complicated. A Jewish homeland was carved out of Palestine. This was based upon the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which offered British support for a Jewish homeland. The decision sent a signal to the people of the Middle East that showed inconsistent promises to Arabs and Jews. This has created ongoing hostilities to this day, particularly in Syria and Iraq. Arabia was created as an Arab state, but despite these attempts, the situation in the Middle East remained unstable, and did not build upon the Fourteen Points. Secret agreements by the British and French seemed to have greater power than self-determination. Equally, China was annoyed that Japan was granted Shantung, although this was eventually given back to China in 1922. Britain and France, despite making compromises, emerged with considerable land and a larger share of reparations.

SOURCE 1.20

Territorial changes after World War I.



ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Looking at Source 1.20, identify land lost by Germany.
2. Describe the changes made to the Austro-Hungarian Empire as a result of the treaty.
3. What gains did France and Britain make at the expense of the Ottoman Empire?

DID YOU KNOW?

Germany made its final payment of £59 million on 3 October 2010. Repayments were interrupted when Hitler was in power. However, a clause in the agreement said that Germany would have to pay interest on the bill if Germany were ever to reunite, which it did in 1990.

AFTER THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

The Paris Peace Conference continued until January 1920, when foreign ministers and diplomats took over, but it was like ‘a theatrical production whose stars are gone’. For Orlando, Clémenceau, George and Wilson, their days as global leaders were numbered. Orlando was replaced by Mussolini; Clémenceau had expected France would accept him as France’s prime minister until he chose to resign; however, the French public believed that Germany was let off lightly and they voted against Clémenceau. Lloyd George was the leader of the Liberal Party, but lost control of the coalition and resigned as prime minister in 1922. Woodrow Wilson returned to the United States and found a hostile Senate who opposed both the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations. Wilson toured the nation to rally support. Believing that the United States was the sole power to bring the idealism of internationalism to fruition, he pushed himself to exhaustion and eventually suffered a stroke, finishing his presidency as a recluse. The USA—despite holding a permanent membership of the League Council under the Covenant of the League of Nations—never ratified the Treaty of Versailles or joined the League of Nations. Indeed, prominent congressmen and senators wanted the USA to engage in a period of isolationism, far from European concerns. It is one of the sad tales of the post-war years that Wilson was unable to convince his own nation that the League of Nations was a step towards a better future.

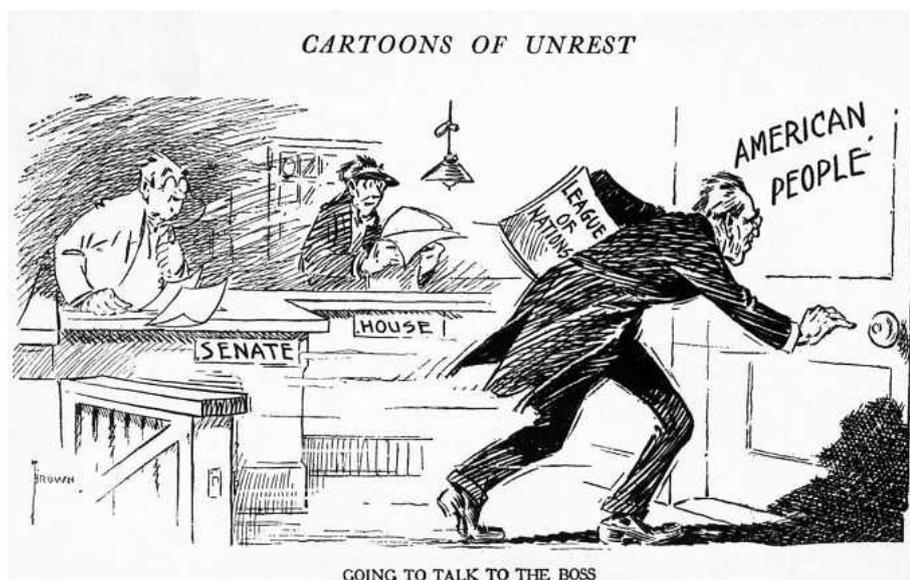
➔ SOURCE 1.21

‘Going to Talk to the Boss,’ from the *Chicago News*, 1919.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Identify the figure in black.
2. Explain what criticism the cartoonist is making of the president.
3. Identify the likely impact of a cartoon such as this on the senators and the American people.
4. Where do the cartoonist’s sympathies lie?



THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AT WORK

If the issues of the Paris Peace Conference convince us of anything, it is that internationalism takes time to both nurture and to be effective. The League of Nations met first in Paris, and then in London before Geneva was chosen as the permanent home for the League because of its neutrality in World War I. In the end, sixty-three countries became members of the League of Nations; it lasted from 1919 until 1946, when it was replaced by the United Nations. Ultimately, the Paris Peace Conference instituted an international order that gave the new

international organisation no explicit political or military power. As the League could not intervene in matters of national sovereignty, essentially the only easily identifiable pre-war internationalist element instituted in the League was a new international court: The Permanent Court of International Justice.²⁰

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE LEAGUE

At first, the League of Nations gained respect and authority, with forty-two member nations by the end of 1919. This authority was reinforced by a number of successful interventions during the 1920s. A dispute between Sweden and Finland over the Åland Islands was successfully resolved in favour of Finland in 1921. The League of Nations was also responsible for diffusing tensions between Greece and Bulgaria in 1925. Moreover, the Treaty of Locarno, signed in 1925, fixed the issue of Germany's Western border under the Treaty of Versailles and put an end to the demilitarised area of Rhineland.

The 1928 Kellogg–Briand Pact is also seen by some historians as a successful outcome achieved by the League of Nations. The pact, which was signed by sixty-four nations, including Germany, the US and the Soviet Union, outlawed war as an instrument of national policy. However, other historians argue that the Kellogg–Briand Pact cannot be attributed to the League of Nations as it was largely engineered by the USA.

In addition to its successes in addressing international disputes, the League of Nations played an important role in humanitarian concerns. The League oversaw the repatriation of nearly half a million prisoners of war from twenty-six countries and initiated the process of establishing general codes for railways, ports and waterways.²¹ The League also sent doctors from the Health Organization and spent over £10 million on building homes and farms; money was used to invest in seeds and by 1926 had created employment for over 600 000 people in Turkey. Campaigns against typhus were initiated by the League and the banning of asphyxiating, poisonous gases or other bacterial weapons, commonly known as the Geneva Protocol (1925), were ratified by sixty-five nations. These achievements gave the League of Nations credibility.

CHALLENGES FACING THE LEAGUE

However, the League of Nations also struggled because it had few powers of enforcement. If a country wanted to ignore a direction from the League there was little it could do. This was the case in 1931 when Japan annexed Manchuria. The League reprimanded Japan but there was little else that could be done because Japan withdrew from the League. Likewise, Nazi Germany opted out of the League in 1933 over a disagreement about rearmament. In 1935, when Italy invaded Abyssinia, Britain appealed to the League to impose sanctions on Italy. Limited sanctions were applied, but they did not stop Mussolini, as they did not include petrol. These setbacks severely undermined the status and credibility of the League of Nations. In the end, as nation after nation withdrew from the League, it was left as nothing more than a society. Hitler referred to the League as a congregation of dead people.



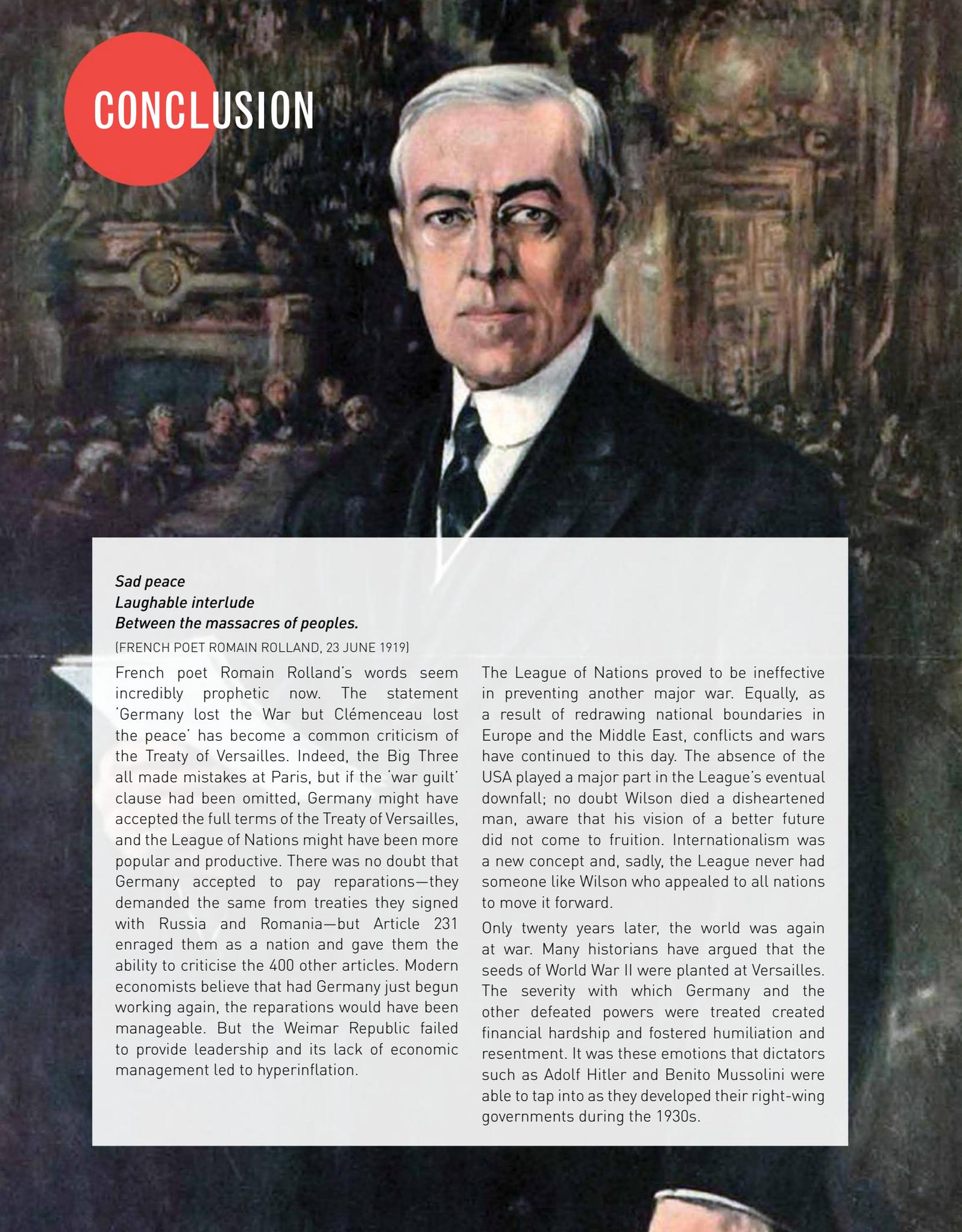
↑ SOURCE 1.22

Palais Wilson, the original League of Nations building in Geneva, Switzerland.

↓ SOURCE 1.23

Calvin Coolidge, US president Herbert Hoover, and Frank Kellogg in the White House, with representatives of the governments that ratified the Kellogg–Briand Pact.





CONCLUSION

Sad peace

Laughable interlude

Between the massacres of peoples.

[FRENCH POET ROMAIN ROLLAND, 23 JUNE 1919]

French poet Romain Rolland's words seem incredibly prophetic now. The statement 'Germany lost the War but Clémenceau lost the peace' has become a common criticism of the Treaty of Versailles. Indeed, the Big Three all made mistakes at Paris, but if the 'war guilt' clause had been omitted, Germany might have accepted the full terms of the Treaty of Versailles, and the League of Nations might have been more popular and productive. There was no doubt that Germany accepted to pay reparations—they demanded the same from treaties they signed with Russia and Romania—but Article 231 enraged them as a nation and gave them the ability to criticise the 400 other articles. Modern economists believe that had Germany just begun working again, the reparations would have been manageable. But the Weimar Republic failed to provide leadership and its lack of economic management led to hyperinflation.

The League of Nations proved to be ineffective in preventing another major war. Equally, as a result of redrawing national boundaries in Europe and the Middle East, conflicts and wars have continued to this day. The absence of the USA played a major part in the League's eventual downfall; no doubt Wilson died a disheartened man, aware that his vision of a better future did not come to fruition. Internationalism was a new concept and, sadly, the League never had someone like Wilson who appealed to all nations to move it forward.

Only twenty years later, the world was again at war. Many historians have argued that the seeds of World War II were planted at Versailles. The severity with which Germany and the other defeated powers were treated created financial hardship and fostered humiliation and resentment. It was these emotions that dictators such as Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini were able to tap into as they developed their right-wing governments during the 1930s.

CHAPTER REVIEW

1. Create a table that summarises the positions, desires and outcomes of Wilson, Clémenceau and Lloyd George at the Paris Peace Conference.
2. Create a table that divides Wilson's Fourteen Points into short- and long-term goals.

SKILLS: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

For many German-speaking people, the decision to redraw boundaries at the Paris Peace Conference led to enormous changes in their citizenship and identity. Only the German-speaking people in Denmark/Northern Germany were given their say in this change (the majority voted to become part of Denmark). However, even today there is a German-speaking minority in Southern Jutland (complete with German-speaking schools) and a Danish-speaking minority (complete with Danish-speaking schools) in North Schleswig.

Consider the consequences for people in these or other regions. Select one region and research people's perspectives on the effects of the new borders. Address the following questions:

1. What were the effects of this change of boundaries on one or more groups?
2. What were the options for the people who lived in those regions?
3. How were German-speaking people treated initially, and then over time?
4. To what extent did people prosper under the new arrangements? Give one or more examples.

EXAM PRACTICE

Using three or four points:

1. Describe the influence of Wilson, Clémenceau or Lloyd George on the outcome of the peace treaties.
2. Explain how the ideals of the peacemakers were shattered by conflicting interpretations of reparations and self-determination.

ESSAY

Write an essay, based on evidence, on one of the topics below.

- 'The Paris Peace Conference created nations for some but ignored self-determination for others'. Discuss this statement, using evidence to support your position.
- 'The League of Nations was totally ineffective'. To what extent do you agree with this statement? Use evidence to support your answer.
- 'The Treaty of Versailles created more problems than it solved'. Discuss.

EXTENSION

Using Trove at the National Library of Australia website, research how the Australian media reported on the events of the Paris Peace Conference. (Note: Victoria's main newspaper during this period was *The Argus*).

TEST



QUIZ – CHAPTER 1

FURTHER READING

Norman Graebner & Edward Bennet. *The Versailles Treaty and its Legacy—the Failure of the Wilsonian Vision*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Although a challenging read, this well-researched history study explores why and how the United States rejected Wilson's vision of a 'new world order'.

Margaret MacMillan. *Paris 1916: Six Months that Changed the World*. New York: Random House, 2003.

This engaging study is a narrative of the struggles and successes of the first six months of the Paris Peace Conference.

Jon Silkin (ed.). *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*. (London: Penguin, 1996).

This edition of poetry charts the path of soldiers in World War I from enthusiasm

to disillusionment. Remarkable in all the poems is a lack of anger against the enemy; instead, anger is directed at politicians who send men into war.

Hew Strachan. *The First World War: A New Illustrated History*. (London: Simon and Schuster, 2003).

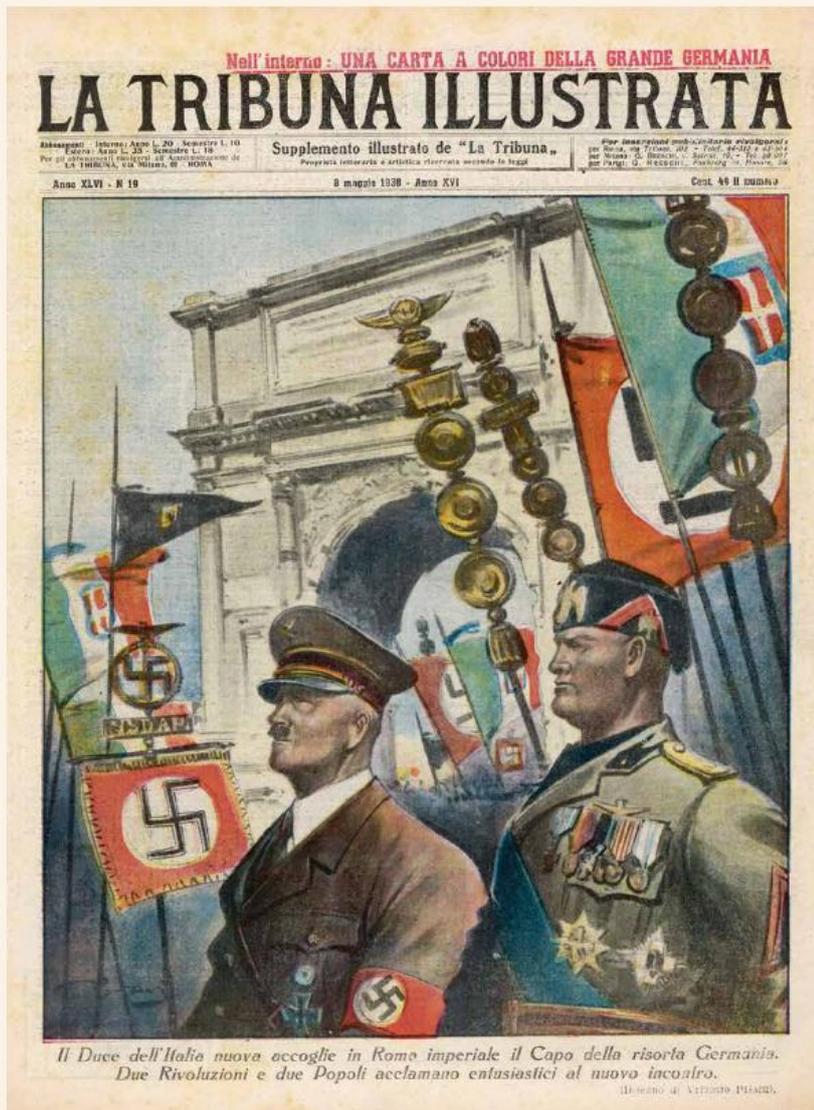
A series of poignant essays by historians, which cover the social, political and ideological aspects of World War I and its aftermath.

IDEOLOGIES AND 'ISMS'

Definition, Oxford Dictionaries:

'ideol-ogy:

1. A system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy.
 - 1.1 The set of beliefs characteristic of a social group or individual.
2. The science of ideas; the study of their origin and nature.
 - 2.1 Visionary speculation, especially of an unrealistic or idealistic nature.'



↑ Hitler and Mussolini.

KEY POINTS

- The twentieth century was marked by ideological struggles.
- Karl Marx's ideas about politics, economics and society challenged traditional beliefs based on monarchies and liberal democratic ideas.
- Marx moved socialist ideology from the small-scale reform of workers' conditions to anticipate universal socialism, famously proclaiming: 'The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working Men of All Countries, Unite!'
- The 1920s and 30s saw the emergence of extreme right-wing parties identifying as fascist or national socialist.
- After World War I, and in the wake of the 1930s Great Depression, some people believed that fascist or socialist ideologies were the answer to the social and economic chaos.

KEY TERMS

Proletariat

Working class, wage-earners; people without capital. Marx believed the proletariat were exploited by capitalists.

Totalitarianism

A totalitarian society is one in which the government, a group or an individual has absolute control over the people and all aspects of their public and private lives.



IDEOLOGIES IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In the twentieth century, various ideologies developed about how society should be structured, governed and organised.

Most European countries entered the century with political systems that included some form of monarchy, and the social structure of those countries supported a monarchical system. Many countries also recognised the role of democracy as a positive form of government.



↑ Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany.

Before World War I, most Europeans—and many people in European colonies around the world—would have accepted that a monarchy should be included in any form of government; this might have varied from the absolutist monarchy of Russia to the constitutional monarchy of Britain, which had a strong parliament. However, by 1918, old monarchies in Russia, Germany and Austria had ceased to exist, and democracies in the USA, France and Britain had proved victorious. American capitalism helped the Allies win the war, as well as benefiting greatly from that war.

As a result of World War I, some political ideologies became more popular. The war helped the collapse of the Romanov monarchy in Russia, which led first to the democratic provisional government in February 1917 and then to the communist government after October 1917. In Germany, there was briefly a period of revolutionary socialism, with Berlin briefly controlled by communists under Spartacist leadership and ‘revolutionary governments’ proclaimed in some cities, but by early 1919 the Weimar Republic was established.

The Russian Revolution established socialism in one country, and its promise of a fairer society with workers’ interests at its heart had worldwide appeal. Both the communist uprising in Berlin in January 1919 and the short-lived communist government in Hungary in March 1919 took their lead from the Bolshevik Party. Socialist or communist parties were established in many Western countries, including the USA; non-revolutionary socialist parties such as the British Labour Party and the German Social Democrats were also strong post-war. Nevertheless, by the 1920s, Russia was the only communist republic.



↑ The Russian Revolution, 1917.

DID YOU KNOW?

The terms ‘left-wing’ and ‘right-wing’ come from the first French government after the 1789 French Revolution, when the more progressive and radical deputies sat in the stalls to the Speaker’s left while the more conservative deputies sat to the right.

The 1920s and 1930s saw the rise of extreme right-wing political parties: Fascists in Italy and National Socialists in Germany. The hopes of the 1919–1920 peace treaties rested on self-determination and democracy, but these concepts often proved unworkable in the newly established states, which had no tradition of government through freely-elected parliaments, and often deep divisions between ethnic and social groups. By 1926, the newly recreated Poland had become a dictatorship and, in 1929, Yugoslavia, formed from six nationalities with long-held animosities, also became a dictatorship.

Spain had elected a republican government in 1931, but in 1936 General Francisco Franco led an attack against the government, which began the Spanish Civil War. From around the world, ‘International Brigades’ were formed, often including socialists and communists, and those who believed in democracy. Seventy Australian men and women joined the International Brigades and fought in Spain between 1936 and 1939, when Franco’s forces defeated the republicans and established a fascist dictatorship.

SOCIALISM

- Socialism is a political, economic and social theory that advocates that the community as a whole should own and control the means of production.
- Socialism is commonly associated with Marxism (see right). However, socialist ideas existed before Marx and some socialists do not see themselves as followers of Marx.
- Socialist ideas developed out of the Industrial Revolution, which took place in Britain from 1750.

↓ SOURCE 1

NEW LANARK VILLAGE FOR COTTON WORKERS

New Lanark, Scotland, was built by David Dale, a successful factory owner, to house his workers' families. Dale, and later his son-in-law Robert Owen, believed in practical socialism: better working conditions made for better work and thus improved profits.



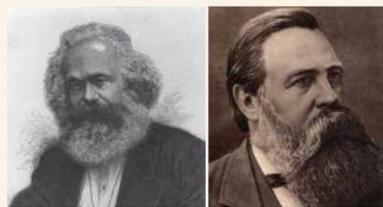
ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

When built in 1795, this row of housing was considered unusual for cotton mill workers. What does this tell us about Robert Owen's attitude to his workers?

COMMUNISM (MARXISM)

- Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) wrote the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, in which they outlined a new political system called communism.
- Marx and Engels argued that human societies operated according to a set of mechanisms that could be scientifically studied and then applied. They stated that 'all history is the history of class struggle', that history was a continuous series of struggles between those who had economic and political power and those who did not.
- 'Marxism' refers to the belief that society will pass from slavery, to feudalism, through capitalism and into socialism. Each stage is marked by the rising up of the exploited class to overthrow those who exploit them.
- The socialist stage is achieved when workers—Marx referred to them as the 'proletariat'—overthrow the capitalists who control the means of production; they then establish a 'dictatorship of the proletariat.' The final stage in the Marxist model is communism, a classless utopia.
- The terms Marxism, socialism, communism and Bolshevism are often used loosely and may refer to any revolution in the name of the workers.



↑ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, authors of the *Communist Manifesto*.

LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

- Liberal democracy is a form of government that recognises the rights and freedoms of individuals. Representatives are elected by the people through free and fair elections.
- Liberal democracy is currently the dominant political ideology in the world, and can take different forms—for example, a constitutional monarchy (Britain) or a constitutional republic (United States, France).

CAPITALISM

- Capitalism is a system where 'capital,' such as farms, factories and other means of production, is privately owned. This allows the owner to produce profits.
- In 1914, the major European powers—Britain, France, Germany and Russia—as well as the United States of America, were industrialising under capitalist systems.
- The US was already the world's most important economic unit prior to 1914, but World War I strengthened its capitalist economy. The US was untouched by the war's devastation, as America entered the war late and benefited enormously through the sale of manufactured goods. Wall Street in New York largely replaced London as the world's financial capital. Although there was dire poverty in America, many Americans lived in affluence that was not experienced in Europe until the 1960s. The United States represented the triumph of capitalism.

NATIONALISM

- Nationalism is a sense of belonging to a distinct 'nation'; a patriotic feeling; a belief in one's country. Extreme nationalism might include feelings of superiority or actions such as taking land or people from another nation.
- After World War I, nationalism continued to cause tensions, and not only in Europe. The treaties signed after the war created new nations from old empires, but some nationalities still believed that their own identities had not been recognised.
- Yugoslavia was formed from six 'national groups'; this caused ongoing tension until, in 1929, it became a dictatorship.
- In Ireland, Sinn Féin wanted an Ireland independent of Britain.
- There was a growing sense of Indian national identity that called for an end to British rule.
- In Asia, Japan was increasing its power and influence; this led to growing calls for European colonies in Asia to gain independence.
- In the Dutch East Indies, a nationalist party aimed to remove the Dutch colonists and establish Indonesia.
- In Indochina, nationalists wanted independence from France.

INTERNATIONALISM

- Internationalism promotes friendly cooperation between nations—or even the absence of nations so that all people exist without destructive competition.
- The last of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points was the establishment of a world parliament, where nations could meet to settle disputes rather than go to war. At the 1919 peace conference this international 'parliament' was established, called the League of Nations.
- The 'International' was the term applied to associations of socialists and communists, which worked to promote socialist ideology. The First International was formed in 1864; the Third International was created after the Russian Revolution and operated from 1919 to 1943.
- The Bolsheviks, who led the October 1917 Russian Revolution, believed that they were the vanguard for a worldwide socialist revolution, in which workers of the world would unite. True communism represented the 'withering away of the state.' But by the early 1920s, the difficulties of establishing a socialist government in Russia forced the leaders to abandon their dreams of a worldwide revolution.

NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION

- National self-determination is linked to nationalism in the belief that people identified as belonging to a 'national group' should be given the opportunity to determine their future.
- President Wilson's Fourteen Points included five points based on national self-determination. For example, Point 10 allowed for the people of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to be given the opportunity of self-government while Point 13 called for the formation of an independent Poland.

ISOLATIONISM

- Isolationism is a policy of isolating one's nation from involvement with other countries. By not becoming involved in politics, joining alliances or making economic commitments, countries seek to serve their own interests.
- In 1823 Thomas Jefferson (United States president 1801–1809) said: 'Our first and fundamental maxim should be never to entangle ourselves in the [problems] of Europe ...', and in the 1920s and 1930s the US tried to do this. The country refused to join the League of Nations, took measures to avoid external conflicts, restricted immigration and focused on improving its own economy.
- The threat of fascist regimes and the bombing of Pearl Harbor signalled the end of isolationism for the United States—it joined World War II in December 1941.

FASCISM

- The term ‘fascism’ is derived from the Latin word *fascēs*, a bundle of rods representing authority. Benito Mussolini founded the National Fascist Party in 1920, representing anti-socialist and anti-democracy principles.
- The fascists quickly gained support, especially from people who feared and opposed communism, and often from those who feared instability.
- In 1924, Mussolini won a majority in general elections, and in 1925 he established a dictatorship: there was no freedom of the press, anti-fascist political parties were suppressed and free trade unions closed. Order was maintained through violence, such as through the secret police, censorship—and even through the support of the Roman Catholic Church.
- Despite the absence of political freedom, fascism appealed to some other Europeans, who admired its tight control of workers and industrial production.
- The term ‘fascism’ is applied to other extreme right-wing organisations and political systems, including Nazism in Germany and General Franco’s Falange Party in Spain.

↓ SOURCE 2

CUT-OUT DOLL PROMOTING FASCIST VIEW DURING THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR



ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What do the four dresses represent?
2. Both the republicans and the fascists produced children’s books and toys that were connected with the war. Do you think such books and toys would have encouraged children to hold particular views? In your response, consider whether there are similar examples in children’s books and toys today.

NAZISM

- The National Socialist German Workers’ Party (‘Nazi’ Party for short) was formed in 1920. It grew out of the German Workers’ Party begun by Anton Drexler in 1919.
- Its policies included the abolition of the Treaty of Versailles, the union of Germany and Austria, the idea that only ‘true’ Germans be permitted to live in Germany and that Jews be excluded.
- It was a totalitarian regime, where all aspects of life were dictated by the Nazi Party. A strong, centralised government and large industry would be state-run and state-owned.
- Many of its policies could be considered ‘socialist’, such as generous aged pensions.

↓ SOURCE 3

A CARTOON PROMOTING THE BENEFITS OF ITALIAN FASCISM, 1923

The caption reads: ‘The misdeeds of Bolshevism in 1919; the benefits of Fascism in 1923.’

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What Bolshevik ‘misdemeanors’ are shown in the first panel?
2. What are the fascist ‘benefits’ shown in the second panel?
3. Who do the two men in the first panel represent? What flag are they waving?
4. How is the land and general environment contrasted in the panels?



RACISM

- Racism refers to the theory that human abilities and attributes are based on race. This was not an unusual belief early in the twentieth century: many Britons believed that their belonging to the 'British race' gave them superior opportunities and abilities. In some ways, 'racism' and 'nationalism' worked together. Many Europeans believed that their higher living standards and longer life expectancy owed something to their nationality or their race—or both.
- As leader of the Nazi Party, Hitler exploited and further intensified racial attitudes among many Germans. In his book *Mein Kampf*, he argued that there is a struggle between different races, the main struggle being that of the German Aryan race against the Jewish race. The Aryan race was a mythological creation, based on selective interpretation of various writings. Distrust of Jewish Europeans was not uncommon in the early twentieth century, a suspicion that Hitler was able to exploit.
- Hitler intensified and promoted anti-Semitism beyond almost anything previously seen. Hitler's race-based policies became more extreme until, in January 1939, he promised the 'destruction of the Jews in Europe.' The 'Final Solution to the Jewish Problem' was applied from 1941, when specific and deliberate acts were applied to exterminate Jews.
- By 1945, six million Jewish Europeans had died at the hands of Nazism.

MILITARISM

- Militarism refers to great or excessive influence on the political process by the military. A militarist state relies on force to achieve its goals.
- Japan in the 1930s had a militaristic government. The Great Depression had seriously affected Japan's economy, and the need for raw materials gave military extremists what they had been looking for—an excuse to invade China's Manchuria region.



SOURCE 4

COMMUNIST AND NAZI FLAGS HANG SIDE BY SIDE IN BERLIN DURING THE RENT STRIKES OF 1932. THE SLOGAN ON THE WALL READS: 'FOOD FIRST, THEN RENT.'

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Does this photograph suggest animosity between people who supported Nazism and people who supported communism? Give evidence from the photograph to support your answer.
2. What circumstances led to these people identifying with either Nazi or communist ideology?
3. We often think of the ideologies of communism and Nazism as very different. Explain how this photograph suggests such an interpretation might be too simplistic.

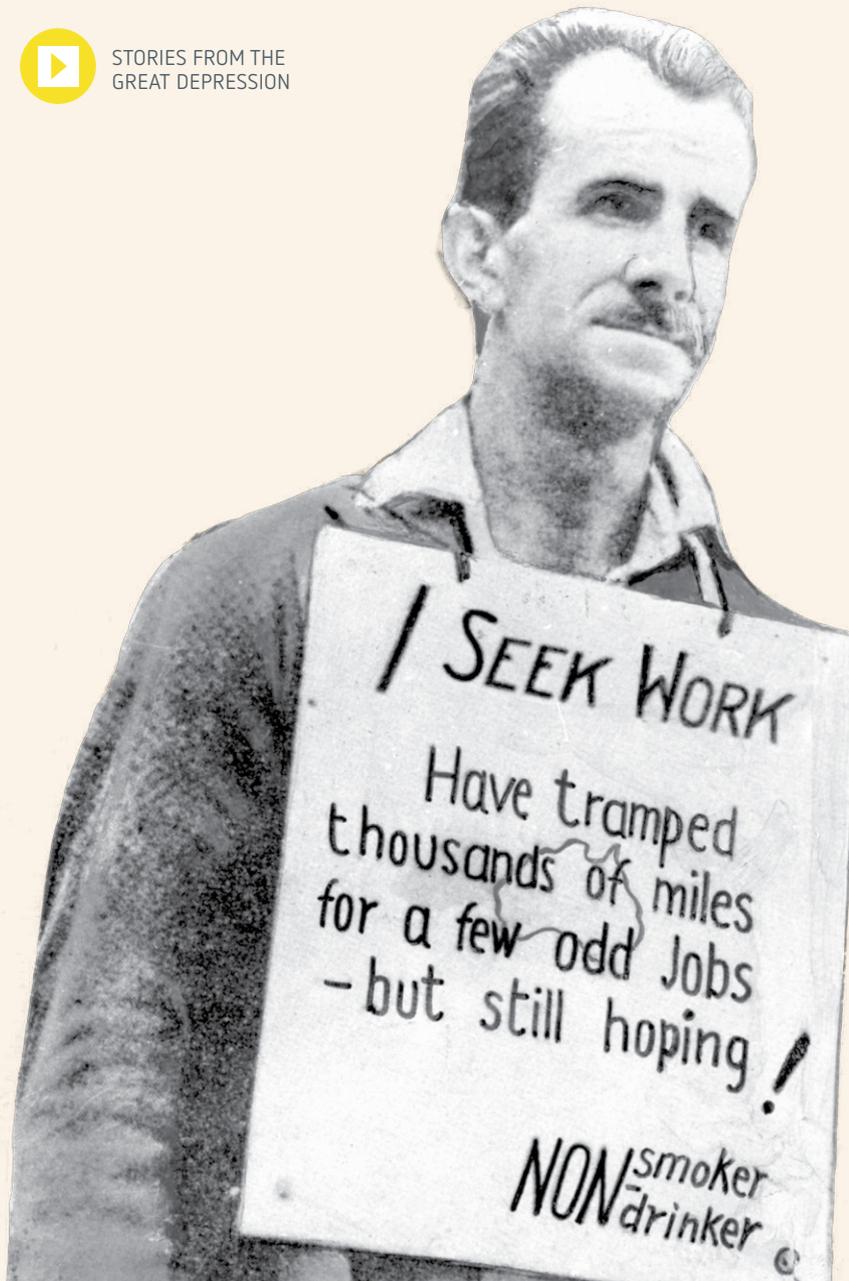
ACTIVITY

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The *Argus newspaper*, 7 March 1931: 'She told of her husband's daily heart-breaking search for work. Two years ago he lost a steady job ... Never since has he been able to get anything better than intermittent work ... In recent months he has walked the streets ... from early morn to setting sun in a fruitless search for a job of any kind or any duration.'



STORIES FROM THE
GREAT DEPRESSION



KEY POINTS

- A common view of the Great Depression is that it began with the collapse of US share prices in October 1929. In reality, business had begun to decline and unemployment increase from 1927.
- The Wall Street collapse on Black Tuesday, 29 October 1929, was a spectacular fall in share prices. People sold their shares for any price, usually much less than they had paid for them.
- Western capitalist countries experienced high unemployment from the late 1920s into the mid-1930s. At the Depression's peak, over 25 per cent of workers were unemployed in some countries. In Germany, nearly 44 per cent of workers were unemployed. Unemployment varied greatly from region to region and across different social groups.
- Each country made various political, economic and social responses to the economic situation. In the USA, President Roosevelt introduced the New Deal in 1933, which gave relief work to unemployed workers and helped build public works. In Germany, Hitler also provided work for the unemployed, often in military developments and rearmament.
- The worst effects of the Depression began to fade from the mid-1930s, as unemployment fell and national economies stabilised. However, the Depression only ended for many countries in 1939 with the coming of World War II.

SOURCE 1

A man searches for work in Sydney, 1932.

KEY TERMS

Bank run or 'run on the bank'

When a large number of customers try to withdraw their deposits from a bank or financial institution at the same time. It creates a spiral of more panicked customers, and may lead to the bank being forced to default on payments.

Deflation

General decrease in the price of goods and an increase in the value of money. This may be associated with higher unemployment, when jobs are scarce and people have less money to spend on goods.

Economic depression

A prolonged and sustained period of low economic activity, with high and rising unemployment and low demand for goods.

Inflation

A general increase in prices and a fall in the purchasing value of money. The opposite of deflation. People may have work, but their wages buy less and less.

Laissez-faire

A government policy of not interfering with or attempting to control the economy.

Quota

A set number or proportion.

Speculation

When people borrow money to buy stockmarket shares, gambling or 'speculating' that the price of shares will rise and they will get a return that covers the original money borrowed plus a profit from the sale of their shares.

Shares

Shares are bought and sold on the stock exchange or sharemarket. Shares give the buyer part-ownership of a company.

OVERVIEW

The world economy often goes through periods of ups and downs, from times when there is strong trade and people are generally better off, to times when there is a recession, with less trade, fewer goods produced and economic hardship. The 1930s Great Depression was a particularly severe decline, with high unemployment and very low levels of trade and manufacturing. The period created images of long queues of workers seeking employment, families evicted from their homes and living in 'shanty towns' and a population that 'went without' food and basic goods.



SOURCE 2

Unemployed men queue outside a Chicago soup kitchen.

These images of the Great Depression were certainly real; however, they do not tell the whole story. Countries suffered economic and social hardship to greater and lesser degrees, and there was great variation among countries. Some social groups suffered greatly, while other social groups, even in hard-hit countries such as America and Australia, experienced no hardship.

The Great Depression is generally dated from 1929, when the New York Stock Exchange 'collapsed', but trade and commerce had begun to shrink by 1927. Most countries experienced their worst effects in 1932 or 1933, when unemployment was highest and there was often a sense of hopelessness. By 1933, governments in most affected countries began to implement specific policies to reverse the dire economic and social circumstances. By 1934, unemployment rates, bank failures and business failures began to decline significantly. Despite this, by 1939 unemployment was often still higher than it had been in the early 1920s, and it was only with the start of World War II, in September 1939, that the economic damage of the Depression was finally over.

1930S CULTURE

Songs, musicals and films from the 1930s were heavily influenced by the social and economic circumstances of the Depression. Films were a relatively inexpensive diversion from personal hardships. The 1933 film *Confidence* included the song 'Brother, can you spare a dime?' *Gold Diggers of 1933* included the songs 'We're in the money' and 'Remember my forgotten man.' A feature of *Gold Diggers*, and several other popular 1930s films, was Busby Berkeley's choreographed colourful displays of dancers and chorus girls. Comedian Charlie Chaplin gained great popularity by playing 'the Tramp.'



↑ Charlie Chaplin.



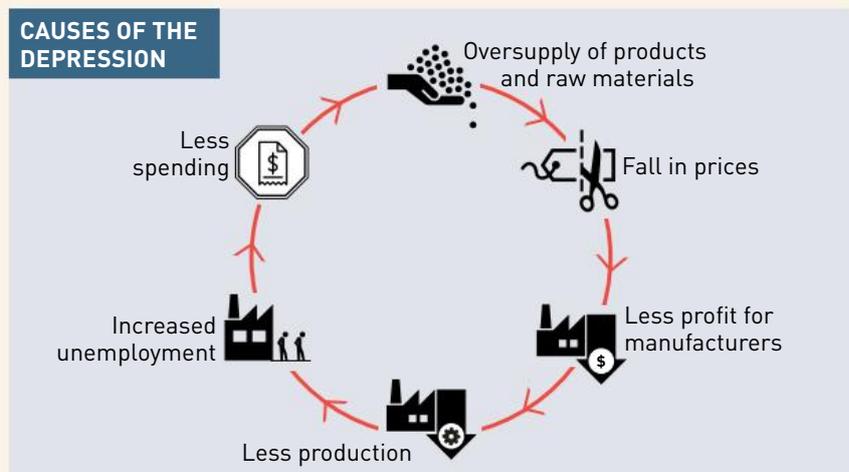
NEW YORK TIMES
COVERAGE OF THE
WALL ST CRASH

CAUSES OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION

There were three long-term (or broad) causes of the 1930s Great Depression. To finance World War I, Britain and Europe borrowed heavily from the USA; in the 1920s, the USA continued to lend money, for example, to Germany to help its reparations payments. This meant that, in the 1920s, whatever happened to the US economy was bound to seriously affect the world economy. The USA was a new financial power and its inexperience meant that it did not foresee problems that would result from the inflated 'bubble' of the stockmarket. At the same time, many countries desperately wanted to return to the economic stability of a pre-war world. But the 'old world' no longer existed: economies such as those of Britain were now more dependent on industrial growth than on agriculture. In the 1920s, agricultural products and raw materials were overproduced, which led to a serious fall in prices for these goods. Governments imposed quotas and tariffs on imported goods to protect their own jobs and industries.

Because of these events, the world economy began to spiral towards a severe depression by about 1927. As the price of goods increased, people bought less and manufacturers reduced their production—thus increasing unemployment. Unemployed people spent even less money than wage-earners. In an effort to help local employment, governments imposed greater tariffs or quotas on imported goods, so every industrialised country found it more difficult to sell their goods. And so it went on.

The USA suffered the same effects. By 1928, the USA started to recall its overseas loans, which meant that countries that had borrowed heavily—including Germany—could no longer fund their recovery. At the same time, the US stockmarket was booming. People borrowed money to speculate and share prices spiralled upwards. But this pattern could only continue if people had confidence that it would continue. In October 1929, panic set in: few people wanted to buy shares, and most wanted to sell. Share prices crashed and millions of people lost their money. Those who had borrowed to speculate could no longer repay their loans. There was a run on the banks, and many people and institutions—including a number of large European banks—defaulted. And so the spiral continued.





SOURCE 3

Former farmer William Swift in his squatter shack in Circleville, Ohio, 1938.

EFFECTS OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The most noticeable effect of the Wall Street collapse and the deflationary economy was the number of unemployed workers. The increase was rapid. In Germany, for example, there were just under two million unemployed workers in 1928, nearly three million in 1929 and over six million in 1932. In the USA, there had been fewer than two million unemployed workers before the stockmarket crash, but twelve million by 1932. Every Western industrialised country suffered similar unemployment rates. By the height of the Depression—in 1932 or 1933 for most countries—national unemployment was generally between one-fifth and one-quarter of the workforce.

There had been economic depressions before, but nothing on this scale. Governments had few ideas about how to repair it. Many believed in a *laissez-faire* approach—that is, do nothing and let the economy repair itself.

In the USA, this was the preferred approach for president Herbert Hoover's administration (1929–1933.) In Australia, Labor premier of New South Wales, Jack Lang, suggested Australia repudiate (refuse to repay) some of its interest on loans from Britain. This created bitter controversy in Australia, between those who believed the Bank of England was cruel to insist on loan repayments when Australian workers and their families suffered, and those who believed the government should reduce its own expenditure rather than default on its loans.

As unemployment continued to rise, wages fell. Families that could not pay rent or mortgages were sometimes evicted, forcing them to move in with relatives or, in the worst cases, to makeshift shanty towns. In Australia, the caves under the Sydney Domain housed unemployed people, families lived in tents or shacks made from discarded materials such as hessian bags, and there were frequent sightings of

IMPACT OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION ON POPULAR ATTITUDES AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

As a result of the unprecedented Great Depression, some people turned to extreme political solutions. In Germany, Hitler and the Nazi Party's promises were very appealing, and after Hitler took power in 1933, unemployment fell rapidly. Even in established democracies such as Britain and Australia, people flirted with political parties of the extreme left or right. In Australia, some unemployed people found socialism appealing, and were encouraged by reports of full employment in the Soviet Union. Residents of shanty towns were often referred to as 'Red Riggers.' Right-wing groups such as the New Guard and the White Army also gained more support. In Britain, Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists, formed in October 1932, initially attracted support.

men 'carrying their swags' as they walked along roads seeking work. In America, makeshift communities were called Hoovervilles, after President Hoover, who presided over the worst depression anyone had experienced.

In the south and west of the USA, many farmers were unable to sell their produce and their incomes became so low they were forced to leave the land. This coincided with

SNAPSHOT

a severe drought. The result was that untended drought-stricken land turned into a dustbowl, and hundreds of thousands of square kilometres of farmland was destroyed.

Another visible result of years of depression was marches of unemployed workers. One of the better known is the Jarrow March in October 1936. Over two hundred unemployed men walked 480 km from Jarrow in north-east England to the British Parliament in London. The marchers carried a petition from the unemployed people of Jarrow, calling for government aid for the poverty stricken town. Although famous—

and well supported by the local communities that provided shelter and food to marchers as they passed through their towns—the Jarrow March was not successful in gaining government aid for Jarrow. There were numerous shorter marches, deputations and demonstrations by unemployed people to raise awareness of their plight and to call for improved support. In America, unemployed men ‘rode the rattler’, jumping on freight trains to travel long distances for no cost. Those who took to the road to try to find work were called ‘hobos’, ‘tramps’ or ‘bums.’ Australians were more likely to use terms such as ‘swagmen’ or ‘bagmen.’

As the Depression deepened, governments were forced to provide relief for long-term unemployed people and their families. In Australia, ‘sustenance’ or ‘susso’ was provided in the form of rations and vouchers. It was strictly means-tested and gave only meagre provisions. Australian governments, including local governments, sometimes provided work on public works programs, such as roadbuilding.

Today, most economists agree that the best way out of an economic depression is to spend money, but this was not a widely recognised solution in the early 1930s. In 1931, economist John Maynard Keynes

↓ SOURCE 4

Ian Turner (ed.), *Cinderella Dressed in Yella*
(Melbourne: Heinemann, 1969), 109.

A POPULAR ‘SKIPPING SONG’ SUNG BY AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN IN THE 1930s

We’re on the susso now,
We can’t afford a cow,
We live in a tent,
We pay no rent,
We’re on the susso now.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. ‘Translate’ this ditty into one or two lines that would be understood by
 - an Australian student today
 - an American in 1934.
2. Would the ditty have been readily understood by most Australians in the 1930s? Explain your response.

↓ SOURCE 5

UNEMPLOYED RELIEF WORKERS BUILDING THE YARRA BOULEVARD IN MELBOURNE

During the Depression, unemployed men worked on construction or landscaping projects so that they would receive sustenance. Melbourne’s Yarra Boulevard was built by sustenance workers, and nicknamed ‘Susso Drive’.



suggested that government spending was the solution, as saving money actually helped put men out of work. At first, this idea was met with incredulity, and few governments implemented policies that reflected Keynes' suggestions.

In the USA, newly elected president Franklin Roosevelt introduced the New Deal as soon as he took office in 1933. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration fed the hungry, and employed men in public works, building roads, schools, playgrounds and airports. The Agricultural Adjustment Act paid farmers to produce less. One of Roosevelt's most impressive and lasting legacies was establishing the Tennessee Valley Authority which provided thousands of jobs for men to build a series of dams to control flooding

in the Tennessee Valley, as well as to provide cheap hydro-electricity.

In most capitalist countries, unemployment began to fall from the mid-1930s, although it rarely fell to the level it had been in the early 1920s. In America, for instance, unemployment peaked in 1932–1933 at over twelve million people; by 1937, it had fallen to eight million. However, it rose again to ten million people, before falling to eight million in 1940. In Australia, unemployment peaked at 30 per cent in 1932, then fell to about 9 per cent of the workforce in 1938. In 1940, one year after Australia entered World War II, the unemployment rate was still 8 per cent, approximately where it had been in 1927. Even the effects of world war took time to lower the unemployment rate.

ACTIVITIES

TIMELINE

Create a simple timeline for key events in the Great Depression, including its causes and effects. Your timeline should include one or two key events for each year from 1918 to 1939.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Why was there bitter difference of opinion about whether Australia should repay interest on its loans to Britain in the 1930s?
2. What were the main differences in how the Hoover and the Roosevelt governments approached unemployment?
3. Drawing on evidence in this snapshot, explain why socialist or fascist political parties appealed to some people during the 1930s.

SOURCE 6

C.B. Scedvin, *A Study of Economic Development and Policy in the 1920s and 1930s. Australia and the Great Depression, Sydney, 1970, p. 46.*

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES IN EIGHT COUNTRIES

COUNTRY	PEAK YEAR	PERCENTAGE	FIVE-YEAR AVERAGE 1930–34
Germany	1932	43.8	31.8
Australia	1932	28.1	23.4
Canada	1933	26.6	20.7
USA	1933	24.9	19.0
Sweden	1933	23.3	18.5
United Kingdom	1932	22.1	19.2
Poland	1935	16.7	12.3
Japan	1932	6.8	5.6

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Which of the countries listed in Source 6 suffered the worst unemployment between 1930 and 1934? Which suffered the least?
2. Explain how the table supports the statement that 1932–1933 was the low point of the Great Depression.

SKILLS: PERSPECTIVES

When interviewed about their experiences in the Great Depression, many older Australians describe the times as 'good in some ways.' What positive experiences might people have taken from the Great Depression?

SKILLS: HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Historian Geoffrey Blainey refers to the stockmarket crash of October 1929 as 'the fire-bell' of the Great Depression. Explain what he means and why he chose that term to describe the events.

CHAPTER

2

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

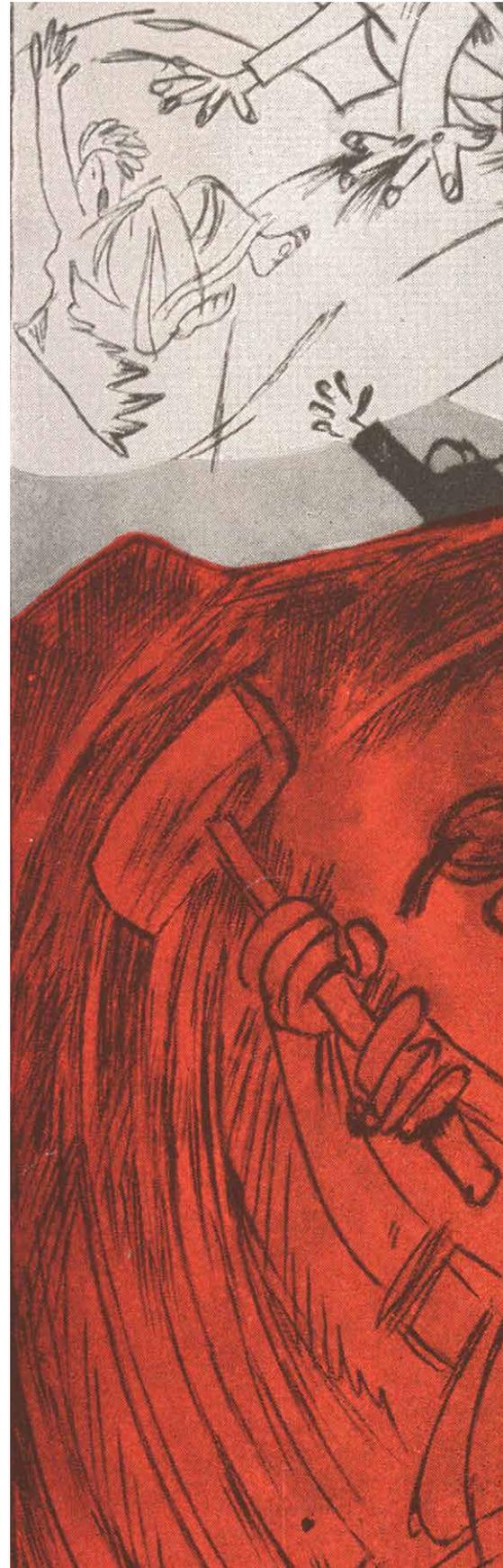
'Let the ruling class tremble at a Communist Revolution.'

KARL MARX, 1848.

INTRODUCTION

The Russian Revolution saw the complete reorganisation of the way life had been lived in Russia for centuries. Ruled by Tsar Nicholas II (of the Romanov dynasty) with absolute power, Russia was the largest country in the world. The rich minority enjoyed privilege and high social status, while the peasant majority endured a miserable existence, their lives at the mercy of each year's harvest or the cycle of plague and disease that routinely ravaged the country. As the world changed and advanced around it, Russia seemed stuck in its old ways. While most European countries were rapidly industrialising, the Russian economy relied mainly on subsistence farming.

Poor leadership, the onset of World War I, severe economic problems and political opposition from all sides saw Russia slide into war and industrial unrest, which saw a revolution of values and politics. In 1917, the Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, brought to Russia the idea of 'revolution from below' and a classless society. Years of destructive civil war left millions of people dead and an economy reeling from one disaster to another. The poor seemed to be no better off than they had been under the tsar. Ultimately, the revolution transformed Russia from a decaying monarchist backwater into an industrialised communist state—and one of the world's great superpowers—but at great human cost.





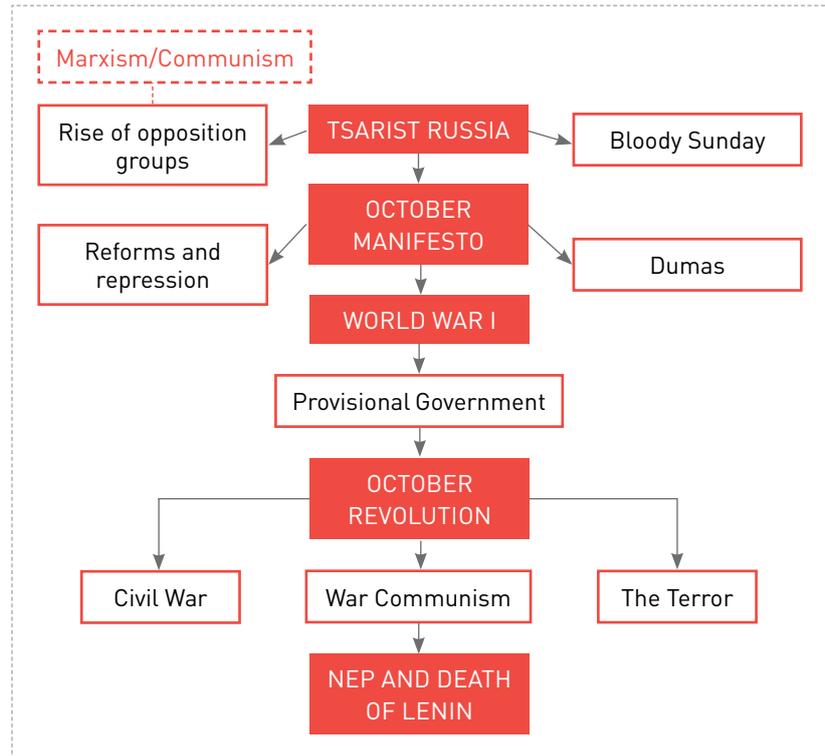
'The Proletarians' Hammer in Action', October 1917.

OVERVIEW

KEY QUESTIONS

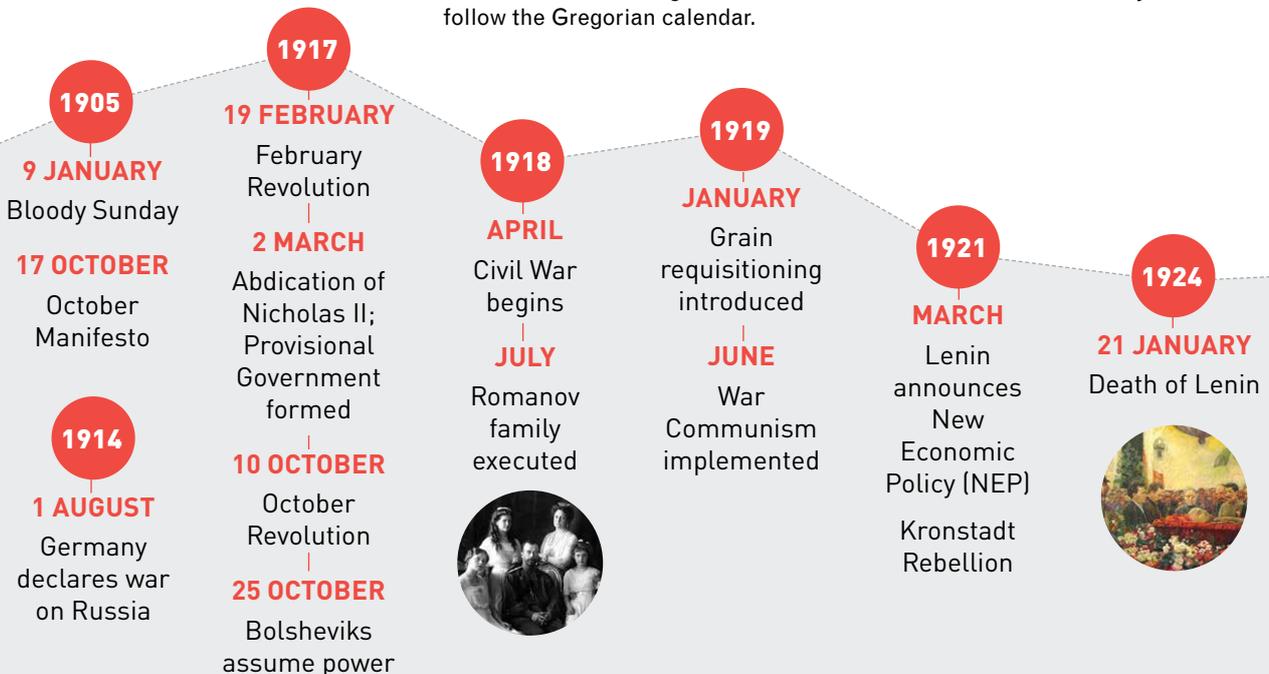
- What were the political, economic and social problems faced by Tsar Nicholas II throughout his rule?
- How did World War I affect the rule of Tsar Nicholas II and life in Russia?
- What alternative political groups rose up to challenge the tsar?
- Why did the revolutions of February and October 1917 happen?
- How did the Bolsheviks consolidate their power between 1918 and 1922?

IN THIS CHAPTER



KEY EVENTS

A word about dates: Until 1918 Russia used the Julian calendar, which was 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar used in the Western world. The Bolshevik government adopted the Gregorian calendar on 24 January 1918. In this chapter we have used the dates that applied in Russia at the time of the event. Thus, the 'October Revolution' is listed as such, even though it occurred in November according to the rest of the world. Dates after February 1918 follow the Gregorian calendar.



KEY PLAYERS

TSAR NICHOLAS II (1868–1918)

- Nicholas Alexandrovich Romanov—tsar of Russia from 1894 until 1917.
- Revolutions, economic disaster, plots, wars and the rising revolutionary tide plagued his rule.
- Abdicated in March 1917; brutally executed in 1918.



ALEXANDER KERENSKY (1881–1970)

- Second and final prime minister of the Provisional Government.
- A gifted speaker, he used his broad popularity to bridge the gap between the government and the revolutionaries, but failed to fulfil the promises he had made to the Russian people.
- Went into hiding after the October Revolution, then tried to get Western powers to intervene in Russia—without success.

VLADIMIR LENIN (1870–1924)

- Born Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov into a wealthy family.
- His actions as a revolutionary saw him exiled to Siberia in 1897; freed in 1900, he then travelled throughout Europe, inciting dissent and promoting his version of Marxist ideas.
- On his return to Russia in 1917 he played a vital role in undermining the Provisional Government and inspiring the Bolsheviks.
- After the successful October Revolution, Lenin continued to lead the Bolsheviks, and the new Soviet Union, until his death in 1924.



LEON TROTSKY (1879–1940)

- Born Lev Bronstein into a wealthy Jewish farming family.
- A skilled organiser, dynamic speaker and talented writer, he played a key role in the October Revolution and subsequent events.
- Led the Red Army to victory in the Civil War.
- Set to take over as leader of the Soviet Union upon Lenin's death, Trotsky was outmanoeuvred by Stalin, expelled from the Communist Party in 1928 and exiled from the Soviet Union in 1929. He was executed in Mexico in 1940 by Stalin's agents.

KEY TERMS

BOLSHEVIKS

A small revolutionary group of communists led by Lenin; known as the Reds.

DUMA

The Russian parliament, established in 1905.

MENSHEVIKS

A moderate communist group opposed to the Bolsheviks.

NEP

The New Economic Policy, designed to reboot the Russian economy after the Civil War.

PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

The temporary government established to administer Russia after the abdication of the Tsar.

REVOLUTION

To drastically overthrow or replace one system of government or society for another.

SOVIET

A council organised by industrial workers to represent their interests.

WAR COMMUNISM

A series of Bolshevik policies aimed at controlling the Russian economy in order to win the Civil War.

HISTORICAL INQUIRY: CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE

Some historians have argued that the success of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in establishing the world's first communist state was the result of a combination of factors, such as poor leadership by Tsar Nicholas II and the hardships endured by the people during World War I. Others claim a revolution was inevitable according to Marx's views of history, and that Lenin's leadership was a key element in attracting support for the new regime. As you read through this chapter, develop a response to **one** of the following questions:

1. Was the success of the Bolsheviks largely due to circumstances, such as World War I and the poor leadership of Tsar Nicholas II, or primarily due to the attractiveness of communism?
2. Were the Bolsheviks interested in establishing a true communist state, or were they more concerned with gaining power and then maintaining it?



TSARIST RUSSIA

TSAR NICHOLAS II, OCTOBER 1894: ‘What is going to happen to me and all of Russia? I am not prepared to be a Tsar. I never wanted to become one. I know nothing of the business of ruling.’

It would be a mistake to study the Russian Revolution without first examining the events that led up to 1917. The seeds of revolution had been planted as early as the previous century. Nicholas Romanov was thrust into the position of tsar upon the unexpected death of his father, Alexander III, in 1894. Often described as a charming but weak man, Romanov was not prepared for the enormity of the task in front of him. He inherited the rule of Russia—the world’s largest country—at a time when it was undergoing significant social and economic change.

DID YOU KNOW?

At an 1896 festival celebrating the coronation of Tsar Nicholas II, over 1300 peasants were crushed to death in a stampede for free food and drink—a bad omen for the new emperor.

TSAR NICHOLAS II

Nicholas Romanov was a contradiction: a man who did not want to rule, understood his own unpreparedness, yet still held strongly to the principle of autocracy. Historians hold wildly differing views about Nicholas and his suitability as a leader. Orlando Figes has said that Romanov’s mild temperament, good memory and sense of decorum would have made him an excellent constitutional monarch—but Russia was not a constitutional monarchy; it was ruled by an autocrat who made the rules.¹ Trotsky, perhaps predictably, summed up Romanov as ‘dim, equable, well-bred ... and cruel.’² Romanov’s own tutor claimed that he would stick ‘... to his insignificant, petty point of view.’³ He was an especially devout man, and loved his family dearly. His own diaries and letters

are full of evidence of his devotion to his family, yet a complete indifference to the matters of state. He seemed to mourn the loss of the family dog more than the loss of life on Bloody Sunday in 1905. He could be charming and diplomatic, endearing himself to those around him, but then turn into a vicious tyrant behind the backs of those same people. Some of Romanov’s odd foibles, such as an obsession with looking after his own filing, right down to licking the flaps of all of his envelopes, was overshadowed by his anti-Semitism, his ruthless crushing of any opposition, and his unhealthy fascination with military life.

▼ SOURCE 2.01

Tsar Nicholas II.



THE RISE OF OPPOSITION GROUPS

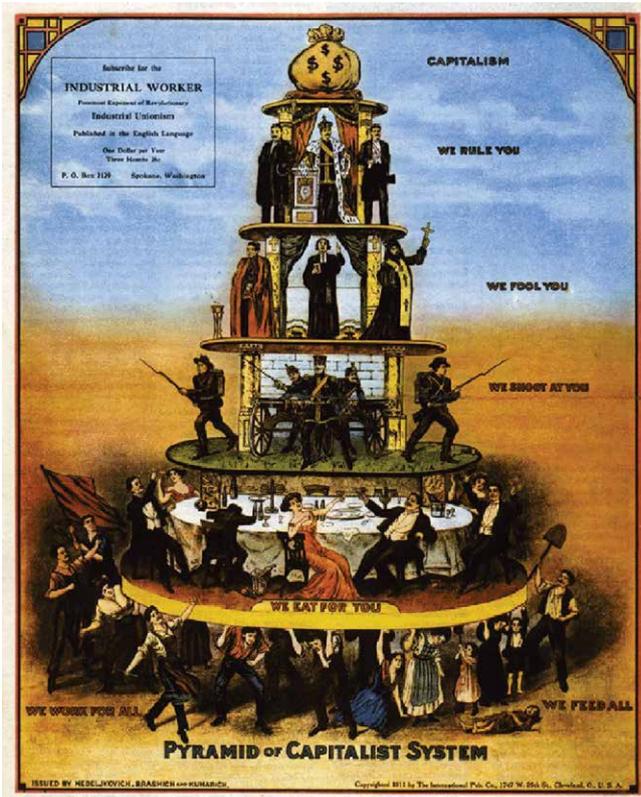
Tsar Nicholas II’s ban on political criticism, strikes and demonstrations, combined with heavy censorship of the media and tough penalties for anyone who dared to raise their voice against the government, led to the formation and development of a number of small, underground opposition groups. Many of these groups formed at the universities, where dangerous ideas could be shared and discussed secretly. Some of the more significant groups are detailed in the table on the next page.

SOURCE 2.02

The Capitalist Pyramid, original Marxist image, 1900.

The labels read (clockwise, from top):

- CAPITALISM
- WE RULE YOU
- WE FOOL YOU
- WE SHOOT AT YOU
- WE FEED ALL
- WE EAT FOR YOU
- WE WORK FOR ALL



SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What social groups are represented in the image?
2. What is the image saying about the effects of capitalism on society?
3. How does the image convey the inequalities present in Russian society?
4. Why might the idea of communism appeal to people on the bottom tier of the pyramid?

ACTIVITY

KEY OPPOSITION GROUPS

LEFT-WING RADICALS (MARXISTS)				RIGHT-WING MODERATES (LIBERALS)	
SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (SDS)		SOCIAL REVOLUTIONARIES (SRS)		KADETS	OCTOBRISTS
BOLSHEVIKS	MENSHEVIKS	LEFT SRS	RIGHT SRS		
Supported by industrial urban workers	Supported by industrial urban workers	Supported by the peasants	Supported by the peasants	Supported by the professional class, landowners and big business	Supported by wealthy, pro-tsar industrialists
Policies: A centralised party should lead workers and peasants in an overthrow of the tsar: a proletarian revolution	Policies: The middle class should lead a bourgeoisie revolution in an overthrow of the tsar, controlled by an open democratic government	Policies: Use terror tactics and assassinations of government officials to roll out radical land reforms, taking the land from the upper classes and distributing it to the peasants	Policies: Use persuasion and negotiation to roll out radical land reforms, taking the land from the upper classes and distributing it to the peasants	Develop a constitutional monarchy, retaining the tsar but increasing free speech, freedom of the press, education and a just legal system	Supporters of the 1905 October Manifesto and the Duma, with elected officials and a powerful tsar, focusing on legislative reforms to improve Russia

KARL MARX AND THE STAGES OF HISTORY

COMMUNIST MANIFESTO: ‘Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!’

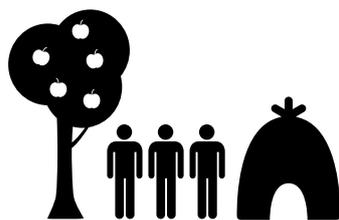
In 1848, the German philosopher Karl Marx, together with Friedrich Engels, wrote the *Communist Manifesto* in response to the horrendous conditions experienced by workers in factories. They blamed industrial capitalism for the woes of the working class. They came up with a solution to the problem: a new social system that would eventually be known as communism.

Marx believed that all history was a ‘history of class struggles.’ He saw consistent themes throughout history: the oppressors always owned the means of production (land, natural resources

and money), while the oppressed relied on their oppressors for survival. Marx called these two groups the *bourgeoisie* (the oppressors) and the *proletariat* (the oppressed). Marx saw society splitting into these two hostile camps: a growing divide between the bourgeoisie middle/upper class and the proletariat working class. In Marx’s view, this struggle had just one, inevitable outcome—a revolution, in which the proletariat would overthrow the bourgeoisie. The economic differences that created separate social classes would be abolished, with the result being a classless utopia. Marx saw the road to revolution in five stages.

PRIMITIVE COMMUNISM

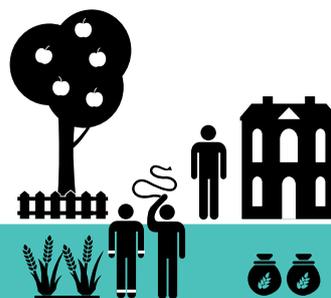
1 Prehistoric human hunter-gatherers live in small groups. There is no concept of leadership. Everyone is roughly equal in standing and there is no exploitation. In this first stage, humans are only concerned with survival, and only gradually begin to bend nature to its will, with discoveries like fire and basic agricultural principles. This forms the basis of future concepts such as ownership of private property and profit.



STAGE 1

SLAVERY

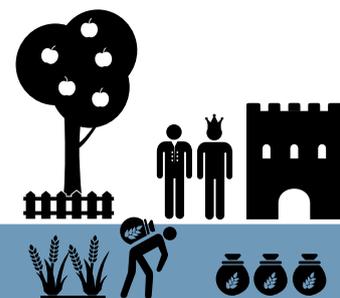
2 In this stage we see the beginning of a class-based society, and the first appearance of personal property. The slave-owning class owns the land and rules the slaves, using the state as a mechanism to enforce control. Agricultural practices develop to support a large population. This stage is exemplified by ancient Egypt and ancient Rome.



STAGE 2

FEUDALISM

3 The monarch (king, tsar) and a small number of wealthy landowners exploit the peasants, who work the land to which they are bound. This stage sees the rise of a merchant class, who want to grow their businesses, which is held back by a primary focus on agriculture. Over time they seize power and the means of production from the monarch and the nobles in a bourgeoisie revolution, as in the 1789 French Revolution.



STAGE 3

CAPITALISM GAME

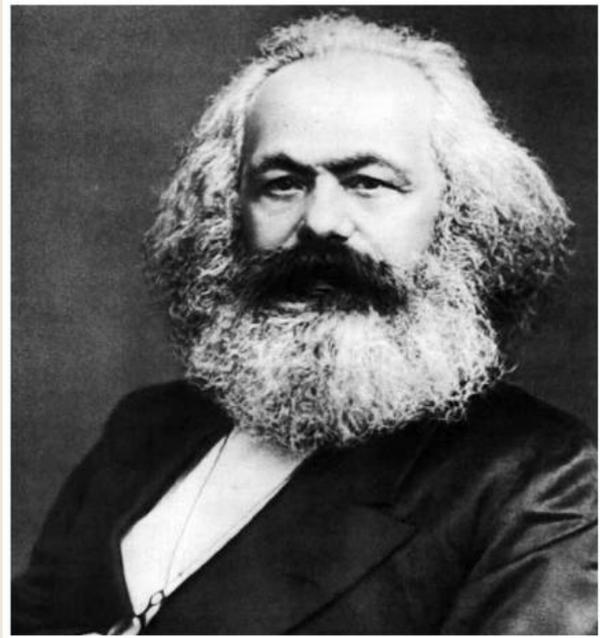
ACTIVITY

Get into pairs and designate one person as rich and one person as poor. Share out some lollies unevenly to reflect social inequalities. Play a few games of Paper Rock Scissors, with the loser of each game handing over one of their lollies until one person runs out of lollies.

What were the results across the class? Did the poor players stay poor or lose everything? What were the overall class results? Was the game unfair to the poor?

Write a paragraph explaining the extent to which this game illustrates the basic principles of capitalism, including private ownership, exploitation and inequalities.

Do you think, as Marx did, that capitalism provides a breeding ground for revolutionary ideas such as socialism?



↑ Karl Marx.

CAPITALISM

4 After the bourgeoisie revolution, the means of production are no longer owned by a monarch, but by private businesses. The bourgeoisie who own the factories, mines and banks invest heavily in them in order to maximise profits. To do this, they must exploit the workers—the proletariat. Marx believed that the capitalist drive for profit above all else would see the oppressed workers develop a class consciousness. This state of affairs inevitably leads to a proletarian revolution, in which the working class rises up and overthrows their capitalist bourgeoisie masters.



STAGE 4

SOCIALISM

5 If the working class is successful in overthrowing the capitalist bourgeoisie, it moves from class consciousness to revolutionary consciousness. Characteristics of socialism include a decentralised planned economy, common ownership of property, and a form of democracy called 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' in place to ensure the old capitalists do not rise up again. Marx believed society would make decisions democratically based on what was needed. It is understood that the vestiges of capitalism would take some time to disappear, requiring strong revolutionary leaders who ensure history progresses smoothly to the final stage.



STAGE 5

COMMUNISM

6 The final stage of history is a classless utopia—communism in its purest form. A stateless, classless, propertyless society. There will be no political power and no big business. Marx expected communism would spread around the entire world. The masses make decisions for the benefit of the masses. This is when real human society begins—everything that has gone before has been a prelude. At the turn of the century, with living and working conditions for Russia's millions of workers and peasants so horrendous and primitive, it is easy to see why the ideas of Karl Marx began to attract the attention of men like Vladimir Lenin.



STAGE 6

1905

FATHER GEORGE GAPON, PETITION TO NICHOLAS II, 9 JANUARY 1905: 'We are impoverished and oppressed, unbearable work is imposed upon us; we are despised and not recognised as human beings. We are treated as slaves, who must bear their fate and be silent.'

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1906 Father Gapon was murdered by SR Party assassins, after being suspected of spying on exiled revolutionaries for the Okhrana.



While it is the 1917 Russian Revolution that is the most noted, there was already considerable unrest in Russia by 1905. On top of the widespread hunger and division in Russian society, the loss to Japan in the 1904–05 Russo-Japanese War had severely dented the pride of Europe's largest country. Tsar Nicholas II had proved to be a poor leader, seemingly unable or unwilling to act to improve the lives of his people. Whenever there was resistance to his rule, he refused to deal with the problem directly; instead, he sent in security forces to sort things out. This usually resulted in violent clashes, which further frustrated his people. Such action only encouraged the growing political unrest throughout the country.

The year 1905 brought the most extreme examples of Nicholas II's perceived indifference, brutality and weakness. On 7 January, a huge strike took place at the Putilov steel works in response to the sacking of four workers. Overseen by the pro-tsar yet radical Father Gapon, over 100 000 workers made a number of demands, including:

- an 8-hour day and freedom to organise trade unions
- improved working conditions, free medical aid, and higher wages for women workers
- elections to be held for a constituent assembly by universal, equal and secret suffrage
- freedom of speech, press, association and religion
- an end to the war with Japan.

Gapon, encouraged by the radical workers involved in the strike, organised a petition to be presented to Tsar Nicholas II. On Sunday 9 January, a crowd of over 100 000 people marched peacefully through the centre of St Petersburg to deliver a petition to the tsar. The security forces' solution was to open fire on the crowd, causing panic and a stampede in which many were trampled. Estimates of the death toll range from two hundred people to a few thousand, including women and children. This day became known as 'Bloody Sunday'. Although the tsar was absent and unaware of the massacre until afterwards, this did nothing to appease his angry subjects. Continuing strikes, protests and mutinies within the armed forces meant that Tsar Nicholas II had to act fast to restore his credibility as the leader of the Russian people.

CAUSES OF THE 1905 REVOLUTION

While it was the protest and subsequent repression of Bloody Sunday that sparked the 1905 Revolution, many long- and short-term factors had combined to create a revolutionary situation.

- An international recession beginning in 1900 had a devastating effect on all areas of the Russian economy. The gains that had been made under Finance Minister Sergei Witte's modernisation were lost as rising unemployment and falling wages took their toll on the poor working class.
- The rapid industrialisation of the Russian economy, particularly in heavy industries, had achieved stunning results, but it was the investors—who were mainly from overseas—who benefited. The workers themselves had to endure days of up to 16 hours, working in dangerous and harsh conditions. Laws to protect children from exploitation were passed during the 1880s, but these were not enforced properly. Strikes, although banned, started to become more frequent and significant.
- The growth of major cities such as St Petersburg and Moscow was so fast that infrastructure development for the increasing populations lagged behind. Families lived in crowded, unsanitary conditions. The water in major cities was undrinkable because of the industrial waste that was pumped into the river systems each day.
- Defeat in the 1904–05 Russo-Japanese War had left the nation reeling. Russia had gone into the war assuming victory would come easily, due to their belief in European superiority. The Russian leadership had not accounted for Japan's own modernisation efforts. The Black Sea Fleet sailed halfway around the world to deal with the Japanese nuisance, only to see the bulk of their ships sent to the bottom of the sea in a matter of hours at the Battle of Tsushima. The old idea of European superiority over Asia had been crushed.
- Tsar Nicholas II's style of leadership had worn his people down. Apart from the loss of prestige associated with the loss to Japan, his policy of forced 'Russification' of significant minority groups led to feelings of ill will throughout the country. This policy went against the rising tide of nationalism that was being felt all across Europe. Millions of Jews, Muslims, Catholics and Lutherans also felt discriminated against. The tsar was opposed by workers, students, peasants, ethnic and religious minorities and alternative political groups. All opposition was handled ruthlessly by Tsar Nicholas II, who used his secret police (the Okhrana), loyal Cossacks and the army to repress any dissent.
- A number of revolutionary political groups had sprung up amidst the discontent, spreading their ideas among the poor and generally causing havoc. Together, these groups promoted revolution, supported trade unions, engaged in terror tactics and assassinations, and demanded more freedoms and rights.



SOURCE 2.03

Bloody Sunday
in St Petersburg.

ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What sort of leader was Tsar Nicholas II?
2. Why did Bloody Sunday happen?
3. Describe the key characteristics of capitalism, socialism and communism.

FATHER GAPON'S ACCOUNT OF THE EVENTS OF BLOODY SUNDAY

We were not more than thirty yards from the soldiers ... when suddenly, without any warning and without a moment's delay, was heard the dry crack of many rifle-shots. I was informed later on that a bugle was blown, but we could not hear it above the singing, and even if we had heard it we should not have known what it meant.

Vasiliev, with whom I was walking hand in hand, suddenly left hold of my arm and sank upon the snow. One of the workmen who carried the banners fell also. Immediately one of the two police officers to whom I had referred shouted out, 'What are you doing? How dare you fire upon the portrait of the Tsar?' This, of course, had no effect, and both he and the other officer were shot down ...

I turned rapidly to the crowd and shouted to them to lie down, and I also stretched myself out upon the ground. As we lay thus another volley was fired, and another, and yet another, till it seemed as though the shooting was continuous. The crowd first kneeled and then lay flat down, hiding their heads from the rain of bullets, while the rear rows of the procession began to run away. The smoke of the fire lay before us like a thin cloud, and I felt it stiflingly in my throat ...

A little boy of ten years, who was carrying a church lantern, fell pierced by a bullet, but still held the lantern tightly and tried to rise again,

when another shot struck him down. Both the smiths who had guarded me were killed, as well as all those who were carrying the icons and banners; and all these emblems now lay scattered on the snow. The soldiers were actually shooting into the courtyards of the adjoining houses, where the crowd tried to find refuge and, as I learned afterwards, bullets even struck persons inside, through the windows.

At last the firing ceased. I stood up with a few others who remained uninjured and looked down at the bodies that lay prostrate around me. I cried to them, 'Stand up!' But they lay still. I could not at first understand. Why did they lie there? I looked again, and saw that their arms were stretched out lifelessly, and I saw the scarlet stain of blood upon the snow. Then I understood. It was horrible. And my Vasiliev lay dead at my feet.

Horror crept into my heart. The thought flashed through my mind, 'And this is the work of our Little Father, the Tsar.' Perhaps this anger saved me, for now I knew in very truth that a new chapter was opened in the book of the history of our people. I stood up, and a little group of workmen gathered round me again. Looking backward, I saw that our line, though still stretching away into the distance, was broken and that many of the people were fleeing. It was in vain that I called to them, and in a moment I stood there, the centre of a few scores of men, trembling with indignation amid the broken ruins of our movement.

📌 SOURCE 2.04

Georgei Gapon, The Story of My Life (London: Chapman & Hall, 1906)

➔ SOURCE 2.05

Cited in George Vernadsky, ed., A Source Book for Russian History From Early Times to 1917, vol. 1-3 (London: Yale University Press, 1972), 743.

➔ SOURCE 2.06

GOVERNMENT REPORT ON BLOODY SUNDAY

The fanatical preaching of the priest Gapon, forgetful of the sanctity of his calling, and the criminal agitation of persons of evil intent excited the workers to such an extent that on January 9 they began heading in great throngs toward the center of the city. In some places bloody clashes took place between them and the troops, in consequence of the stubborn refusal of the crowd to obey the command to disperse, and sometimes even in consequence of attacks upon the troops.

TSAR NICHOLAS II, DIARY ENTRY, 22 JANUARY 1917

A painful day. There have been serious disorders in St. Petersburg because workmen wanted to come up to the Winter Palace. Troops had to open fire in several places in the city; there were many killed and wounded. God, how painful and sad.

ACTIVITY

SKILLS: PERSPECTIVES

1. How do the three accounts of Bloody Sunday differ? Give examples of the language used to convey the different perspectives.
2. Find out more about Father Gapon. Who was he, and why did he speak so forthrightly on behalf of the workers?
3. In your view, who was most responsible for the Bloody Sunday massacre: Father Gapon, or the government?

CONSEQUENCES OF THE 1905 REVOLUTION

1. STRIKES

As news of the events of Bloody Sunday spread throughout Russia, chaos ensued. Strikes, riots, demonstrations and acts of terrorism became commonplace. The bond between Tsar Nicholas II and his people had been broken.

2. MUTINY

With Russia teetering on the brink of full-scale revolution, Tsar Nicholas II needed the support of his armed forces. On 14 June, the worst possible outcome for the tsar occurred: the crew of Russian battleship *Potemkin* mutinied. Morale was already low on the ship, but after being served rotten meat, the crew complained, leading to an officer shooting a sailor. The tsar reacted harshly, but civilians were once again caught in the crossfire, with nearly 2000 people killed in Odessa.



3. SOVIETS

In October 1905, the Mensheviks became involved in a spreading general strike. In a meeting to decide the next step in the strike, the St Petersburg soviet (a form of local council) was formed as an alternative government. While Russia suffered without electricity, telephones or running water, soviets began to form all over Russia.

4. ATTEMPTS AT REFORM

Tsar Nicholas II gave in—his attempts to suppress the discontent with force had no effect on the people. His trusted advisor, Witte, suggested two solutions: increase the bloodshed or introduce reforms. Under pressure from all sides, and with Witte enthusiastically promoting wide-ranging reform, Tsar Nicholas II issued the October Manifesto.

DID YOU KNOW?

Many of the early revolutionaries adopted aliases to protect themselves and their families from the secret police. Even the famous names 'Lenin' and 'Trotsky' were pseudonyms.

SOURCE 2.07

The *Potemkin* mutiny was later turned into the movie *Battleship Potemkin*.

A constitution was written and the *duma*, a parliament of elected officials, was established. It was agreed in principle that people of all classes could vote in the elections, and that the tsar would have his power limited.

RETURN TO AUTOCRACY

▼ SOURCE 2.08

Pyotr Stolypin.

PYOTR STOLYPIN, 1906: 'Suppression first and then, and only then, reform.'



Tsar Nicholas II survived the events of 1905. He had given the liberals what they wanted—a constitution, freedom of speech, the *duma*. The promise of a *duma* seemed to have pleased the majority of the people to the extent that the radicals lost support and the tsar took the opportunity to crush his opposition, rounding up revolutionary leaders and sending them off to the Gulags in Siberia. Unsettled by the freedom and power being wielded by the *dumas*, Tsar Nicholas II issued the Fundamental Laws in 1906, a move designed to restore his power. He could veto anything the *duma* wanted to do, appointed half the members of the State Council (the upper house of the *duma*) and appointed his own ministers. He also gave himself control of the army and foreign policy. He had managed to stave off revolution through a combination of repression and reform. While the *duma* proved too radical for the tsar's liking, it was a step towards Russia becoming a functioning democracy. The economy began to prosper, and the peasants were appeased to an extent by prime minister Pyotr Stolypin's land reforms. Over the next few years, the tsar restored much of his power. World War I, however, was to change everything.

ACTIVITY

SKILLS: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

The October Manifesto promised so much—but did life change for the better, or for worse? Create a table like the one shown below and consider what life was like before the events of Bloody Sunday, the hope offered by the tsar in the October Manifesto, and what happened afterwards. Write a paragraph summarising your conclusion.

	Continuities	Changes
Politics		
Law and order		
Agriculture—farm life		
Industry—city life		

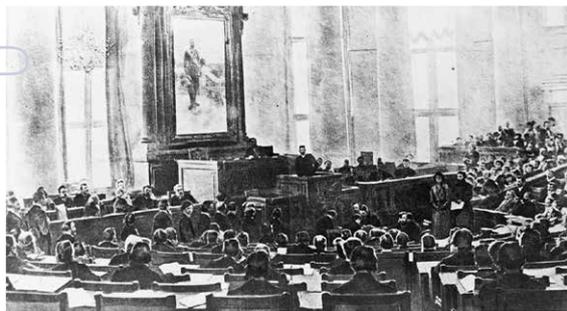
LIMITED REFORMS

Law and Order

After Bloody Sunday, unrest spread throughout Russia. Tsar Nicholas II responded by appointing Pyotr Stolypin as prime minister to restore law and order. While urban areas had quickly returned to normal, the countryside remained unsettled. Stolypin had a reputation for tough tactics, and this was reinforced by the establishment of military courts that could try a person on the spot and pass a death sentence. The Okhrana remained active, and all Russians were required to carry internal passports and register with the police when travelling. The freedom of speech and the press that had been granted in 1905 was gradually curtailed, with fines and censorship dealt out to newspapers that criticised the government.

The Dumas

The First Duma sounded good in theory, but in reality it was extremely limited. It could not pass laws or appoint ministers, nor could it control finance or national defence. Elections were seen as unfair—there was one duma representative for every 2000 nobles, but just one for every 90 000 workers. In spite of these limitations, the early dumas demanded radical changes, including more land for peasants, free education and more civil rights. Stolypin responded by reorganising the Third Duma to grant more representation to the wealthy and noble classes. The Third Duma persisted with a reform agenda, and managed to make a number of changes between 1907–1912, including the provision of accident insurance for workers. The Fourth Duma had no opportunity to make an impact due to the onset of World War I.



Agriculture

Peasants were allowed to buy strips of land and combine them together to make plots. This was to encourage more efficient and productive farming. The year 1913 saw a record harvest. Some peasant farmers did so well out of this they became Kulaks—wealthy land-owning peasants. The government introduced bank loans to enable peasants to buy land. Peasants who sold their land became even poorer labourers wandering the countryside looking for work.

▼ SOURCE 2.09

Russian peasants.



Industry

There was an industrial boom in Russia between 1906–1914. Output increased 100 per cent, making Russia the largest producer of coal and iron in the world. Factories began to use mass production techniques and Russia's oilfields were second only to those in the United States. Workers gained little from this boom, and wages were as low as they had been in 1903. Prices of basic goods rose and working conditions remained poor. Workers who dared to strike faced harsh treatment from the military, and many were killed.

◀ SOURCE 2.10

Duma in session, 1917.



SOURCE 2.11

Tsarina Alexandra.

DID YOU KNOW?

Russian military commanders communicated with each other over unprotected radio channels, providing the German codebreakers with early and detailed plans of attacks.

SOURCE 2.12

Ian F. W. Beckett, *The Great War: 1914–1918* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 76.

In 1906, strikes broke out almost everywhere; there were several attempts on the lives of members of the Imperial Family and of high government officials. The tsar was forced to compromise and give the country a constitutional government by establishing the *duma*. Tsarina Alexandra violently opposed this; she did not realise the seriousness of the situation, and would not admit that there was no other solution.

The First *Duma* opened on 27 April 1906. This was a moment of great anxiety for all, as everyone knew the *duma* was a two-edged sword that could prove either helpful or disastrous to Russia, according to the course of events.

If all members of the *duma* had been ‘loyal’ Russians the Assembly might have done great service to the government, but certain ‘questionable’ elements—among which were many Jews—made it a hotbed of revolutionary ideas.

WORLD WAR I

TSAR NICHOLAS II IN A LETTER TO TSARINA ALEXANDRA, 7 JULY 1915: ‘If we should have three days of serious fighting we might run out of ammunition altogether... It is understood, of course, that what I say is strictly for you only. Please do not say a word of this to anyone.’

World War I was catastrophic for almost all countries involved, but for Russia it was especially devastating. Apart from the loss of millions of men, huge swathes of territory and natural resources, it was the event that finally, if indirectly, brought centuries of tsarist rule to an end. As in most countries, the declaration of war was greeted positively, as most Russians were caught up in the old belief that war was good for nations. Many of the discontent socialists were happy to put aside ideological differences and support the tsar’s defence of Russian territory.⁴ Lenin, however, held the view that the best outcome for Russia was a defeat, which would hopefully provoke a civil war and revolution—a view that saw all known Bolsheviks detained for the duration of the war.⁵

Russia’s army had traditionally been a symbol of pride for the nation, and was the largest standing force in Europe at the start of World War I, numbering over a million men. However, a series of losses from the Crimean War during the 1860s through to the disaster of the 1904–05 Russo-Japanese War had damaged its reputation as an effective fighting force. When the Russian army eventually came up against the German forces, they were found to be sadly lacking tactically and technologically. While they achieved early success against the Austro-Hungarian forces, within weeks, Russia suffered a number of terrible defeats, particularly at Tannenberg and the Masurian Lakes. The combined statistical losses were overwhelming.

RUSSIAN LOSSES AT THE BATTLES OF TANNENBERG AND MASURIAN LAKES, AUGUST–SEPTEMBER 1914

	CASUALTIES	CAPTURED
Tannenberg	50 000–70 000	92 000
Masurian Lakes	70 000	70 000



As a result of such massive early defeats, Tsar Nicholas II himself took command of the army by August 1915. In a decision that was heavily criticised at the time, Nicholas created a situation in which subsequent military failures would be directly linked to him and his leadership. General Brusilov claimed that the tsar 'knew next to nothing about military matters'.⁶

↑ SOURCE 2.13

15,000 Russian prisoners were taken by the German army in 1914.

RODZIANKO LETTER TO TSAR NICHOLAS II, 1915

The nation longs for and impatiently awaits that authority which will be capable of instilling confidence and leading our native land onto the path of victory. Yet at such a time, Your Majesty, you decide to remove the supreme commander-in-chief, whom the Russian people still trusts absolutely. The people must interpret your move as one inspired by the Germans around you, who are identified in the minds of the people with our enemies and with treason to the Russian cause.

Your Majesty's decision will appear to the people to be a confession of the hopelessness of the situation and of the chaos that has invaded the administration.

Sire! The situation will be even worse if the army, deprived of a leader enjoying its complete confidence, loses courage.

In this event, defeat is inevitable, and within the country revolution and anarchy will then inevitably break out, sweeping everything from their path.

Your Majesty! Before it is too late, revoke your decision, no matter how hard it may be for you.

[...]

The President of the State Duma

Mikhail Rodzianko

↻ SOURCE 2.14

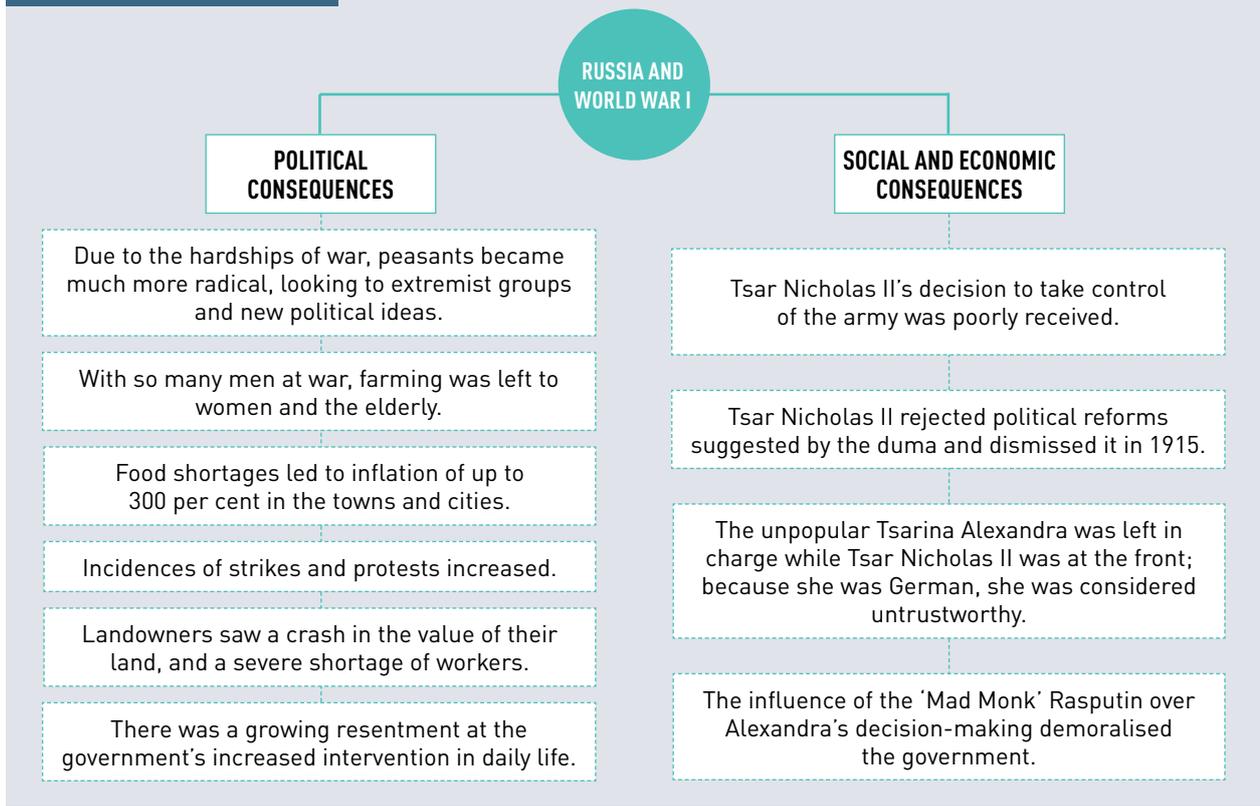
*Cited in George Vernadsky, ed.,
A Source Book for Russian
History From Early Times to
1917 (London: Yale University
Press, 1972), 844–5.*

SOURCE ANALYSIS

ACTIVITY

1. How does Rodzianko suggest the Russian people will interpret the tsar's decision to take command of the armed forces?
2. Why was the tsar's decision to take command of the army so damaging to his relationship with the Russian people?

CONSEQUENCES OF WORLD WAR I FOR RUSSIA



ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How did life improve in Russia between 1906 and 1914?
2. What impact did World War I have on life in Russia?
3. By 1917, to what extent was Tsar Nicholas II's authority and legitimacy intact?



FEATURE AND
ACTIVITY: RASPUTIN

FEBRUARY 1917

GRAND DUKE ALEXANDER MIKHAILOVICH IN A LETTER TO TSAR NICHOLAS II, JANUARY 1917: 'The unrest grows; even the monarchist principle is beginning to totter; and those who defend the idea that Russia cannot exist without a Tsar lose the ground under their feet, since the facts of disorganization and lawlessness are manifest.'

By February 1917, Russia was on the brink of revolution. The war had produced conditions that exponentially increased the hardships being suffered by the Russian people. The food shortages resulted in mass demonstrations, with the people blaming the tsar for their hunger. The upper classes felt abandoned as the tsar gave them no significant political role to play, despite their heavy and costly involvement in the war as officers. By taking command of the army, Tsar Nicholas II tied his own fate to the success of the war and, as defeat followed defeat and millions suffered, his reputation as the father of his people was irreversibly ruined. He had left his wife, Tsarina Alexandra, in charge of the country in his absence. The fact the tsarina was of German birth meant she was not trusted by the Russian people, especially during the war with Germany. Her fondness for the mystic holy man Rasputin clouded her judgement about domestic affairs. In the end, Tsar Nicholas II had no option but to abdicate on 2 March 1917, saying, 'There is no sacrifice that I would not be willing to make for the welfare and salvation of Mother Russia.'⁷ Tsar Nicholas II wished to pass power to his brother, the Grand Duke Michael, but his brother declined. Three centuries of Romanov rule had come to an end.

The 'Provisional Government' took control of Russia, led initially by Prince Lvov and, after July 1917, by Alexander Kerensky. The Bolsheviks were in no state to take power; they were too disorganised and Lenin was out of the country (and had been for a decade). In January 1917, Lenin had said that there would be no revolution in his lifetime. The Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries believed a bourgeois revolution needed to take place before the soviets took power, and saw the Provisional Government as a good opportunity for the country to settle down and avoid civil war. The Provisional Government, for its part, made the promises the people needed to hear: they would roll out land reforms, take Russia out of the war, and work towards free elections by the end of the year. They fulfilled none of these promises, and instead became embroiled in a tussle for power for the powerful Petrograd Soviet. This system of 'dual power' led Kerensky to state that, 'The Soviet had power without authority ... the Provisional Government had authority without power'. As the government began to spiral out of control, the Bolsheviks geared up for a true revolution.



LENIN'S APRIL
THESES



DIGITAL TIMELINE:
EVENTS AND
PERSPECTIVES



SOURCE 2.15

The nine members of the provisional executive committee. Seated on the right at the desk is Mikhail Rodzianko, seated next to him is Alexander Guchkov, standing in the back row, (right to left) are General Nikolai Ruzski, Alexander Kerensky, Georgy Lvov and Pavel N. Milyukov.

TIMELINE: FEBRUARY TO AUGUST 1917

2 MARCH

Abdication of Tsar Nicholas II; Provisional Government formed.

3 APRIL

Lenin delivers the April Theses, uniting the Bolsheviks against the government, calling for an immediate end to the war, a worldwide Bolshevik revolution, promising power to the Soviets and land reform for the people.

JUNE

Kerensky, now the war minister, orders a major offensive aimed at driving Germany out of Russia: a major disaster for Russia, with hundreds of thousands left dead and millions of square miles of Russian territory lost.

JULY

The 'July Days' saw the Kronstadt Garrison march against the government, but without strong support from Lenin, who wanted to 'wait and see'; the uprising was put down with help from the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries. Key Bolshevik leaders were arrested, including Trotsky.

25
AUGUST

The Kornilov Affair saw Kerensky clash with the man he appointed to head the armed forces, General Kornilov. Kornilov, a right winger with an aim of suppressing unrest in Petrograd, staged what looked like an attempted military coup, only to be arrested on Kerensky's order, with help from the Soviet and freed Bolshevik prisoners.

Throughout these tumultuous months, Kerensky had fallen from his unique position as a man who appealed to both the right and left sides of politics, to a situation in which he was trusted by no one. Kerensky was now seen as a weak and ineffectual leader, and an alternative was sought. The Bolsheviks, for their part, had gained credibility, were armed, and ready to stage a revolution of their own.

SOURCE 2.16

A DUMA REPORT ON RUSSIAN CITIES, FEBRUARY 1917

Your Imperial Majesty

In a moment of terrible danger, the worst policy is to shut one's eyes to the full seriousness of the actual situation. One must boldly look it in the face since, in this case, there is a possibility of finding some sort of favourable solution. The situation in Russia today is both catastrophic and profoundly tragic. Her army is not defeated; it is better supplied with arms than ever before. But behind the army, in the rear, the breakdown is such that it threatens to render useless all the sacrifices, all the bloodshed, all the unparalleled heroism, and to tip the military scales to the advantage of our enemies.

From every corner of Russia come reports, each more dismal and miserable than the other. The mayor of Moscow reports in his memorandum presented to the chairman of the Council of Ministers that the situation in Moscow with respect to the food supply is critical. Instead of the required 65 carloads of flour ... in December, the daily flour supply in Moscow was not more than 50 carloads, and in January it fell to 42 carloads. That is, the supply met only a little more than half the need. If the supply of flour is not brought up to the norm, Moscow will soon have absolutely no reserves of flour.

The situation in Petrograd is no better. The January supply of essential commodities was 50 per cent of the norm, as established by the Special Conference. The supply of livestock, poultry and butter was 25 per cent of the norm, and supply in the first half of January was better than in the second half ... The city needed 40 carloads of wheat flour per day, but [in five days] only 12, 10, 35, eight and two carloads were actually brought in ...

The fuel situation is no better. Almost all of Russia is suffering from an acute shortage of liquid and solid mineral fuels, and of wood and peat. The same memorandum from the mayor of

Moscow cites depressing facts. During the winter season Moscow needs daily 475 000 poods of wood, 100 000 poods of coal, 100 000 poods of fuel oil, and 15 000 poods of peat. [A 'pood' is about 16 kilograms.] But in January, before the frosts set in, average shipments into Moscow were only 430 000 poods of wood, 60 000 poods of coal, and 75 000 poods of oil ...

Because of the shortage of fuel, many enterprises—including even those working for defence—have already halted or will soon halt operation. Buildings with central-heating systems have 50 per cent of the fuel they need, and the woodyards are empty ... Of the 73 plants standing idle [in Petrograd] in December 1916, 39 were forced to suspend production because of a lack of fuel and 11 because of the suspension of electric power, caused by fuel shortages at power stations.

The country has everything it needs but cannot make adequate use of it. There is not the slightest doubt that agricultural production is able to satisfy the consumer needs of the Russian population ... We must cite first the poor organization of transportation, which does not permit us to move the requisite products in the necessary quantities from one place to another, and which therefore retards the pace of the national economy. Thus the fuel crisis is caused only by the fact that the railroads do not manage to transport the required amount of fuel, even though the latter is available.

The second major reason for the collapse of the rear is the confusion in the labour market. The huge depletions of the population caused by the mobilization, which took more than 50 per cent of the able-bodied males between the ages of 16 and 50, have created an extremely complex and crucial situation in the rear ... Skilled workers were mobilized and sent to the front and all efforts to send them back from the army remained virtually fruitless until very lately. Under such conditions our enterprises had to resort to the labour of semi-skilled or entirely unskilled workers, and this had a number of harmful repercussions.

ACTIVITY

EXTENSION: MIND MAP

Summarise the information in Source 2.16 to create a detailed and well-organised mind map explaining the difficulties facing Russia in February 1917.

OCTOBER 1917

VLADIMIR LENIN, INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED TO THE BOLSHEVIKS, 24 OCTOBER 1917: 'We must at all costs, this very evening, this very night, arrest the Government ... We must not wait! We will lose everything! History will not forgive revolutionaries for procrastinating when they can be victorious today, while they risk losing much, in fact, everything, tomorrow.'

SEIZING THE WINTER PALACE

The perceived ineptness of the Provisional Government, along with continuing losses in the war, desertions, food shortages and a general sense of social breakdown across the countryside, had set the scene for the Bolshevik takeover of power. Kerensky formed another government in September, but it was populated with incapable politicians who could not turn around Kerensky's flagging fortunes. At the same time, the Bolsheviks were on the rise. They had gained a majority on the Petrograd City Council, and took control of the Moscow Soviet. On 25 September 1917, Trotsky was elected as leader of the Petrograd Soviet. Lenin himself had been absent up to this point, having fled to Finland after a warrant was issued for his arrest following the July Days. He returned to Petrograd in disguise, and began agitating for an armed Bolshevik overthrow of the Provisional Government. He did not get the support he wanted, however, as other leaders such as Kamenev advised a more circumspect approach. A meeting of the Bolshevik Central Committee on 10 October eventually agreed the time was ripe for a takeover.

Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolsheviks began their takeover on the night of 24 October. Trotsky sent Red Guard units to seize control of key points in Petrograd, such as bridges, railway stations and the telephone exchange. They faced minimal resistance, and the next day life on the streets of Petrograd looked normal, with people going about their everyday business. The Bolsheviks moved next on the Provisional Government, taking the Winter Palace with a minimum of fuss, arresting any members of the government who happened to be unlucky enough to still be working at 2am. While Soviet historians have written about the events of 25–26 October as a great act of heroism featuring the mass participation of the proletariat, in reality the task was completed with a minimum of effort. That same evening the Congress of Soviets met to denounce the Bolsheviks, but Trotsky's defiant speech offended the opposition Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries so much that they stormed out, leaving the Bolsheviks alone with a few stray leftists. Lenin's declarations of 'Soviet power' and 'Peace, bread, and land' were read out, and that was that—political power in Russia was now in the hands of the Bolsheviks.

DID YOU KNOW?

On the night of the Bolshevik takeover, the assault on the Winter Palace was delayed when the Bolsheviks could not find a red lantern to signal the attack. They made do with a purple flare instead.



IMAGE GALLERY:
THE OCTOBER
REVOLUTION



HOW DID IT HAPPEN?
HISTORICAL
INTERPRETATIONS

SOURCE 2.17

Storming of the Winter Palace, St Petersburg.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Bolshevik takeover in Petrograd led to widespread looting and mass displays of drunken behaviour, as gangs helped themselves to the stores of alcohol found in the cellars of the Winter Palace and in the homes of the rich.

SOVNARKOM, INITIAL DECREES AND THE DISSOLUTION OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

The events of October 1917 were momentous, but the Bolsheviks controlled very little of the country, mainly Petrograd and Moscow. There was much to do. Lenin proceeded to issue a number of decrees through a new body—the Council of People’s Commissars, or Sovnarkom, which was populated exclusively by Bolsheviks. The new Constituent Assembly held elections in November 1917, and the Bolsheviks found themselves with just 24 per cent of the popular vote and less than half the seats.⁸ The election was dominated by the Socialist Revolutionaries, although they lacked an outright majority. Lenin dismissed the Constituent Assembly in January 1918, calling it redundant. The deputies were forced to go home, and while a small protest indicated some displeasure at this turn of events, it was quickly silenced.

Lenin proceeded to announce a number of populist decrees. Some of his most popular decisions indicated a willingness to compromise his ideals in order to retain power. These included:

- **Land reform:** The peasants were invited to confiscate the land of the nobles, and to decide for themselves how it was to be divided up; however, Lenin did not agree with the concept of privately owned land.



➔ SOURCE 2.18

A decree about land redistribution being read in rural village.

ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How did Lenin and the Bolsheviks seize power?
 2. What did Lenin do to gain support from the Russian people?
 3. Why was the peace Lenin promised so problematic for Russia?
- **Workers’ reforms:** These included a new eight-hour working day, social security, and increased worker control of factories and railways. Bolshevik leaders did not want to give too much control to the workers, but they could not ignore the rising activism of the working class.
 - **Self-determination:** The many ethnic minorities within Russia were granted a measure of self-government. This didn’t mean much in a practical sense, as most of these regions lay outside Bolshevik control at the time.

TREATY OF BREST-LITOVSK

World War I had been a key factor in bringing about the circumstances that led to the revolution; it had destroyed the economy, brought an end to the rule of Tsar Nicholas II, and led to unimaginable suffering and death. Lenin was determined to follow through on his promise of peace—and he duly delivered, although the terms under which Russia withdrew from World War I were widely condemned, both within Russia and by its allies. Lenin believed peace at any price was necessary for the Bolsheviks to successfully consolidate their power; more radical communists wanted to fight back as revolutionaries, encouraging a European revolution; and Trotsky himself was keen to draw out the negotiations, as he believed revolution in Germany was brewing. Lenin got his way, but the cost to Russia was significant. Germany instead benefited greatly from the terms of the treaty.

Under the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Russia lost:

- 60 million people
- over 25 per cent of its farmland
- over 25 per cent of its rail network
- the majority of its access to coal and iron ore reserves.

In addition, many former regions of the empire were either granted independence (Poland, Finland, the Baltic states) or semi-independence (Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia). Lenin got his ‘peace’ but at great cost to Russian territory, resources and the population. His opponents were unhappy, and the stage was set for the Civil War.

CIVIL WAR, WAR COMMUNISM AND THE NEP

LEON TROTSKY, 1918: ‘I give warning that if any unit retreats without orders, the first to be shot down will be the commissary of the unit, and next the commander. Brave and gallant soldiers will be appointed in their places. Cowards, dastards and traitors will not escape the bullet. This I solemnly promise in the presence of the entire Red Army.’

The 1918–1920 Civil War presented the Bolsheviks with their biggest crisis, as internal and external opponents fought to destroy them. It was a complex war, and a devastating one, as Lenin, Trotsky and the Red Army campaigned against numerous enemies to ensure the survival of the revolution.

One of the reasons the war was so confused and hard to explain is the sheer number of armies involved in the conflict. Throughout history, the Civil War has been presented as a ‘Red vs. White’ conflict, but that reflected the simple Bolshevik view that it was them against everyone else, presenting a contrived unity among their opponents. In reality, with over 20 armies fighting on Russian soil, it was much more complex. For our purposes, it is necessary to organise the belligerents into three groups.

1. The Reds (the Bolsheviks) included workers, peasants and former tsarist soldiers. The Red Army, led by Trotsky, was determined to preserve the revolution.

▼ SOURCE 2.19

Leon Trotsky, Commissar for War, rallies his Red Army soldiers.



2. The Whites included a vast array of groups, from Mensheviks, former tsarists, Socialist Revolutionaries, nationalists, foreign interventionists and others, each with different views of what they wanted to achieve. Arguably the key thing holding the White Army together was the common aim of destroying the Bolsheviks.
3. The Greens were a group of peasant armies who fought against the Reds, the Whites and foreign forces, but also with the Reds and Whites from time to time. Their primary goal was to protect what was theirs. Lenin acknowledged that the Greens were more dangerous than anything the Whites had to offer.

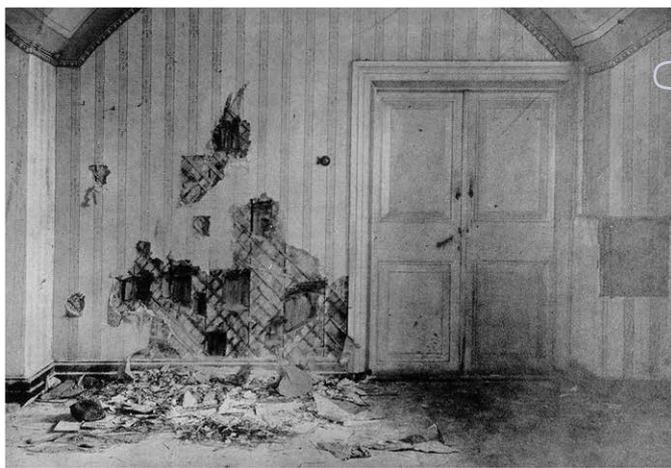
WAR COMMUNISM

The freedoms handed to the workers and peasants in the immediate aftermath of the October Revolution were a hindrance to a government trying to fight a civil war. The industrial sector collapsed because the workers' councils were unable to turn back the already-looming economic disaster. Consumer goods such as food staples and fuel were in short supply, leading to dire shortages and an increasingly popular black market. The wheat-rich region of the Ukraine had been lost in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Rationing of bread led to rioting, and a subsequent exodus of civilians from the major cities led Lenin and the Bolsheviks to embark on a program of increased nationalisation of the economy, called War Communism. The nation—or at least those areas under Bolshevik control—was focused by Lenin on answering Trotsky's rallying cry: 'Everything for the Front!'

War Communism was characterised by centralised decision-making and discipline as the Bolsheviks struggled to consolidate their power and defeat their many enemies.

EXECUTION OF THE TSAR AND HIS FAMILY

Tsar Nicholas II and his family had remained under arrest since the Tsar's abdication in 1917, although Kerensky had moved the family to Siberia for safety. A decision on the Tsar's fate had been pushed aside because the Bolsheviks had more immediate problems. However, on 17 July 1918, *Cheka* agents, acting on Lenin's orders, entered the basement of the Yekaterinburg farmhouse in which the Romanov family was huddled and, in a confusion of gunshots, smoke and blood, slaughtered the entire family and their servants. Right up until the end of the Cold War, the Soviet regime insisted the execution was the result of the actions of independently motivated agents, but historical documents show that Lenin and top-level Bolsheviks sanctioned the killing, mainly so the White Army would have nothing to fight for.



↑ SOURCE 2.20

One of the rooms in the Yekaterinburg farmhouse where the Romanovs were murdered.

Private trade was banned outright, although the black market ensured its survival to a degree; grain-requisitioning units were tasked with sourcing grain in rural areas and bringing it to the cities; all industry was nationalised and administered by a new body, the Supreme Economic Council; discipline in the workplace was increased; and prioritised rationing was introduced, with preference given to those who were perceived as directly supporting the war effort, namely soldiers and workers.

These measures were unpopular, and dissent began to rise in the cities in the form of protests, graffiti and terrorist attacks on the Bolsheviks themselves. Even Lenin became a target; he was wounded by a gunshot in August 1918.

OUTCOME AND IMPACT OF WAR

The Civil War was ultimately won by the Bolsheviks, despite great opposition. For a blow-by-blow description of the war, Orlando Figes' *A People's Tragedy* is recommended. The Civil War was different to the static, trench-based warfare of World War I, with ever-changing front lines, rapid incursions and retreats, and a much heavier toll taken on non-combatants. It is almost impossible to assess the full impact of the war, but probably over 10 million Russians died; perhaps half of these as a result of famine blamed on crop failure and grain requisitioning, and another million from disease. The Bolsheviks triumphed because of a number of factors in their favour.

ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Why was the Civil War so complicated?
2. How unified were the Whites?
3. How close was Lenin's War Communism to Marx's ideal?

WHY DID THE REDS WIN?

	WHITES	REDS
Geography	The Whites were scattered throughout rural Russia across vast distances in areas with low population. They had little access to transport or communication systems.	The Bolsheviks held key cities and operated out of a centralised area. They controlled the rail system hub, industry, the most populated regions, and the bulk of the armaments factories.
Leadership	The Whites were primarily led by ex-tsarist generals who treated their troops with disdain. Many soldiers were reminded of the Tsar, and deserted. In general, the White Armies were corrupt and poorly disciplined.	Lenin and Trotsky provided strong, if brutal, leadership. Trotsky proved to be an inspiring and focused leader who could get the most out of his troops. He insisted on tough discipline, and the death penalty was used frequently to ensure order.
Support	The Whites were unable to provide their followers with a vision for the future. As the war progressed, the leadership made it clear land reform would be reversed and self-determination of ethnic groups would also be scaled back.	While the peasants generally hated the war and both sides, Lenin's land reforms held more promise than a return to the old ways under the Whites. Despite the anger brought about by War Communism, most saw the Bolsheviks as best able to preserve the gains won in the revolution.
Organisation	The Whites were made up of many factions with wildly different ideas and beliefs. They could not settle on a cause and refused to cooperate with each other over military or political strategies.	The Bolsheviks implemented and maintained a clearly defined command structure, and were focused on winning the war at any cost. The implementation of War Communism and use a secret police and propaganda helped the Bolshevik cause.
Other	The Whites did not understand or use propaganda very well. Foreign intervention should have helped, but it was insufficient and poorly coordinated.	The Bolsheviks used propaganda to depict themselves as defenders of Russia and the Whites as traitors who would return to the old ways. They were also able to portray themselves as more patriotic, as they received no foreign aid.



TROTSKY'S ORDERS TO RED ARMY TROOPS, SOUTHERN FRONT, NOVEMBER 1918

Krasnov and the foreign capitalists which stand behind his back, have thrown onto the Voronezh front hundreds of hired agents who have penetrated, under various guises, Red Army units and are carrying on their base work, corrupting and inciting men to desert ...

I declare from now on, an end must be put to this by using merciless means ...

1. Every scoundrel who incites anyone to retreat, to desert, or not to fulfil a military order, will be shot.
2. Every soldier of the Red Army who voluntarily deserts his military post will be shot...

Death to the self-seekers and to traitors!

Death to deserters and to the agents of Krasnov!

Long live the honest soldiers of the Workers' Red Army!

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. According to Trotsky, why did deserters exist in the Red Army?
2. Who, according to Trotsky, deserves to be shot?
3. How would this order have galvanised Red Army troops?

📌 SOURCE 2.21

'The Bolshevik snake strangles the heart of Russia.'

📌 SOURCE 2.22

www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1918-mil/ch36.htm

📌 SOURCE 2.23

'Defend Petrograd with your life!'



ACTIVITY

SKILLS: PERSPECTIVES

1. What view or perspective is being conveyed in each of the posters above? What colours, symbols, facial expressions and gestures are used to convey this perspective?
2. Which poster strikes you as the most effective use of propaganda? Give reasons for your answer.
3. How useful are these sources in understanding the nature of the Civil War?

THE TERROR

FROM A RED ARMY NEWSPAPER, 1918: 'Let there be floods of blood of the bourgeoisie—more blood, as much as possible.'

During the Civil War and for decades afterwards, the Bolsheviks made extensive use of terror tactics and the Cheka, the Bolshevik secret police, to weed out enemies and dissenters. Faced with challenges and opposition in the cities and in the countryside, terror was used systematically and ruthlessly on the entire population. The assassination attempt on Lenin in August 1918 simply gave the Cheka the motivation to intensify what they had been slowly building up to. While the Romanov family was certainly the most famous victim of Bolshevik wrath, it is estimated that at least 300 000 Russians—and possibly up to 500 000—were murdered by the secret police. Members of the Cheka became almost an elite class within Russia, headed up by 'Iron Felix' Dzerzhinsky, an odd combination of Polish aristocrat and firebrand Bolshevik revolutionary.

The tactics employed by the Cheka to enforce the rule of the Bolsheviks went beyond cruel. Wholesale shootings and hangings were carried out across Russia, for crimes ranging from genuine subterfuge to being acquainted with enemies of the Bolsheviks. Chekists employed a number of tactics designed to bring the victim to mental disintegration, seemingly for the sole purpose of sadistic pleasure. Such behaviour had a negative effect on the general population, as



SOURCE 2.24

The Red Terror in Russia. Pedestrians being searched on the streets of St Petersburg.

SOURCE 2.25

<http://spartacus-educational.com/RUSterror.htm>

EYEWITNESSES TO THE TERROR

Dzerzhinsky, 14 July 1918

We stand for organized terror—this should be frankly admitted. Terror is an absolute necessity during times of revolution. Our aim is to fight against the enemies of the Soviet Government and of the new order of life. We judge quickly. In most cases only a day passes between the apprehension of the criminal and his sentence. When confronted with evidence, criminals in almost every case confess; and what argument can have greater weight than a criminal's own confession.

Walter Duranty

The fear of the *Cheka* was so great those early days in Moscow that people made a detour rather than step on the sidewalk in front of its main building on Lubyanka Square.

Manager of a British-owned company

The Bolsheviks continue to hold power by a

system of terrorism and tyranny that has never before been heard of. It has made the history of the French Reign of Terror, or the Spanish Inquisition, appear mild by comparison. People were arrested wholesale, not merely on individual orders on information received from spies, but literally wholesale—people arrested in the streets, theatres, cafes, every day in hundreds.

Maxim Gorky, author

If the trial of the Socialist Revolutionaries will end with a death sentence, then this will be a premeditated murder, a foul murder. I beg of you to inform Leon Trotsky and the others that this is my contention. I hope this will not surprise you since I had told the Soviet authorities a thousand times that it is a senseless and criminal to decimate the ranks of our intelligentsia in our illiterate and lacking of culture country. I am convinced, that if the SRs should be executed, the crime will result in a moral blockade of Russia by all of socialist Europe.



↑ SOURCE 2.26

Felix Dzerzhinsky.

well as on Cheka agents themselves, many of whom became mentally ill or alcoholic. Dzerzhinsky enjoyed the support of Lenin, who personally sent telegrams ordering the Cheka to ‘hang Kulaks ... in full view of the people.’ The freedom and hope offered by Lenin to the Russian people in October 1917 must have seemed far away when terror and violence were delivered by the same people who had liberated them from tsarist repression.

THE DEATH OF LENIN

With the Civil War won but his new communist state in chaos, Lenin set about restoring order. Going against his ideological beliefs, he reversed some of the policies of War Communism, claiming that, as the war had been won, they were no longer necessary. Grain requisitioning stopped and small businesses were allowed a measure of freedom, opening up the market and increasing demand for manufactured goods. However, Lenin retained state control over heavy industry and other key sectors. The Bolsheviks then ensured their political control of Russia, punishing Menshevik and Socialist Revolutionary leaders, and stacking the soviets all across the country with Bolshevik loyalists, as well as increasing censorship

and marginalising religion. In 1922, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was proclaimed, including some of the territory originally lost to Germany in 1918—the rest would be brought back under Soviet influence during World War II.

In some respects life began to improve for the Russian people. Lenin’s New Economic Policy (NEP), rolled out in 1921, began to reap dividends as the economy recovered. While this plan involved a measure of private enterprise, surprising committed communists, Lenin was determined to keep it as a temporary measure in order to preserve the unity of his party. It would not last forever. Food became plentiful—so plentiful that food prices plummeted while the price of manufactured goods soared. The government resolved this crisis quickly and some balance was restored to the economy. The production of coal, steel, iron, cotton and other raw products—which had declined or even ceased during the Civil War—recovered slowly, although it wasn’t until after Lenin’s death that production was restored to pre–World War I levels.

Lenin had suffered from a series of health setbacks since the attempt on his life in 1918. A number of strokes plagued him afterwards, but he was able to recover and continue his work. However, in March 1923, a major stroke left him paralysed and unable to speak, and his influence began to diminish. Before his stroke, Lenin had been worrying about the influence and power of General Secretary Joseph Stalin. Lenin’s condition continued to deteriorate, and he died on 21 January 1924, leaving no clear indication about who should take over the leadership.



🔍 SOURCE 2.27

The body of Vladimir Lenin.

DID YOU KNOW?

Thanks to an untested embalming technique involving a small amount of vodka, Lenin's corpse looks better today than when he died. His body is visited by over one million people every year.

Lenin's body lay in state in Moscow, visited by hundreds of thousands of mourners paying their respects to the man who had released Russia from the burden of tsardom.

Lenin's legacy is a mixed one. While he has not been as reviled as much as his successor Stalin has, even in the post–Cold War era, he remains a polarising historical figure on both sides of politics. To some he was an heroic revolutionary who brought tsarist repression to an end, bringing the promise of a better life to millions of downtrodden workers and peasants. To others, he unleashed the evils of the Bolsheviks and communism upon Russia—and the world—which contributed to the start of World War II, and then to the Cold War.

HISTORIAN CHRISTOPHER HILL

The attempt to overthrow the Bolsheviks after the revolution produced cruelties indeed; but the revolutionary process abolished a regime of despair and created a new world of hope.

🔍 SOURCE 2.28

Christopher Hill, Lenin and the Russian Revolution (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1947), 221.

HISTORIAN DMITRI VOLKAGONOV

Lenin wanted earthly happiness for the people, at least those he called the 'proletariat'. But he regarded it as normal to build this 'happiness' on blood, coercion, and the denial of freedom.

🔍 SOURCE 2.29

Dmitri Volkogonov, Lenin: A New Biography (New York: The Free Press, 1994), xxxix.

ACTIVITY

SKILLS: HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

How do historical interpretations of Lenin's role in the Russian Revolution differ? Investigate the work of four historians and write one sentence summarising their views on each of the following points:

- Lenin's leadership
- Lenin's achievements
- Lenin's mistakes and limitations.



CONCLUSION

As the dust settled on the Civil War and it became clear that the Bolsheviks had succeeded in their revolution, ordinary Russians could have been excused for wondering if life was now worse than it had been under Tsar Nicholas II. The tsar had been brutal, certainly—but not to the extent of the rivers of blood set flowing by the Red Army and the Cheka. It is estimated that about 10 million Russians died during the Civil War as a result of military action, terror, famine and disease. There were numerous atrocities committed on all sides. Estimates of the number of people killed by the Cheka vary, with some sources claiming 500 000 people. Millions of people fled the war-

torn country. By 1922 there were upwards of 7 million homeless and abandoned children living in Russia. As historian Orlando Figes put it, the Russian Revolution was 'a people's tragedy'. The promises of 1917—of land, bread and peace—had all, to some extent, been broken. From the dismissal of the Constituent Assembly through to the centralisation of War Communism, the Bolsheviks consolidated their power at the expense of the Russian people. The failures of the tsarist regime to modernise and listen to his people led to revolution—a model of revolution that would be emulated in some countries, and crushed in others.

CHAPTER REVIEW

1. How successful were Lenin and the Bolsheviks at establishing a communist society according to the ideals of Karl Marx?
2. Do you think the Russian people were better off under the autocratic rule of Tsar Nicholas II, or the ideology of Lenin and the Bolsheviks?
3. Who do you think were the three most influential individuals in the Russian Revolution? Write a paragraph for each of your choices, justifying your selection with historical evidence.

EXAM PRACTICE

Using three to four points:

1. Explain to what extent the failures of Tsar Nicholas II and the Provisional Government were a key factor in Lenin's rise to power.
2. Describe how the Bolsheviks' use of violence helped to consolidate the revolution. You should consider the Civil War and the Terror, as well as Trotsky and Dzerzhinsky.

ESSAY

Write an essay, based on evidence, on one of the topics below.

- 'The Russian Revolution succeeded only in replacing one dictatorial regime with another.' To what extent do you agree with this statement? Use evidence to support your answer.
- 'Judged in terms of its own aspirations, the communist regime was a monumental failure.' To what extent do you agree with this statement? Use evidence to support your answer.

EXTENSION

1. Using what you have learned, write a series of journal entries detailing the life of a peasant or worker at various stages of the revolution. Suggested stages include after Bloody Sunday, during World War I (up to the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II), and under the rule of the Bolsheviks.
2. Create a collection of different historical interpretations of the key individuals, events and groups involved in the revolution. Present your work in a table.

TEST



QUIZ – CHAPTER 2

FURTHER READING

Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891–1924*, Penguin Books, London, 1996

This vast account of the Russian Revolution is rich in detail and interpretations. Figes, a noted modern historian, has a talent for linking the great upheavals in the major cities to the lives of ordinary peasants in the Russian countryside. It is a big book—over 900 pages—so use the index to find out about the events and individuals that interest you. It is worth finding out about Figes himself, too—he is a controversial figure in historical circles!

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994

Fitzpatrick is a noted international historian—and an Australian! This concise book covers the main causes and consequences of the revolution, and continues into the Stalinist era. Fitzpatrick had access to the archives opened up after the end of the Cold War and provides a balanced approach to understanding complex events.

Richard Pipes, *Three Whys of the Russian Revolution*, Vintage Books, New York, 1995

Pipes is one of the most respected historians of the Russian Revolution, and any serious study of events would be incomplete without reading his opinion. This short and accessible book approaches some of the big questions of the Russian Revolution, including 'Why did Tsarism fall?' and 'Why did the Bolsheviks triumph?' Pipes downplays the idea of a popular revolution with mass involvement.

CHAPTER

3

THE RISE OF NAZISM IN GERMANY

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

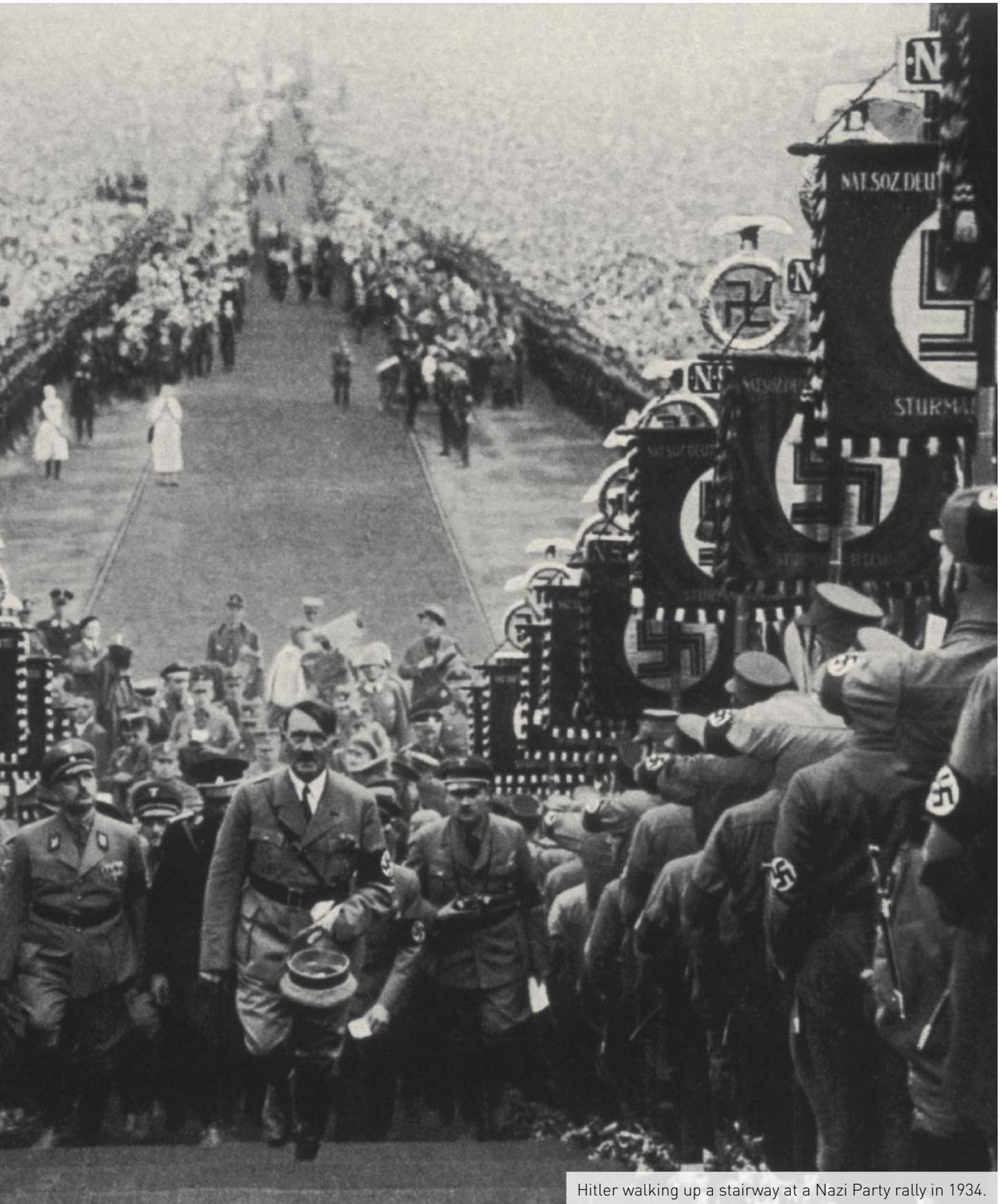
ADOLF HITLER

INTRODUCTION

When Adolf Hitler shared the vision described above with a fellow Nazi Party member while serving time in Landsberg prison in 1924, he was no doubt convinced that he would one day become the absolute ruler of Germany. Less than ten years later, on 30 January 1933, Hitler was offered the position of chancellor by president Paul von Hindenburg. It would then take just eighteen months for Hitler to establish a dictatorship and declare himself *führer* (leader) of the Third Reich.

Since the end of the World War II, historians have asked how a man like Hitler—a failed art student who never rose above the rank of corporal in World War I—was able to take power in such a highly cultured nation. A weak democratic tradition, economic chaos and the all-consuming ambition of the Nazi Party combined in the early 1930s to thrust Hitler onto the political stage—and provided a platform for his ideology of extreme nationalism and racial hatred.





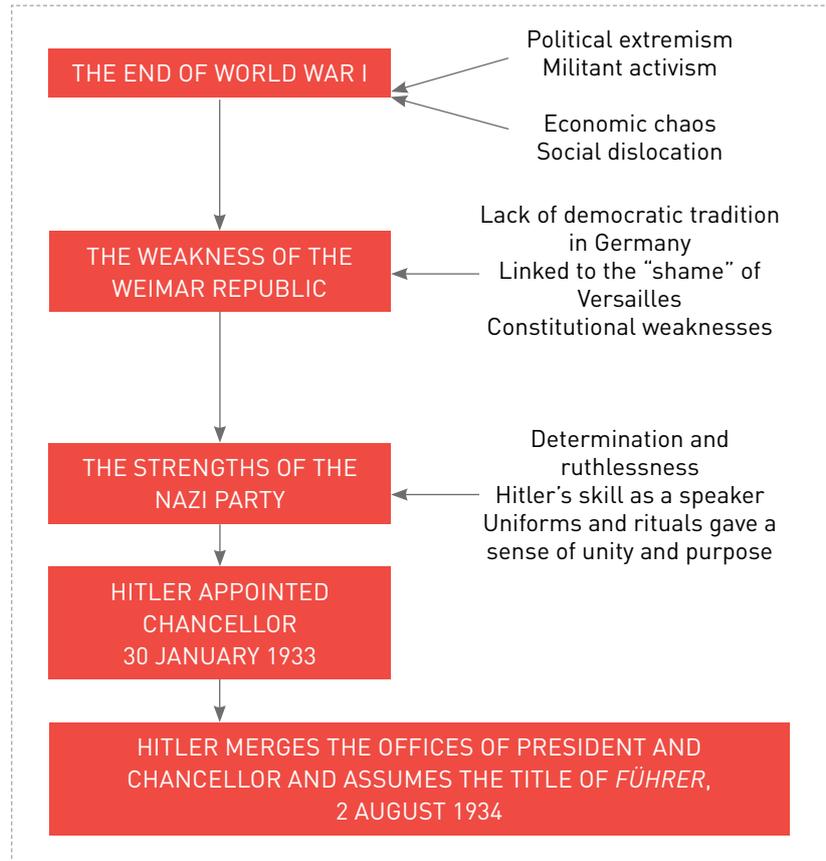
Hitler walking up a stairway at a Nazi Party rally in 1934.

OVERVIEW

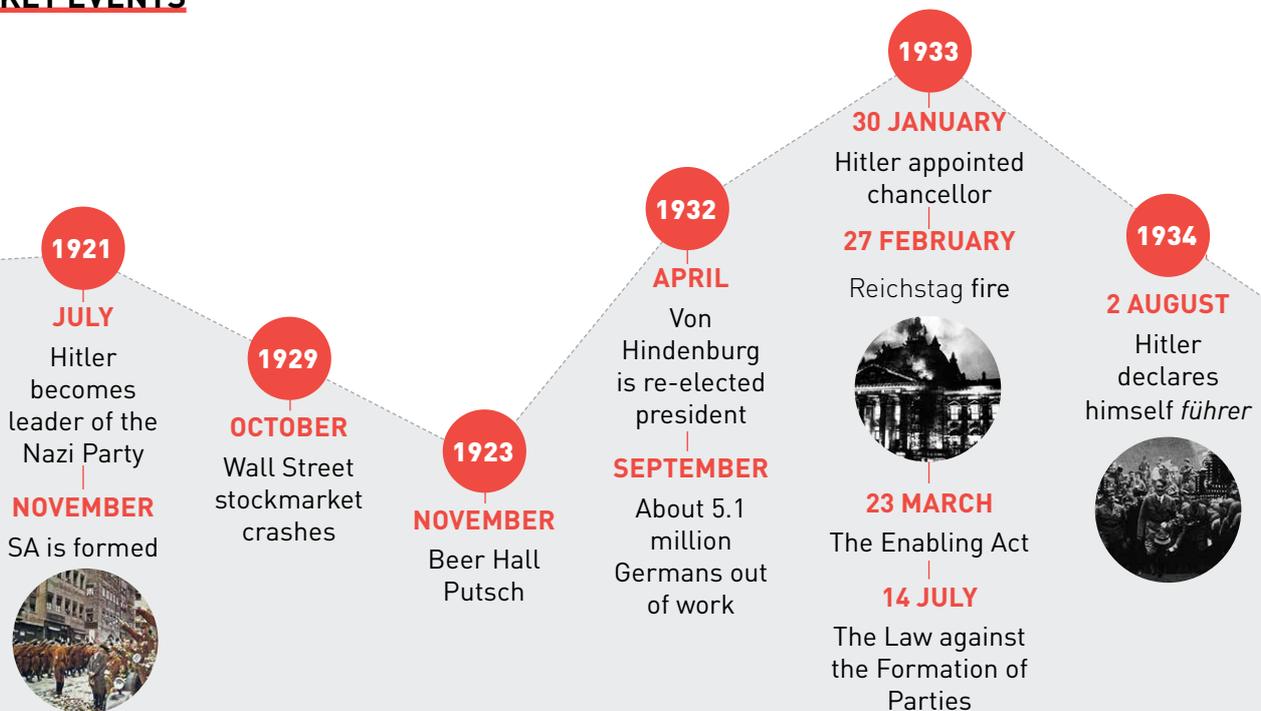
KEY QUESTIONS

- How did the economic situation in Germany at the end of World War I cause problems for the Weimar Republic?
- What did the ideology of Hitler and the Nazi Party focus on?
- What talents did Hitler possess?
- Why did so many people vote for the Nazi Party?
- How did Hitler consolidate his dictatorship?

IN THIS CHAPTER



KEY EVENTS



KEY PLAYERS

ADOLF HITLER (1889–1945)

- Born in Austria on 20 April 1889
- Fought for Germany in World War I; awarded the Iron Cross First Class for bravery.
- Joined the DAP in 1919 and, renaming the party the NSDAP in 1921, became its leader.
- After a failed coup in 1923, resolved to take power through legal means.
- Expressed his ideology of nationalism, anti-semitism and racial purity in his book *Mein Kampf*.
- Was appointed chancellor of Germany on 30 January 1933.
- Within eighteen months had consolidated power as a dictator.
- Committed suicide in Berlin on 28 April 1945.



PAUL VON HINDENBURG (1847–1934)

- Commanded the German war effort during World War I.
- After retiring from the army, was persuaded to run for president in 1925. He won the election and was re-elected in 1932, beating Hitler by a clear margin.
- In the midst of social and economic upheaval, he appointed Hitler as chancellor of Germany on 30 January 1933. Upon Hindenburg's death on 2 August 1934, Hitler assumed the title of *Führer*.



ERNST RÖHM (1887–1934)

- Served during World War I.
- Joined the DAP in 1919, where he met Hitler. The two quickly became close friends.
- Played an important role in recruitment for the *Sturmabteilung* (SA) and, with his army connections, provided weapons and equipment.
- On 30 June, in the 'Night of the Long Knives', Röhm and other leading members of the SA were executed on Hitler's orders. Hitler feared that the SA had become a threat to his own position.



KEY TERMS

CHANCELLOR

The head of the legislative body in the Weimar Republic; similar to a prime minister.

NSDAP

An abbreviation of *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*, or National Socialist German Workers Party. Commonly shortened to Nazi Party.

REICHSTAG

The German national parliament; the main legislative decision-making body. The term also applies to the Reichstag building in Berlin, which housed the German parliament from 1894–1933 (and again from 1999 until the current day).

HISTORICAL INQUIRY: CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE

Some historians have suggested that circumstances in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s made the emergence of a dictator both possible and likely. Others have argued that Adolf Hitler possessed particular traits and abilities that made his rise to power inevitable. As you work through this chapter, consider both arguments. Use the material and ideas that you have developed to answer **one** of the following questions:

1. To what extent was Hitler just in the right place at the right time?
2. How important were Hitler's personal attributes in determining his rise to power in Germany?



GERMANY IN THE WAKE OF WORLD WAR I

GENERAL ERICH LUDENDORFF: 'I was told ... of behaviour which, I openly confess, I should not have thought possible in the German army; whole bodies of our men surrendered to single troops.'

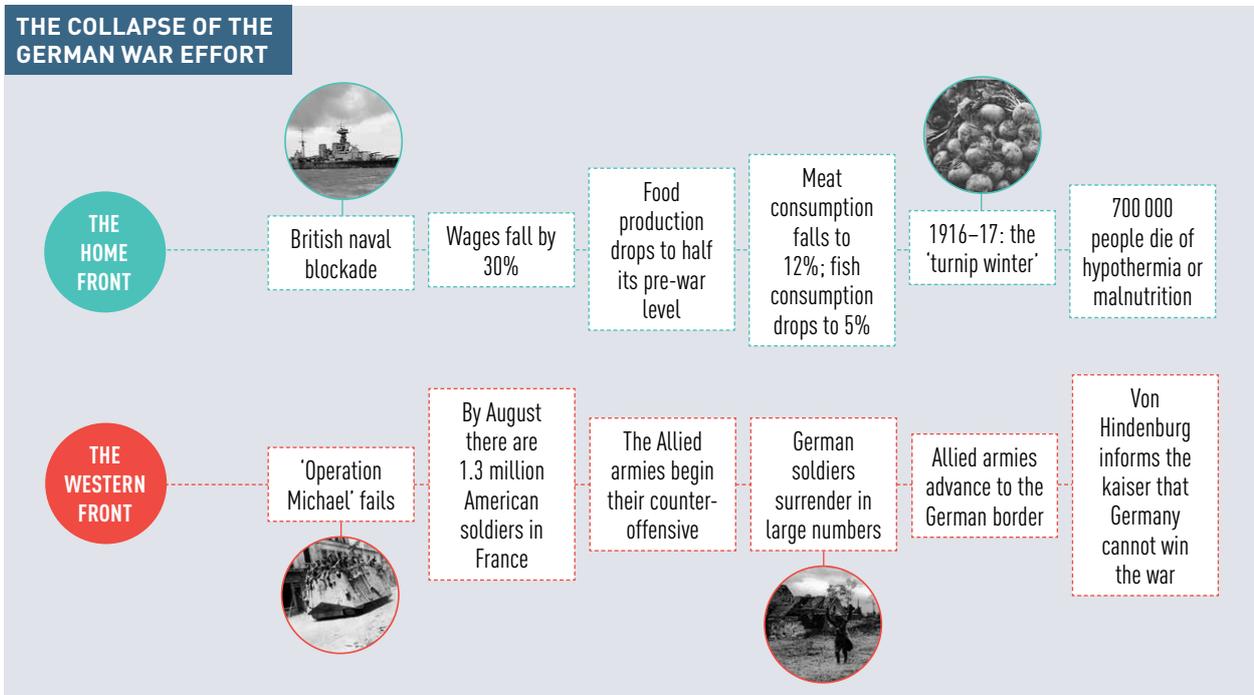
DID YOU KNOW?

Kaiser is the German word for 'emperor.' It is derived from the Latin word *caesar*. The Russian word for 'emperor,' *tsar* (or *czar*) has the same origin.

CHAOS AT THE FRONT AND AT HOME

When the armistice that ended the fighting on the Western Front was signed on 11 November 1918, Germany was in a state of political, social and economic turmoil. In an attempt to win the war before millions of American soldiers arrived in Europe, the German army launched a massive offensive on the Western front, called Operation Michael. Although it was initially successful, Allied troops eventually halted the German advance and began a counteroffensive. On 8 August 1918, Australian and Canadian troops launched a stunning attack that advanced 12 kilometres and captured 15 000 German soldiers. General Erich Ludendorff of the German High Command referred to this as 'the black day of the German army'.¹ Germany was now facing a series of crises that it could not overcome.

By the end of September 1918, the disastrous economic and military situation convinced the German High Command to seek peace terms. The Allies accepted the request—but only on the condition that Kaiser Wilhelm II was removed from power. With mutinies and strikes breaking out all over the country, a Soviet-style revolution seemed imminent. The Reichstag, led by Friedrich Ebert of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), demanded that the kaiser step down. On 9 November 1918, with massive strikes and protests in Berlin, Philipp Scheidemann, a member of the SPD, announced the abdication of the kaiser and the establishment of a German Republic. Kaiser Wilhelm II fled to the Netherlands on 10 November 1918 and remained there in exile until his death in



1940. A German delegation signed the armistice with representatives from the Allies the next day. The fighting on the Western Front was over—but a new series of problems was about to begin for Germany.

THREATS FROM LEFT AND RIGHT

Germany had a new government but it was far from stable. Ebert was not sure if he had the support of the army and the German people. With workers, soldiers and sailors forming councils (known as the Republics of Councils or the Councils Movement)² to take control in many of Germany's major cities, Ebert's new national government did not even control all of Berlin. Ebert decided to hold national elections for a new government on 19 January 1919, but there was no guarantee that Ebert's hold on power would last even that long.

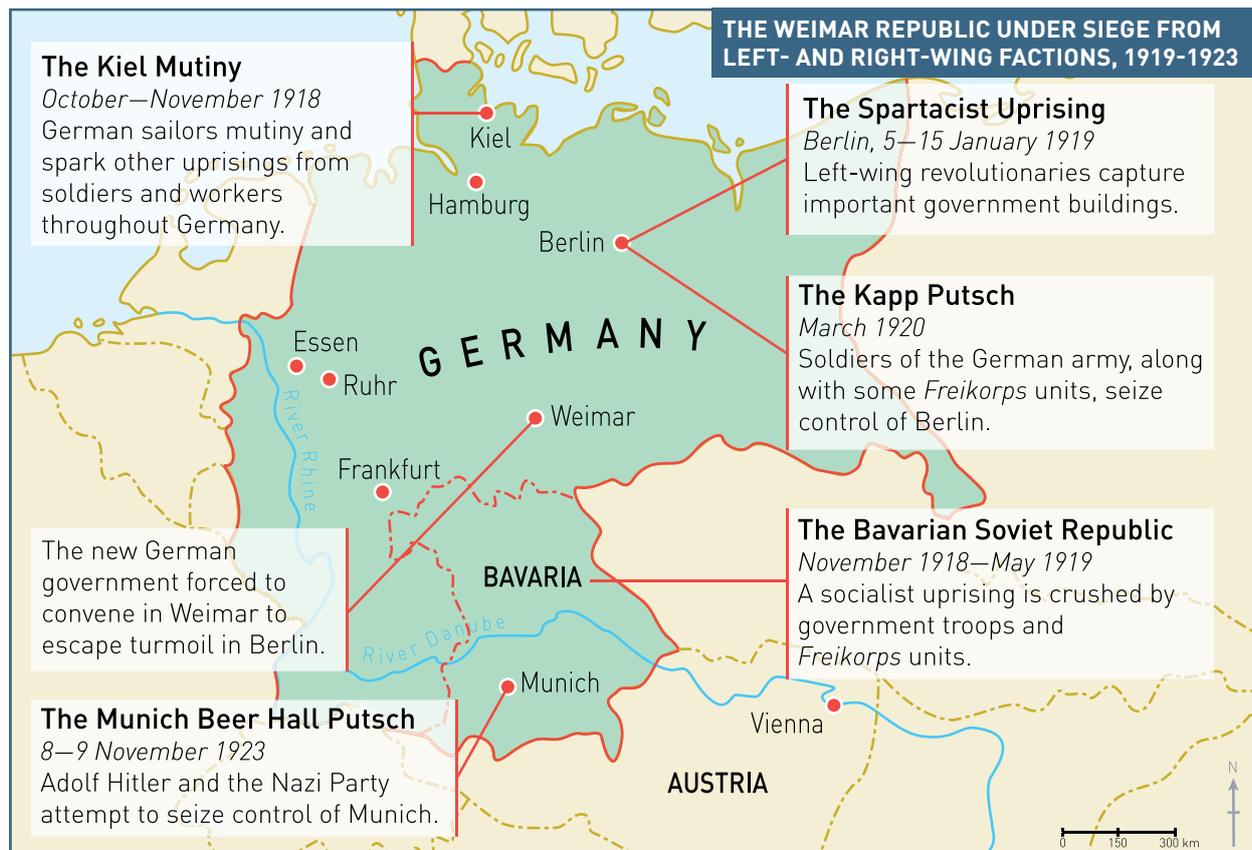


↑ SOURCE 3.01

German prisoners-of-war being watched by Australian soldiers, 1918.



THE SPARTACIST UPRISING



THE FREIKORPS

DID YOU KNOW?

A *putsch*, like a coup, is an illegal attempt to overthrow an existing government by force. In German it means 'knock' or 'thrust'.

The *Freikorps*, or Free Corps, consisted of groups of ex-soldiers recruited at the end of World War I to help the government put down uprisings. Its members were typically conservative and anti-communist; they were quite brutal in putting down left-wing coups in Berlin (January 1919) and Bavaria (April 1919). Freikorps soldiers were responsible for the murders of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.³ Some Freikorps units took part in the right-wing Kapp Putsch in March 1920, which meant that the units used to defend democracy had actually become a threat to the new republic!



➔ SOURCE 3.02

Freikorps troops supported by an armoured car and a flamethrower.

ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Who joined the Freikorps at the end of World War I?
2. Why did they join the Freikorps?
3. What does the presence of these troops in a city street suggest about the state of Germany in the aftermath of World War I?

A TROUBLED BIRTH FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

To avoid the ongoing strife in Berlin, the new government first met in the town of Weimar on 6 February 1919 (see page 89). Friedrich Ebert had been chosen as the republic's first president but no political party had a clear majority in the Reichstag (German Parliament), the legislative body. Governments would have to rule through coalitions. Not only did these parties represent a wide range of political and economic ideologies, some were actively opposed to democracy and sought to bring down the republic from within.

REICHSTAG ELECTION RESULTS

PARTY	JANUARY 1919 (423 SEATS)		JUNE 1920 (459 SEATS)	
	PERCENTAGE OF VOTE	NUMBER OF SEATS	PERCENTAGE OF VOTE	NUMBER OF SEATS
KPD/USPD	7.6%	22	19.7%	84
SPD	38%	165	22%	102
DDP	18.5%	75	8.3%	39
Zentrum	19.7%	91	13.6%	64
DVP	4.4%	22	13.9%	65
DNVP	10.3%	44	15.1%	71

SOURCE 3.03

Martin Collier and Philip Pedley, *Germany 1919–45* (Oxford: Heinemann, 2000), 9 & 26.

THE POLITICAL PARTIES OF THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC (1919–1933)

PARTY	PARTY NAME	LEADERS	POLITICAL STANDPOINT
KPD	German Communist Party	Ernst Thälmann	Extreme left-wing; anti-Weimar
USPD	Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany	Kurt Eisner	Left-wing; broke with the SPD over use of the <i>Freikorps</i> during the Spartacist revolt
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany	Friedrich Ebert; Philipp Scheidemann; Hermann Müller	Largest left-wing party; pro-Weimar
DDP	German Democratic Party	Walther Rathenau	Left-wing liberal; pro-Weimar
Zentrum	Zentrum Party	Matthias Erzberger; Heinrich Brüning	Catholic; liberal; anti-Marxist; pro-Weimar
BVP	Bavarian People's Party	Heinrich Held	Split from Zentrum in 1920
DVP	German People's Party	Gustav Stresemann	Right-wing liberal; became pro-Weimar
DNVP	German National People's Party	Karl Helfferich; Alfred Hugenberg	Conservative; monarchist; anti-Weimar
NSDAP	National Socialist German Workers' Party	Adolf Hitler	Extreme right-wing; racist; anti-Weimar

SOURCE 3.04

Martin Collier and Philip Pedley, *Germany 1919–45* (Oxford: Heinemann, 2000), 10.

ACTIVITY

DISCUSSION

With a partner, discuss the significance of the information presented in Sources 3.03 and 3.04, as well as the annotated map on page 89. What chance would there have been of forming a workable government in Germany in 1919?



THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

After the elections, the Weimar politicians faced a number of issues that demanded their immediate attention. The peace treaty—known as the Treaty of Versailles—was the first issue. The Paris Peace Conference began in January 1919 but, because of major disagreements between France, Great Britain and the United States, the peace treaty with Germany was only ready to be signed in June. Most Germans were appalled when the terms of the treaty were finally presented to them. They had been under the impression that the armistice would be based on the terms of Wilson’s Fourteen Points. However, the terms of the Treaty of Versailles were much harsher.

Under the threat of a renewed Allied offensive and continuation of the naval blockade, the German delegation to Paris, led by Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, signed the treaty on 28 June 1919 at the Palace of Versailles. The clauses of the Treaty of Versailles were to have a devastating impact on the perception of democracy and the republic in Germany. The treaty became known as the *Diktat* in Germany, or ‘dictated treaty’, and gave rise to the ‘stab-in-the-back’ myth. This held that the German army had not been defeated by the Allied armies at the Western Front, but by politicians such as Ebert who, in November, had signed the armistice with the Allies.

A German soldier, upon hearing that Germany had signed the Treaty of Versailles, wrote: ‘We shivered from the terrible cold of abandonment. We had believed that our country would never betray us.’⁴ There were swift political consequences for Germany. In the June 1920 Reichstag elections, held in the aftermath of the right-wing Kapp Putsch, support increased for anti-Versailles, anti-Weimar political parties. The extreme right-wing DNVP increased their vote from 10.3 per cent in January 1919 to 13.9 per cent in June. Pro-treaty parties found their voter support falling from 76 per cent to 47 per cent. It seemed that Weimar was a ‘republic without republicans.’⁵ Years later, Hitler would use this simmering resentment against the so-called *Schmachfrieden* (shameful peace) of the Treaty of Versailles to propel himself to power.

ACTIVITY

SKILLS: HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. Explain why Germans were shocked by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.
2. Whom did many Germans blame for their defeat in World War I?
3. Explain how the treaty affected the way people voted in Germany. Which parties gained and lost voter support between these elections? Explain the factors that contributed to this change. Refer to Source 3.03 and the annotated map on page 89 in your response.

THE WEIMAR CONSTITUTION

In the wake of the Treaty of Versailles, the Weimar Republic had to draft the new German constitution. While the new constitution seemed to represent the best features of a modern, democratic republic, it also contained the seeds of the republic’s downfall. A great deal would depend on the willingness of politicians from the centre and moderate left- and right-wing parties to form coalitions and

keep extremist, anti-democratic parties such as the KPD and DNVP from having any influence. Article 48 of the constitution (see diagram below) could be used to defend the republic from its enemies. However, it could also become the means to ‘create an authoritarian government’.⁶

CHANCELLORS AND COALITION PARTNERS OF THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC (1919–1923)

CHANCELLOR	DATE	COALITION PARTNERS
Friedrich Ebert (SPD)	November 1918–February 1919	Coalition of Socialists
Philipp Scheidemann (SPD)	February 1919–June 1919	SPD, Zentrum, DDP
Gustav Bauer (SPD)	June 1919–March 1920	SPD, Zentrum, DDP
Hermann Müller (SPD)	March 1920–June 1920	SPD, Zentrum, DDP
Konstantin Fehrenbach (Zentrum)	June 1920–May 1921	DDP, Zentrum, DVP
Joseph Wirth (Zentrum)	May 1921–October 1921	SPD, DDP, Zentrum
Joseph Wirth (Zentrum)	October 1921–November 1922	SPD, DDP, Zentrum
Wilhelm Cuno (non-aligned)	November 1922–August 1923	DDP, Zentrum, DVP

SOURCE 3.05

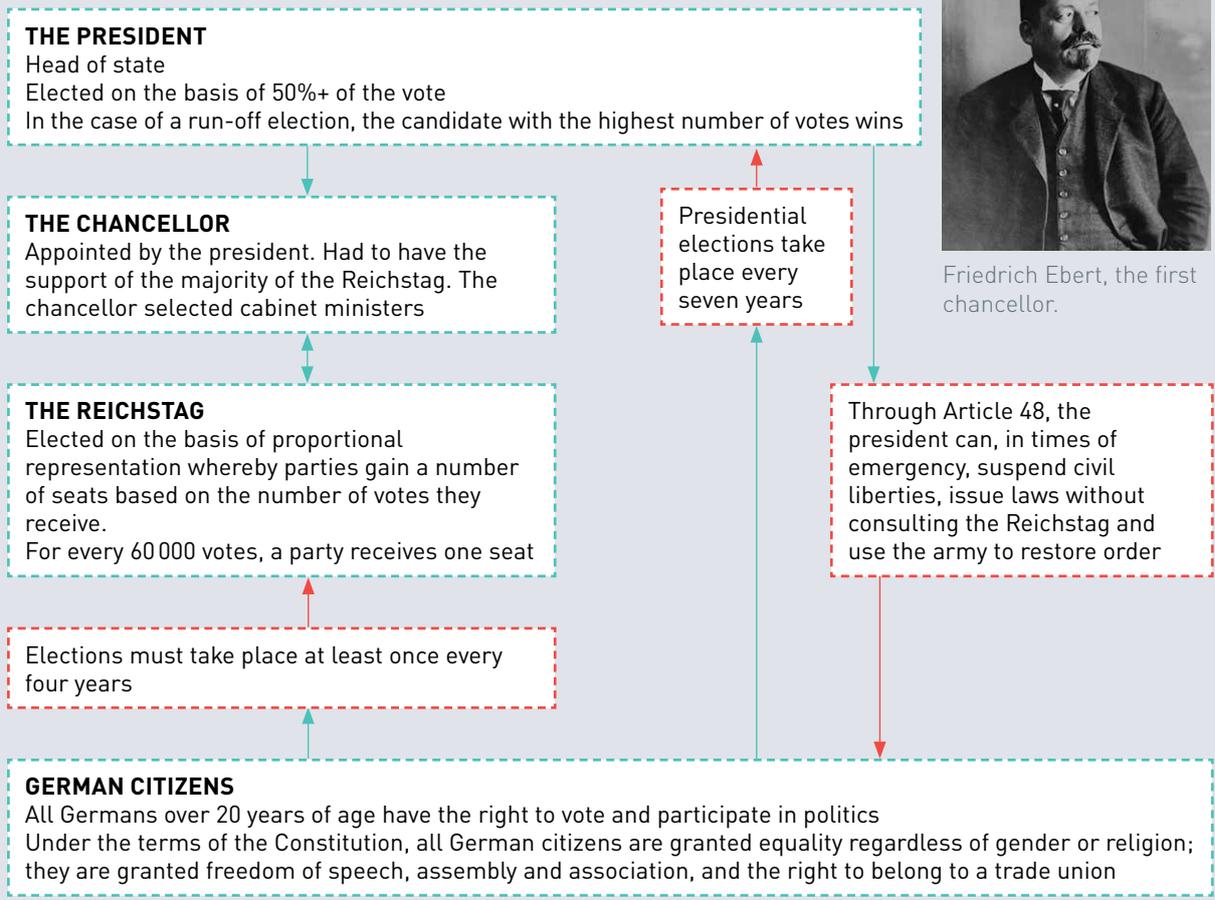
Martin Collier and Philip Pedley, *Germany 1919–45 (Oxford: Heinemann, 2000)*, 10.

SOURCE ANALYSIS

In 200–300 words, explain the significance of the information in Source 3.05. What does it suggest about the nature of politics in Germany in the years 1919–1923?

ACTIVITY

THE WEIMAR CONSTITUTION



DID YOU KNOW?

The number of seats in the Weimar parliament increased considerably from 423 in 1919 to 647 in 1933. This was because the number of seats was not fixed. Parties were granted a seat in the Reichstag for every 60 000 votes they received. So, the higher the voter turnout on election day, the more seats were offered.



THE FRENCH OCCUPATION

DID YOU KNOW?

The Ruhr region was the industrial heartland of Germany. After Upper Silesia had been ceded to Poland under the Treaty of Versailles, the Ruhr was responsible for 80 per cent of Germany's coal and steel production.

DID YOU KNOW?

The specific pretext the French gave for moving their troops into the Ruhr was that Germany had failed to deliver a shipment of timber for telegraph poles.

ACTIVITIES

TABLE

Copy and complete this table based on the information in the diagram on the page 93.

Features of the Constitution	Strengths	Weaknesses
Extending civil rights to all		
Proportional representation		
The chancellor and cabinet		
The president		
Article 48		

CREATIVE WRITING

Imagine that you are an ex-German soldier, and it is the middle of 1919. Write a letter to the local newspaper expressing your views on everything that has happened since November 1918. Your letter must be based on real details of the Treaty of Versailles, the constitution, conflicts, people and events.

THE FRENCH OCCUPATION OF THE RUHR

The new government, formed after the June 1920 elections, faced immediate pressure from the Allies to honour the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. The total amount of reparations announced in the London payments plan on 1 May 1921 was 132 billion gold marks (equivalent to £6.5 billion pounds or \$32 billion US dollars at the time).⁷ Under threat of Allied invasion, the new German chancellor, Joseph Wirth, had no choice but to accept the terms. However, World War I had had a devastating effect on the German economy and having to make reparations made the problem worse. By the end of 1922, the German government had failed to meet its commitments under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, so the French government took decisive action.

Under the terms of the November armistice, the French army already had troops stationed in the Rhineland. On 11 January 1923 the French government, with Belgian support, ordered 60 000 soldiers to march into the Ruhr region and seize the material they were owed. The occupation was also intended to demonstrate France's resolve to uphold the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

A new German chancellor, Wilhelm Cuno, had been appointed in November 1922 (see Source 3.05). Cuno's response to the occupation was to encourage the miners and industrial workers in the Ruhr to engage in a campaign of passive resistance. This meant that the workers would refuse to work or, if they were forced, to work at a greatly reduced pace. The idea was to prevent the French from taking the region's valuable coal and iron reserves for themselves. The policy worked and the presence of a foreign enemy meant that Germans were united in a way they hadn't been united since August 1914.⁸ However, there were unforeseen and severe consequences.

OCCUPATION OF THE RUHR: TENSIONS BETWEEN GERMANY AND FRANCE

Occupation armies are rarely popular with the local population, and the French troops sent into the Ruhr were no exception. German workers, encouraged and assisted by the army, went on strike and engaged in acts of sabotage. The French retaliated. On 31 March, French soldiers killed thirteen workers at the Krupp factory in Essen and wounded forty-one people during a violent protest.⁹ Overall, one hundred Germans were killed during the occupation and 100 000 Germans were expelled from the region.¹⁰



↑ SOURCE 3.06

The French occupation of the Ruhr, 1923. French soldiers set up a machine gun in front of a post office in Essen.

↻ SOURCE 3.07

German poster encouraging workers to use passive resistance. The caption reads: 'No! You cannot force me!'

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Describe the appearance and demeanour of the French soldiers in Source 3.06.
2. What elements of Source 3.07 relate to the German response of passive resistance to the French occupation?
3. In 200–300 words, compare and contrast the two images. What are the similarities and differences between the two?
4. Explain the likely effect that the French occupation would have had on the German people's sense of national pride and their faith in the Weimar Republic.

DID YOU KNOW?

The value of the mark had fallen by so much by the autumn of 1923 that it cost more to print a banknote than the note was worth. The government was printing so many notes that they had to use newspaper presses to maintain the supply.



HYPERINFLATION IN GERMANY

HYPERINFLATION AND ECONOMIC COLLAPSE

Prior to World War I, the German economy had been one of the world's strongest. This was based on plentiful resources such as coal and iron ore, a highly developed industrial base, a sophisticated education system and advanced banking techniques.¹¹ Germany also had a navy second only to Britain's. However, four years of total war had put enormous strain on the economy. Germany was forced to supply its allies with food and other materials, and the Allied naval blockade ensured that Germany could not import necessary supplies or export goods for payment. The German government paid for its war expenses by borrowing money—and soon the national debt began to soar. As industry concentrated on military supplies rather than consumer products, prices began to rise much faster than wages.

The situation was made worse by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. By handing over territory to other European nations—or to the League of Nations as mandated territory—Germany lost 75 per cent of its iron-ore reserves and 26 per cent of its coal reserves.¹² By 1919, the national debt was 144 000 million Deutsche marks, and by December 1922 this had reached 469 000 million marks. In order to reduce the debt level and make reparations payments without charging additional taxes, the Weimar government started printing more money. This only made the situation worse. The price of everyday goods, such as bread, started to rise faster than money could be injected into the economy (see Source 3.08). A vicious cycle of inflation had set in.

While the policy of passive resistance achieved its goal of denying France access to Germany's resources, it had a devastating effect on Germany's already struggling economy. Despite having almost no coal or iron ore to export, the government pledged to pay the workers' wages for the duration of the occupation. This forced the government to print even more money, which led to hyperinflation. There were so many Deutsche marks in circulation that they became worthless.

➔ SOURCE 3.08

Ben Walsh, Modern World History (London: John Murray, 2001), 143.

➔ SOURCE 3.09

Ben Walsh, Modern World History (London: John Murray, 2001), 143.

THE PRICE OF A LOAF OF BREAD IN BERLIN

DATE	PRICE (IN MARKS)
1918	0.63
1922	163
January 1923	250
July 1923	3465
September 1923	1 512 000
November 1923	201 000 000 000

VALUE OF THE DEUTSCHE MARK COMPARED TO US DOLLAR

DATE	VALUE COMPARED TO US DOLLAR
July 1914	4.2
January 1919	8.9
January 1920	14.0
January 1921	64.9
July 1921	76.7
January 1922	191.8
July 1922	493.2
January 1923	17 792
July 1923	353 412
September 1923	98 860 000
November 1923	200 000 000 000



THE CONSEQUENCES OF HYPERINFLATION

Because banknotes were worthless, people traded items they possessed for goods that they needed. This tended to favour wealthy people, who had more possessions to barter with. The government’s health minister noted that there was an increase in a range of ailments caused by a poor diet. In addition, crime, suicides and attacks on minority groups—such as German Jews—all increased.¹³

top SOURCE 3.10

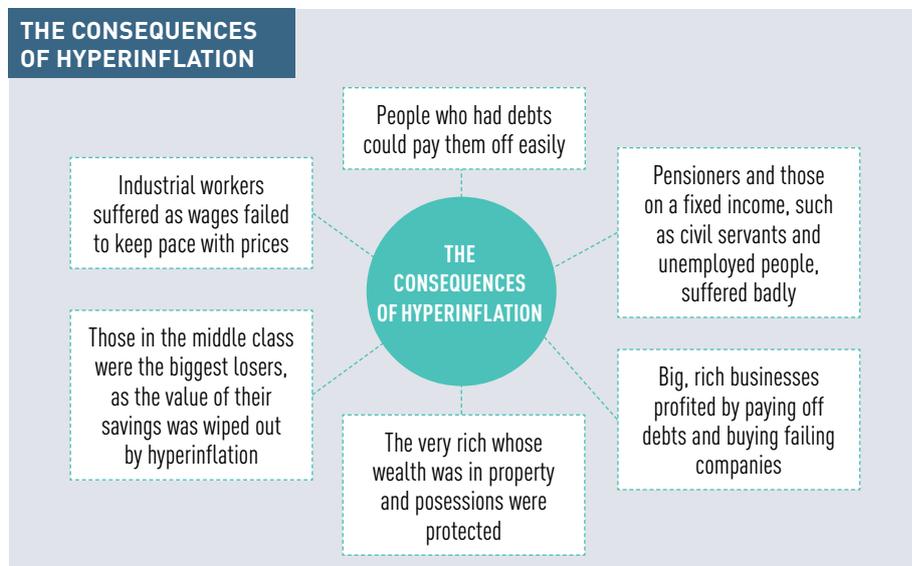
Piles of money in German bank.

SOURCE 3.11

German banknote for 10 billion marks.

SOURCE 3.12

A woman uses worthless Deutsche marks to light a fire.



➔ SOURCE 3.13

The recollections of a woman who ran a Quaker [religious] relief centre which offered help to the poor. Cited in Greg Lacey and Keith Shephard, Germany 1918–1945: A Study in Depth (London: John Murray, 1997), 24–5.

➔ SOURCE 3.14

The recollections of a German writer. Cited in Greg Lacey and Keith Shephard, Germany 1918–1945: A Study in Depth (London: John Murray, 1997), 24–5.

➔ SOURCE 3.15

The recollections of a German writer. Cited in Greg Lacey and Keith Shephard, Germany 1918–1945: A Study in Depth (London: John Murray, 1997), 24–5.

➔ SOURCE 3.16

The recollections of a German university student. Cited in Greg Lacey and Keith Shephard, Germany 1918–1945: A Study in Depth (London: John Murray, 1997), 24–5.

THE IMPACT OF HYPERINFLATION ON FAMILIES

[There was] the widow of a policeman who was left with four children. She had been awarded three months of her late husband's salary. The papers were sent on, as required, to Wiesbaden. There they were again checked, rubber-stamped and sent back to Frankfurt. By the time all this was done, and the money finally paid out to the widow, the amount would only have paid for three boxes of matches.

THE IMPACT OF HYPERINFLATION ON PRICES

One fine day I dropped into a café to have a coffee. As I went in I noticed the price was 5000 marks—just about what I had in my pocket. I sat down, read my paper, drank my coffee, and spent altogether about one hour in the café, and then asked for the bill. The waiter duly presented me with a bill for 8000 marks. 'Why 8000 marks?' I asked. The mark had dropped in the meantime, I was told. So I gave the waiter all the money I had, and he was generous enough to leave it at that.

A STRANGE CRIME

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

A STUDENT REMEMBERS

You very often bought things you did not need. But with those things in hand you could start to barter. You went round and exchanged a pair of socks for a sack of potatoes. And this process was repeated until you eventually ended up with the things you actually needed.

ACTIVITY

SKILLS: PERSPECTIVES

Read the sources and answer the following questions.

1. Analyse the impact that hyperinflation had on a range of different people. How were people's lives adversely affected by the declining value of the mark?
2. Explain why the people mentioned in these sources would have been particularly vulnerable to hyperinflation.
3. What methods or strategies did people use to cope with the effects of hyperinflation?
4. Why do you think that hyperinflation led to attacks on minority groups such as Jews?

THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE

The government realised that it had to do something to end the hyperinflation spiral. A new chancellor, Gustav Stresemann, had been appointed in August 1923 and he was determined to take measures to stabilise the economy and end the occupation of the Ruhr. He called off the campaign of passive resistance and in September Germany resumed making reparations payments. The mark was abolished as a form of currency and replaced by the *Rentenmark* (later renamed the *Reichsmark*), which was much more stable. In order to save money, the government sacked 700 000 civil servants. Finally, Stresemann asked the Allies for an international conference to discuss Germany's dire economic situation and to reassess the reparations plan.

However, not all of the outcomes for the republic were positive. There was lasting resentment against the Weimar government, which was blamed for the crisis, particularly by members of the middle class who had lost all their savings. Workers who lost their jobs or were forced to sell their possessions for necessities such as food also carried deep grievances. This was reflected in the two Reichstag elections of 1924 (see Source 3.27). Amid the fury at the government's response, there were political uprisings from the fringes of the political spectrum. KPD uprisings in Saxony and Thuringia had to be put down by the army. In Bavaria, an extremist group calling itself the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) and its new leader, Adolf Hitler, came to national attention for the first time.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Design a flowchart or mind map to explain the causes of inflation and hyperinflation in Germany from 1914 to 1923.
2. Explain why the German government called for a campaign of passive resistance against the French occupation of the Ruhr.
3. What were the outcomes of the passive resistance campaign?

PRACTICE EXAM

1. Using three or four points, supported with evidence, explain the social impact that hyperinflation had on the German people.
2. Using three or four points, evaluate the outcomes of the Weimar government's responses to the hyperinflation crisis.

ACTIVITIES

DID YOU KNOW?

Upon hearing Adolf Hitler speak for the first time at a DAP meeting in September 1919, Anton Drexler said to a colleague: 'Goodness, he's got a gob [mouth]! We could use him!'

▼ SOURCE 3.17

Hitler speaking in 1923.

HITLER FINDS HIS VOICE

ADOLF HITLER: 'I spoke for thirty minutes, and what before I had simply felt within me, without in any way knowing it, was now proved by reality: I could speak!'

JOINING THE DAP

The end of World War I found Adolf Hitler recuperating in a military hospital. His unit, the List Regiment of the Bavarian Army, had been stationed near Ypres in Belgium when, on the night of 13–14 October 1918, the British bombed their position with mustard gas. Hitler was temporarily blinded by the attack, and he was transported to Stettin in Pomerania (in north-east Germany) for treatment. He was still there when, on 10 November, the hospital chaplain informed the patients that Germany had agreed to sign an armistice with the Allies. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler recorded his reaction:



SOURCE 3.18

Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*
(London: Pimlico, 1992), 186–7.

HITLER ON THE NOVEMBER 1918 ARMISTICE, FROM *MEIN KAMPF*, 1926.

Was it for this that the German soldier had stood fast in the sun's heat and in snowstorms, hungry, thirsty, and freezing, weary from sleepless nights and endless marches? Was it for this that he had lain in the hell of the drumfire and in the fever of gas attacks without wavering, always thoughtful of his one duty to preserve the fatherland from the enemy peril? ... The more I tried to achieve clarity on the monstrous event in this hour, the more the shame of indignation and disgrace burned my brow. What was all the pain in me compared to this misery? There followed terrible days and even worse nights—I knew that all was lost. Only fools, liars, and criminals could hope in the mercy of the enemy. In these nights hatred grew in me, hatred for those responsible for this deed.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Where was Hitler when he heard that Germany had signed the armistice?
2. Explain Hitler's reaction to the news of the armistice. Support your explanation with reference to Hitler's words and the tone of his response.
3. Who might be 'those responsible for this deed'?
4. By referring to the extract, and using your own knowledge, explain why Germany agreed to sign the armistice with the Allies.
5. Evaluate to what extent this extract is useful in explaining how news of the armistice was received by the German population.



SOURCE 3.19

Adolf Hitler (seated on the right) with members of his unit in World War I, including Foxl, the white terrier.



ANTON DREXLER

After being released from hospital, Hitler made his way to Munich, the city he had been living in when the war broke out. He had no prospects and his bank account contained only fifteen marks.¹⁴ The army was his salvation. Unlike almost all of his comrades, who were discharged as soon as the war ended, Hitler was permitted to stay on until 31 March 1920. In the wake of the socialist uprising in Munich in early 1919, the army units in Bavaria received special political education designed to 'root out any lingering socialist sentiments ... and indoctrinate them with the beliefs of the far right.'¹⁵ Hitler took to these ideas so quickly that by August 1919 he was asked to give lectures to other soldiers. One of the main topics of his speeches was anti-Semitism. The purpose of laws in Germany, Hitler declared to his fellow-soldiers, 'must unshakably be the removal of the Jews altogether.'¹⁶

Given his talent as a speaker and his instinctive grasp of politics, Hitler was asked by his captain to attend meetings of the many political parties that had sprung up in Munich after the war and report on their ideologies and activities. One such party was the *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (German Workers' Party or DAP). Started by Anton Drexler on 5 January 1919, the DAP blended socialism and nationalism. It had only a few dozen members when Hitler went along to one of its meetings in a Munich beer hall on 12 September 1919. Hitler was unimpressed by the speakers at the tiny meeting until one of them talked in favour of Bavarian separatism. Hitler attacked him so passionately that Drexler handed him a pamphlet, *My Political Awakening*, and asked Hitler to join the fledgling party. Hitler pondered the invitation for a few days until, sometime in mid-September, he decided to join the DAP.

ADOLF HITLER: LIFE BEFORE WORLD WAR I

As historian Ian Kershaw notes, the events of Hitler's early years 'bear no hint of what would emerge.'¹⁷ He was born on 20 April 1889 in the small village of Braunau Am Inn, on the border of Bavaria and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His father, Alois, was a mid-ranked customs official. His mother, Klara, was a housewife. In 1899 Alois purchased a small farm outside the town of Linz and moved his family there, including Hitler's younger sister Paula. The Hitlers had moved house several times and the elementary school Hitler attended in Linz was his third. Initially a good student, by secondary school the young Hitler grew to despise his teachers; in turn, his teachers thought he was lazy and rude.¹⁸

Hitler's father died in 1903. Alois had wanted his son to follow him into the civil service, but Hitler dreamed of becoming an artist. He left school in 1905, aged sixteen, without graduating and two years later applied to the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Hitler recalled being totally unprepared for the news: 'When I received my rejection, it struck me as a bolt from the blue.'¹⁹ By this time Hitler's mother was gravely ill with breast cancer; she died in December 1907. Hitler, who went back to Linz for the funeral, was grief-stricken: 'It was a dreadful blow, particularly for me ... My mother I had loved.'²⁰

Nevertheless, Hitler returned to Vienna determined to make something of himself. Living off an orphan's pension, Hitler spent his days wandering the streets and admiring the architecture.

He read in the state library and went to the opera, where Wagner was his favourite composer. In September 1908 he applied again to the Academy, and was again rejected. Down and out, Hitler found lodgings at hostels for penniless men. He managed to make a little bit of money by selling watercolour paintings of Viennese street scenes.

At that time Vienna was a cosmopolitan city that was home to dozens of different nationalities. There were also 175 000 Jewish people in the city, about 9 per cent of the population.²¹ It was during his years in Vienna that Hitler formed his ideas on the purity of the German race and his rabid anti-semitism. 'The longer I lived in this city,' he wrote, 'the more my hatred grew for the foreign mixture of peoples which had begun to corrode this old site of German culture.'²² Hitler left Vienna for Munich in 1913. When war broke out in August 1914 Hitler volunteered and in October, as part of the 16th Bavarian Reserve Regiment, he was sent to fight on the Western Front.²³

DID YOU KNOW?

Hitler's father, Alois, was an illegitimate child and took his mother's surname 'Schicklgruber.' Alois was only permitted to change his surname to 'Hitler,' his biological father's surname, in 1876. Somehow 'Heil Schicklgruber!' doesn't have quite the same ring to it as 'Heil Hitler!'



THE RISE OF
HITLER

▼ SOURCE 3.20

Hitler's primary school class. Hitler is in the middle of the top row.



IDEOLOGY AND LEADERSHIP

Soon after joining the party, Hitler became a member of the DAP's leadership committee. He quickly became one of the dominant personalities in the Party and, in February 1920, helped Drexler write up the Party's 25-Point Program (see Source 3.23). In April, the Party changed its name to the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP). This was usually abbreviated to 'Nazi' (short for 'National Socialists'). In mid-1920, Hitler personally designed a new banner for the NSDAP, consisting of a black swastika inside a white circle on a red background. Hitler commented on the significance of the colours and symbols in *Mein Kampf*:

➔ SOURCE 3.21

Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*
(London: Pimlico, 1992), 451–2.



HISTORY OF
THE SWASTIKA
DOCUMENTARY

HITLER ON THE NAZI BANNER

I myself ... after innumerable attempts, had laid a final form; a flag with a red background, a white disk, and a black swastika in the middle. After long trials I also found a definite proportion between the size of the flag and the size of the white disk, as well as the shape and thickness of the swastika ... What a symbol it really is! In red we see the social idea of the movement, in white the nationalist idea, in the swastika the mission of the struggle for the victory of the Aryan man!

➔ SOURCE 3.22

Flags bearing the swastika
at a Nazi rally in 1933.

DID YOU KNOW?

Hitler thought that the swastika represented the pure Germanic race, or Aryans. But the swastika is actually an ancient symbol used in the Buddhist and Hindu faiths, where it represents luck and prosperity. Because of its associations with Nazism and the Holocaust, the swastika is deeply stigmatised in Western cultures; it is illegal to publicly display the swastika in Germany and Austria.



Hitler was put in charge of the propaganda section of the NSDAP and quickly began to attract larger crowds to their meetings. On 24 February 1920 nearly 2000 people listened as Hitler unveiled the Party's 25-Point Program.²⁴ He was also quite successful in securing funds for the Party by encouraging donations. Hitler's own gifts as a public speaker helped fill the beer-halls of Munich where the Party held their meetings. As Ian Kershaw notes, 'It was largely owing to Hitler's public profile that the party membership increased sharply from 190 in January 1920 to 2000 by the end of the year and 3300 by August 1921.'²⁵

THE 25-POINT PROGRAM

📄 SOURCE 3.23

"The 25 Points 1920: Early Nazi Program,"
Fordham University, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/25points.asp>

KEY EXTRACTS FROM THE 25-POINT PROGRAM

- 1 We demand the union of all Germans in a Greater Germany on the basis of the right of national self-determination.
- 2 We demand equality of rights for the German people in its dealings with other nations, and the revocation [repeal] of the peace treaties of Versailles and Saint Germain.
- 3 We demand land and territory (colonies) to feed our people and to settle our surplus population [*lebensraum*].
- 4 Only members of the *volk* [Germanic people] may be citizens of the State. Only those of German blood, whatever their creed may be members of the nation. Accordingly no Jew may be a member of the nation ...
- 7 We demand that the State shall make it its primary duty to provide a livelihood for its citizens. If it should prove impossible to feed the entire population, non-citizens must be deported from the Reich ...
- 10 It must be the first duty of every citizen to perform physical or mental work. The activities of the individual must not clash with the general interest, but must proceed within the framework of the community and be for the general good ...
- 14 We demand profit sharing in large industrial enterprises.
- 15 We demand the extensive development of insurance for old age.
- 16 We demand the creation of a healthy middle class and its conservation, immediate socialisation of the great warehouses and their being leased at low cost to small firms.
- 17 We demand a land reform suitable to our needs, provision of a law for the free expropriation [use] of land for the purposes of public utility, abolition of taxes on land and prevention of all speculation in land.
- 18 We demand the ruthless prosecution of those whose activities are injurious to the common interest. Common criminals, usurers, profiteers must be punished with death ...
- 25 We demand the creation of a strong central power of the Reich.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Summarise in a few words each of the points presented.
2. Conduct a quick web search on the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye and list its key points.
3. Draw up and complete a table similar to the one below. For each of the points presented in Source 3.23, place a tick in the appropriate box to indicate whether you think it is nationalist (in support of one's country), socialist (sharing the wealth equally) or racist (judgments made about a person's racial or religious background).

Point	Nationalist	Socialist	Racist
1			
2			
3			
4, etc			

4. Discuss with a partner the decision you made for each point. Then share your ideas with the rest of the class.



DID YOU KNOW?

Ernst Röhm was badly wounded in the face during World War I. He bore the scars for the rest of his life.



Ernst Röhm.

DID YOU KNOW?

In the wake of the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923, Drexler left the Nazi Party. He lived in obscurity until he was asked to rejoin the party in 1933. This was purely a propaganda stunt engineered to suggest that Hitler had 'made up' with his old comrade. Drexler played no role in the Nazi Party or Germany's war effort, and he died in Munich in 1942.

SOURCE 3.24

Marienplatz in Munich during the Beer Hall Putsch, November 1923.

This success, however, sowed the seeds of resentment in the Nazi Party's founders. Drexler and other members of the leadership committee attempted to curtail Hitler's growing dominance by merging the NSDAP with other Bavarian nationalist parties. When Hitler heard of this, he threatened to resign. He knew that he had the support of the vast majority of ordinary members and, at two meetings in July 1921, Hitler's resignation offer was rejected. He was appointed party president while Drexler was given the meaningless position of honorary president. Hitler was now master of the Nazi Party.

THE BEER HALL PUTSCH

ADOLF HITLER: 'The man who is born to be a dictator is not compelled. He wills it.'

Hitler started making rapid and significant changes to the Nazi Party. Soon after taking power he formed the SA (*Sturmabteilung* or Assault Battalion). This was a paramilitary organisation led by Ernst Röhm, a captain in the German Army during World War I. They were nicknamed the 'brown shirts' after their distinctive uniform. Their primary function was to protect Nazi Party meetings and break up the meetings of political opponents. SA activities frequently led to massive street brawls.²⁶ Hitler also recruited Hermann Göring, a World War I fighter pilot with connections to German aristocracy. Hitler had also developed contacts with Erich Ludendorff. Göring and Ludendorff gave some much-needed respectability to the Nazi Party, which was often seen merely as a fringe-dwelling, rabble-rousing mob.

Towards the end of 1923, Nazi Party membership had risen to 55 000.²⁷ Members came from all classes and were attracted by Hitler's speaking style and his relentless attacks on the Weimar government. The Party, however, remained very much a Bavarian movement and had almost no impact at the national level. Hitler was inspired by Mussolini's 'March on Rome' in 1922 and sought



MUSSOLINI'S MARCH ON ROME, 1922

The First Fascist

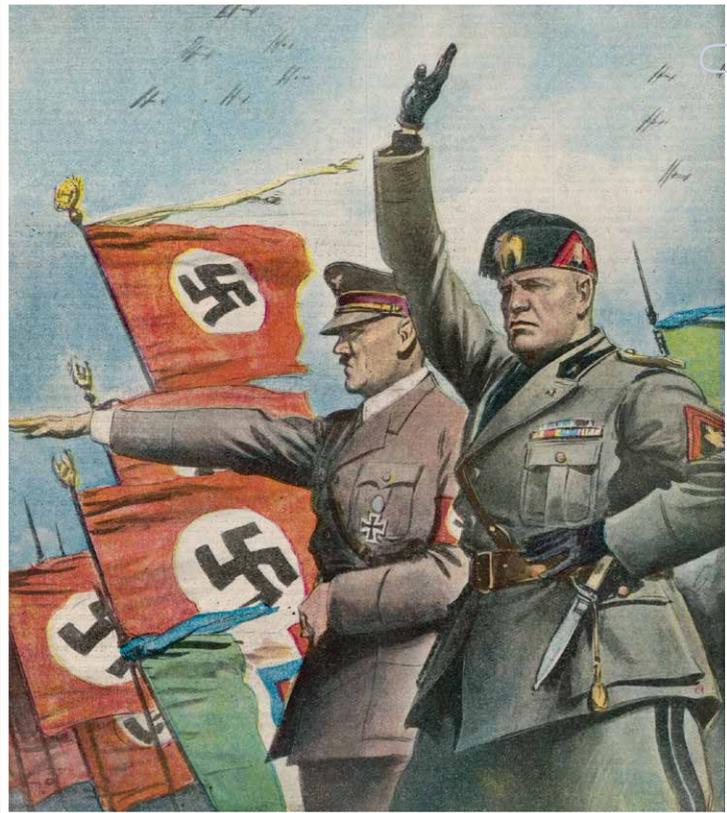
Benito Mussolini founded the Italian Fascist Party in March 1919. Like Nazism, fascism appealed to ardent nationalists and was violently anti-communist. In October 1922, Mussolini and his supporters, named the Blackshirts, marched on Rome to demand government authority. This was granted by King Victor Emmanuel III and Mussolini was appointed prime minister on 30 October. Mussolini seized dictatorial powers in 1925. Hitler was greatly impressed by the March on Rome and its success inspired him to undertake his own coup.



WHAT IS FASCISM?
SOURCE ANALYSIS

➔ SOURCE 3.25

Mussolini and Hitler, depicted in 1937.



ACTIVITY

EXTENSION

Compare and contrast the lives of Hitler and Mussolini from their births to 1925. Include topics such as childhood, education, service during World War I, ideology and political activities. You could present this as a report or a detailed table.

DID YOU KNOW?

As a World War I fighter pilot, Hermann Göring commanded *Jagdgeschwader 1* (Fighter Wing 1), the unit Manfred von Richthofen, better known as the Red Baron, led before his death on 21 April 1918. Göring scored twenty-two 'kills' during the war, thereby qualifying as an 'ace.'

to replicate the Italian dictator's success with his own 'March on Berlin.' The trigger was the Weimar government's decision in September 1923 to call off the campaign of passive resistance and resume paying war reparations.²⁸

On the night of 8 November, the Bavarian prime minister, Gustav von Kahr, and the chiefs of the Bavarian army (Otto von Lossow) and police (Hans von Seisser) were addressing a crowd of 3000 businessmen in a Munich beerhall named the *Bürgerbräukeller*. Hitler and Göring, along with 600 SA troops, stormed the meeting and announced that a national revolution had begun. Hitler coerced von Kahr, von Seisser and von Lossow to join his uprising. The next day, Hitler and about 3000 Nazi supporters, including Göring and Ludendorff, marched on the Munich Town Hall where they hoped to gain the support of the army and police. This became known as the Munich Beer Hall Putsch. The goal after that was to somehow move on Berlin.

DID YOU KNOW?

In *Mein Kampf* Hitler claimed he was the seventh member of the DAP. This is not true. He was the seventh member of the leadership committee, but his membership card number was 555. Even this is misleading. In order to give the impression that the DAP was more popular than it really was, the party started its membership at the number 501. Hitler, therefore, was the fifty-fourth member of the DAP.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE PUTSCH

The putsch had little chance of success. It was poorly organised and did not have a realistic objective. The police, who had not gone over to the Nazis, lined the town square. As the Nazis entered, the police ordered them to halt and then opened fire. Some of the Nazis who were carrying guns returned fire. Fourteen Nazis and four policemen were killed. Hitler fell to the ground and dislocated his shoulder. He was taken away in a car and arrested two days later. Many of the leading Nazis, along with Ludendorff, were arrested in the square.²⁹

In February 1924 the trial of the leading Nazis began. Hitler used the occasion as a platform to expound the Nazi ideology. 'There is no such thing as high treason against the traitors of 1918,' Hitler told the court during one of his lengthy monologues.³⁰ The judge, sympathetic to the Nazi cause, handed down lenient sentences. Hitler received a prison sentence of four years but ended up serving only nine months. Hitler served this time in relative comfort in Landsberg prison, where he started dictating the first few chapters of what would become *Mein Kampf* to his faithful subordinate, Rudolf Hess. The most important outcome of the failed putsch was Hitler's realisation that he could not overthrow the state in a violent revolution. If he wanted to rule Germany, he would have to work with the system rather than against it. In other words, he would have to become a legitimate politician.

➔ SOURCE 3.26

Hitler and his supporters during their trial for treason. Ludendorff is to the left of Hitler and Röhm is second from the right.



ACTIVITIES

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Identify two of the individuals present in this photo.
2. Identify two elements of the image that suggest some military support for the Nazi Party.
3. By referring directly to the image, and using your own knowledge, explain what prompted Hitler to launch the Beer Hall Putsch in November 1923.
4. Evaluate to what extent this image helps us understand the nature and extent of the support for the Nazi Party by February 1924.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How and when did Hitler first come into contact with the DAP?
2. What effect did Hitler have on the Nazi Party membership? Refer to relevant statistics in your response.
3. What role did the SA play in the early years of the Nazi Party?

THE NAZI WORLD VIEW

Nazism wasn't really a political ideology. An ideology is a group of closely connected ideas that form an interpretative framework for analysing society and human activity. Marxism and liberalism are two classic examples of ideologies. Nazism, on the other hand, was a random collection of ideas cobbled together by Hitler during his years in Vienna. There was nothing particularly original or unique about them; most of his ideas were popular among some German-speaking people throughout the nineteenth century.³¹ The basic tenets of Nazism can be found in *Mein Kampf* and Hitler remained committed to them until his death in 1945.



NAZI IDEOLOGY:
USING EVIDENCE

RACISM

Hitler believed that the races of the world could be organised into a hierarchy with the Aryans at the top as the master race (or *Herrenvolk*). They should resist diminishing the purity of their blood by mingling with lesser races. In a perversion of Darwin's theories on evolution and the survival of the fittest, Hitler believed that there would be a struggle between the various races for world domination.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Closely linked to Hitler's racism was his hatred of Jewish people. Hitler believed that they were the lowest form of humanity, and that they were seeking to corrupt and subjugate all races, particularly the Aryans. For Hitler, Jews represented an impure race that had to be destroyed in order to protect the pure Aryan people and their culture. This would eventually lead to the Holocaust during World War II.

NATIONALISM

Hitler believed that all true Germans should commit themselves to the Fatherland, sacrificing their life if necessary. He also demanded the right of the German people to *Lebensraum* ('living space'), particularly in Eastern Europe and Russia. This, of course, would mean the total rejection of the Treaty of Versailles and the creation of a vast Germanic state in Europe.

THE IDEOLOGY OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM

FÜHRERPRINZIP

This was the idea (or principle) that the leader, or *führer*, was infallible and could not be questioned. Hitler ensured his dominance of the Nazi Party by adopting a structure (see page 110) that placed him at the apex. All key decisions were either made personally or approved by Hitler. Once a decision had been made, no debate would be tolerated. This was essentially anti-democratic and hence a direct threat to the Weimar Republic.

ANTI-MARXIST

Despite having 'socialism' in the Party name, Hitler was deeply opposed to the socialist ideas of Karl Marx as implemented during the Russian Revolution. Hitler felt that Marx's ideas were essentially un-German and linked to the Jewish plot to take over the world. Hitler therefore despised the Soviet Union and the left-wing parties in the German political system. The *Lebensraum* he demanded would come chiefly from Russia, and its people would toil as slaves for German settlers.

VOLKSGEMEINSCHAFT

This term roughly means 'the pure, Germanic nation.' Hitler thought that all members of the racially pure *volk* (people) should come together in a single community. They would put the collective good above the needs and desires of the individual. 'German values' would be promoted over divisive notions of class, politics and religion. This was a vague concept that appealed to many Germans, from all social positions.

WEIMAR: THE YEARS OF STABILITY 1924–29

GUSTAV STRESEMANN: 'German policy will be one of finesse.'

The twin crises of the French occupation and hyperinflation had an adverse impact on the moderate and liberal parties of the Reichstag. In the two elections of 1924, middle-class voters, who had suffered greatly when their savings were wiped out, abandoned the centre-right DDP and DVP for the nationalist DNVP. (see Source 3.27) Voters on the left switched from the SPD to the more radical KPD. The anti-republican, anti-democratic parties were on the rise. Even the NSDAP, previously a nonentity in federal German politics, picked up a handful of seats in the Reichstag. In spite of this, the years 1924–29 are typically seen as an era of relative stability for the Weimar Republic.³²

SOURCE 3.27

Martin Collier and Philip
Pedley, *Germany 1919–45*
(Oxford: Heinemann, 2000), 31.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1926, Stresemann shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Aristide Briand, the French foreign minister, for their work on the Locarno Treaty.



Gustav Stresemann.

REICHSTAG ELECTION RESULTS DURING THE 1920s

PARTY	MAY 1924 (472 SEATS)		DECEMBER 1924 (493 SEATS)		MAY 1928 (491 SEATS)	
	PERCENTAGE OF VOTES	NUMBER OF SEATS	PERCENTAGE OF VOTES	NUMBER OF SEATS	PERCENTAGE OF VOTES	NUMBER OF SEATS
KPD	12.6%	62	9.0%	45	10.6%	54
SPD	20.5%	100	26.0%	131	29.8%	153
DDP	5.7%	28	6.3%	32	4.9%	25
Zentrum	13.4%	65	13.6%	69	12.1%	62
BVP	3.2%	16	3.7%	19	3.1%	16
DVP	9.2%	45	10.1%	51	8.7%	45
DNVP	19.5%	95	20.5%	103	14.2%	73
NSDAP	6.5%	32	3.0%	14	2.6%	12

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Which party received the most votes between 1924 and 1928?
2. Which party received the least votes between 1924 and 1928?
3. Explain the rise and decline of support for the NSDAP over this time.

ECONOMIC AND FOREIGN POLICY GAINS

The most prominent Weimar politician during this period was Gustav Stresemann. Stresemann was chancellor for only three months in 1923 (August–September) but he played a crucial role in bringing the French occupation of the Ruhr to an end. He was Germany's foreign minister (1924–29) and did a great deal to bring Germany back into the international community. As a founding member of the DVP, Stresemann was quite successful at holding together a coalition of moderate left- and right-wing parties. His first success was the Dawes Plan of 1924. Named after the American banker Charles Dawes, a committee

of international economists tried to find a solution to Germany's reparations problems. The committee devised the following solution:

- The French army is to leave the Ruhr
- Establish a new national bank and currency, the *Rentenmark*
- A loan of 800 million marks from the United States to aid German economic recovery
- Reparations payments to be made over a longer period of time in amounts that would not ruin the German economy.

The plan was a success but relied heavily on a steady flow of money from the United States. In 1925, Stresemann proposed a security pact with France. Under the terms, known as the Locarno Treaty, Germany and France agreed that the border between their two countries would remain permanent and the Rhineland would remain free of German troops. Violence was also renounced as a means of settling international disputes. Subsequently, Germany was admitted into the League of Nations on 8 September 1926.

Stresemann's last diplomatic success was the Young Plan. Under the terms of this agreement, named after Owen D. Young, the American banker who chaired the negotiation panel, reparations were to be paid until 1988. The limit was set at 2000 million marks, 500 million less than the sum set under the Dawes Plan. In addition, Allied troops would be withdrawn from the Rhineland in 1930, five years ahead of schedule.³³ For Stresemann personally, and Germany generally, these deals represented significant successes. This was reflected in the election results of May 1928 which saw the pro-republic parties regain the votes they had lost in 1924 (see Source 3.27).

Another important development in this period was the election of former World War I Field Marshall Paul von Hindenburg as president of the Republic in 1925. Hindenburg did not stand in the first round, but he was persuaded to run by other high-ranking officers and conservative politicians who were concerned about a victory by the centre-left candidates. DVP candidate Karl Jarres withdrew his candidacy in favour of Hindenburg, who narrowly won the second round. Hindenburg did not represent any particular party and he swore to faithfully uphold the Constitution. Nevertheless, Hindenburg was deeply conservative and his election was a victory for the nationalist, anti-democratic elements of German politics.³⁴



Paul von Hindenburg, president of Germany 1925–1934.

RESULTS OF THE 1925 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

FIRST ROUND			SECOND ROUND		
CANDIDATE/PARTY	VOTES	%	CANDIDATE/PARTY	VOTES	%
Karl Jarres (DVP; DNVP)	10 416 658	38.8	Paul von Hindenburg (unaligned)	14 655 641	48.3
Otto Braun (SPD)	7 802 497	29.0	Wilhelm Marx (Zentrum)	13 751 605	45.3
Wilhelm Marx (Zentrum)	3 887 734	14.5	Ernst Thälmann (KPD)	1 931 151	6.4
Ernst Thälmann (KPD)	1 871 815	7.0			

← SOURCE 3.28

"Weimar Germany Presidential Election 1925," *Electoral Geography* 2.0, <http://www.electoralgeography.com/new/en/countries/g/germany/germany-presidential-election-1925.html>

DID YOU KNOW?

Hitler originally wanted the title of his book to be *Four and a Half Years of Struggle against Lies, Stupidity and Cowardice*. His publisher, Max Amman, shrewdly suggested that he reduce it to the more marketable *My Struggle* (*Mein Kampf*).

NAZIS ON THE MARGIN: 1924–30

WILLIAM L. SHIRER: 'One scarcely heard of Hitler or the Nazis except as butts of jokes.'

When Hitler was released from prison in December 1924, his political future looked grim indeed. Other party leaders were in jail or exile and membership was falling. The brief success the party experienced in the May 1924 Reichstag elections had evaporated by December (see Source 3.27). The party leadership group was also bitterly divided in terms of philosophy: some members believed ardently in the socialist aspects of the party while others promoted nationalism and anti-Marxism. On 25 February 1925 Hitler officially re-launched the Nazi Party. However, he was unable to control the rival factions. Some party members utterly rejected Hitler's new policy of a legitimate path to power rather than a violent revolution.³⁵

In spite of this, Hitler was determined to stamp his complete authority over the party. At a party conference in the northern Bavarian town of Bamberg on 14 February 1926, Hitler introduced the concept of *Führerprinzip* (the leadership principle). *Führerprinzip* held that the leader was infallible and could not be questioned.³⁶ Absolute loyalty was the highest virtue in the re-born party. Crucially, Hitler also won over Joseph Goebbels, one of the key Nazi Party members in Berlin. As a reward for his support, Goebbels was appointed *Gauleiter* of Germany's capital in October 1926. Hitler also set about restructuring the party. Germany was divided into regions (*Gaue*) which matched the electoral districts of the Weimar Republic. Each *Gau* was controlled by a *Gauleiter* who then created district (*Kreis*) and branch (*Ort*) groups in his region. This continued down to the ordinary party members (*parteigenosse*). The leader of each subdivision was directly responsible to the person above them, and the leaders of the *Gaue* were personally responsible to Hitler. This vertical and hierarchical structure gave Hitler almost total control over the NSDAP.

STRUCTURE OF THE NSDAP





SOURCE 3.29

Hitler salutes SA troops during a Nazi Party rally.

Important symbolic changes were also made to raise the Party's profile and transmit a sense of unity and purpose. In 1924, the brown shirts of the SA troops became the official party uniform. Two years later the right-arm salute and the cry 'Heil Hitler!', used only intermittently since 1923, became an official, even ritualistic, element of party meetings and rallies.³⁷

THE FORMATION OF THE SS

A new group within the Nazi Party was created in 1925: the *Schutzstaffel* (Protection Squad), better known as the SS. This was an elite body whose hand-picked members swore a personal oath to protect Hitler with their lives.³⁸ The SS were distinguished from the SA by their black uniforms. Initially, the SS comprised 200 members. From 1929 the SS was put under the command of Heinrich Himmler and the organisation started to grow rapidly in terms of manpower and influence within the party.

PARTY MEMBERSHIP

The Nazi Party slowly recovered from the failed putsch of 1923 and its membership began to rise (see Source 3.31). In spite of the significant changes to the party's structure, image and overall strategy, Hitler was deeply disappointed with the results of the 1928 election. The Nazis had failed to capitalise on the

DID YOU KNOW?

The brown shirts used by the Nazis as their uniform from 1924 were actually army surplus. They were originally made for German soldiers fighting in East Africa during World War I.

➔ SOURCE 3.30

Hitler's bodyguard, the SS.

DID YOU KNOW?

All members of the Nazi Party were given a badge, but only the first 100 000 had a badge where the rim was embossed with a golden laurel wreath. The wearers of this badge called themselves *Alte Kämpfer* (Old Fighters), as they had joined up during the party's early days.



NSDAP golden party badge.



ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What role did the SS play in the early years of the Nazi Party?
2. What impact would the uniform and formations of the SS have on an observer at a Nazi Party rally?

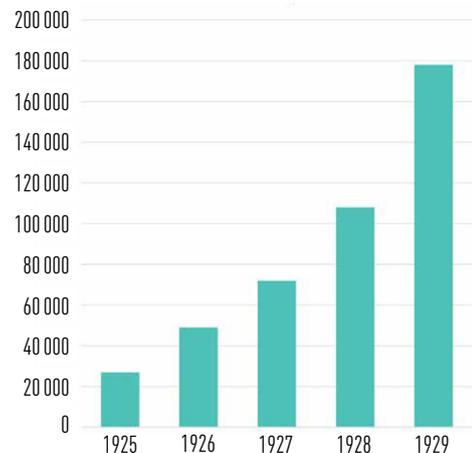
December 1924 election result and lost two of its seats in the Reichstag (see Source 3.27). The relative prosperity and stability of the Weimar Republic from the mid-1920s starved the party of the crises on which it thrived. A German government report in 1927 noted that the NSDAP 'was not advancing' and was 'a numerically insignificant ... radical revolutionary splinter group.'³⁹ If the party was to survive and become a real force in German politics, Hitler needed another crisis.

➔ SOURCE 3.31

Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (London: Penguin Books, 1952), 141.

NAZI PARTY MEMBERSHIP

YEAR	MEMBERSHIP
1925	27 000
1926	49 000
1927	72 000
1928	108 000
1929	178 000



HITLER BECOMES CHANCELLOR

PRESIDENT VON HINDENBURG, JANUARY 1933: 'You cannot for one moment, gentlemen, imagine that I intend to appoint that Austrian corporal Reich Chancellor.'

ECONOMIC COLLAPSE

On Tuesday 29 October 1929, the Wall Street stock market in New York crashed. The effects were felt in most developed countries in the world, but Germany was particularly vulnerable. American banks had invested heavily in the stock market and lost billions. To make good their losses, they recalled a large proportion of their loans including those given to Germany. The German government and businesses had borrowed heavily from American banks and relied on a constant stream of credit from them to keep operating. Now this crucial source of funds had dried up. German exports also dropped because the purchasing power of most nations had declined. As a result, German businesses began laying off their workers. By 1931, 50 000 businesses had been forced to close and 5.5 million Germans were out of work.⁴⁰ The resulting social and economic chaos gave Hitler the opportunity he desperately needed to turn around the fortunes of the NSDAP. As unemployment started to rise, the Party made enormous gains in the Reichstag and presidential elections of the early 1930s.

WHO VOTED FOR THE NAZIS?

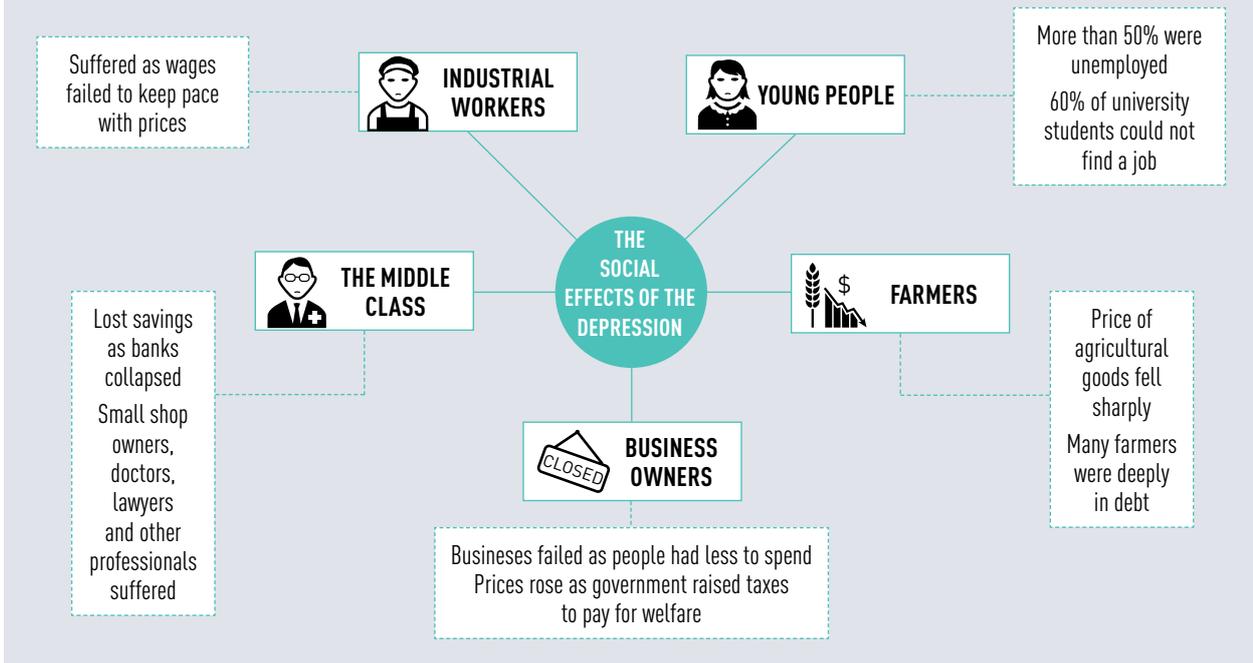
When the Great Depression hit Germany and millions were thrown out of work, people started to look for answers. Hitler and the Nazis appealed to them by pointing at scapegoats such as the Weimar politicians, Jewish people and the communists (who had also done well in the *Reichstag* elections of 1930 and 1932). Hitler's persistent attacks on the Treaty of Versailles were also very popular with patriotic Germans of all classes. While the Nazis won the vote of a broad cross-section of German society, they were particularly popular with the middle class. Interestingly, about one-third of German workers also voted for Hitler rather than the KPD or SPD.⁴¹ Geographically, the Nazis were more popular in the north and east of the country. They competed with the KPD and SPD in industrial areas, like the Ruhr, for the working-class vote. The Nazis gained many votes in rural areas but did poorly in regions that were strongly Catholic, such as Bavaria (where, ironically, the Nazi Party was founded).

➔ SOURCE 3.32

Nazi campaign poster from 1932. It reads 'Work, Freedom and Bread. Vote for the National Socialists.'



THE SOCIAL EFFECTS OF THE DEPRESSION IN GERMANY



➔ SOURCE 3.33

"Election Results in Germany 1924–1933," Marxists Internet Archive, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/germany/elect.htm>

RESULTS OF THE 1932 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

FIRST ROUND (MARCH)			SECOND ROUND (APRIL)		
CANDIDATE/PARTY	VOTES	%	CANDIDATE/PARTY	VOTES	%
Paul von Hindenburg (independent)	18 651 497	49.6	Paul von Hindenburg (independent)	19 359 983	53.0
Adolf Hitler (NSDAP)	11 339 446	30.1	Adolf Hitler (NSDAP)	13 418 547	36.8
Ernst Thälmann (KPD)	4 938 341	13.2	Ernst Thälmann (KPD)	3 706 759	10.2
Theodor Duesterberg (DNVP)	2 557 729	6.8			

➔ SOURCE 3.34

Martin Collier and Philip Pedley, *Germany 1919–45* (Oxford: Heinemann, 2000), 77.

REICHSTAG ELECTION RESULTS 1930 AND 1932

PARTY	SEPTEMBER 1930 (577 SEATS)		JULY 1932 (608 SEATS)	
	PERCENTAGE OF VOTE	NUMBER OF SEATS	PERCENTAGE OF VOTE	NUMBER OF SEATS
KPD	13.1%	77	14.3%	89
SPD	24.5%	143	21.6%	133
DDP	3.8%	20	1.0%	4
Zentrum	11.8%	68	12.5%	75
BVP	3.0%	19	3.2%	22
DVP	4.5%	30	1.2%	7
DNVP	7.0%	41	5.9%	37
NSDAP	18.3%	107	37.3%	230

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Identify the two parties that gained the most seats in the Reichstag from 1930 to 1932.
2. Identify the two parties that lost the most seats in the Reichstag from 1930 to 1932.
3. By referring to the statistics in the tables, and using your own knowledge, explain the economic, social and political effects of the Depression on Germany.
4. Evaluate the usefulness of these sources in explaining the popularity of the Nazi Party from 1924 to 1932.

SKILLS: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Explain the similarities and differences between the hyperinflation of 1923 and the Great Depression of 1929. Explore themes such as the origins of the economic crises, the impact on people's lives and the overall outcomes.

NAZI ELECTION STRATEGIES

The Great Depression was not the only reason for the NSDAP's success at the ballot box from 1930. The Party employed a range of modern techniques designed to secure as many votes as possible. Hitler's public speaking was also a strong drawcard for the Party.

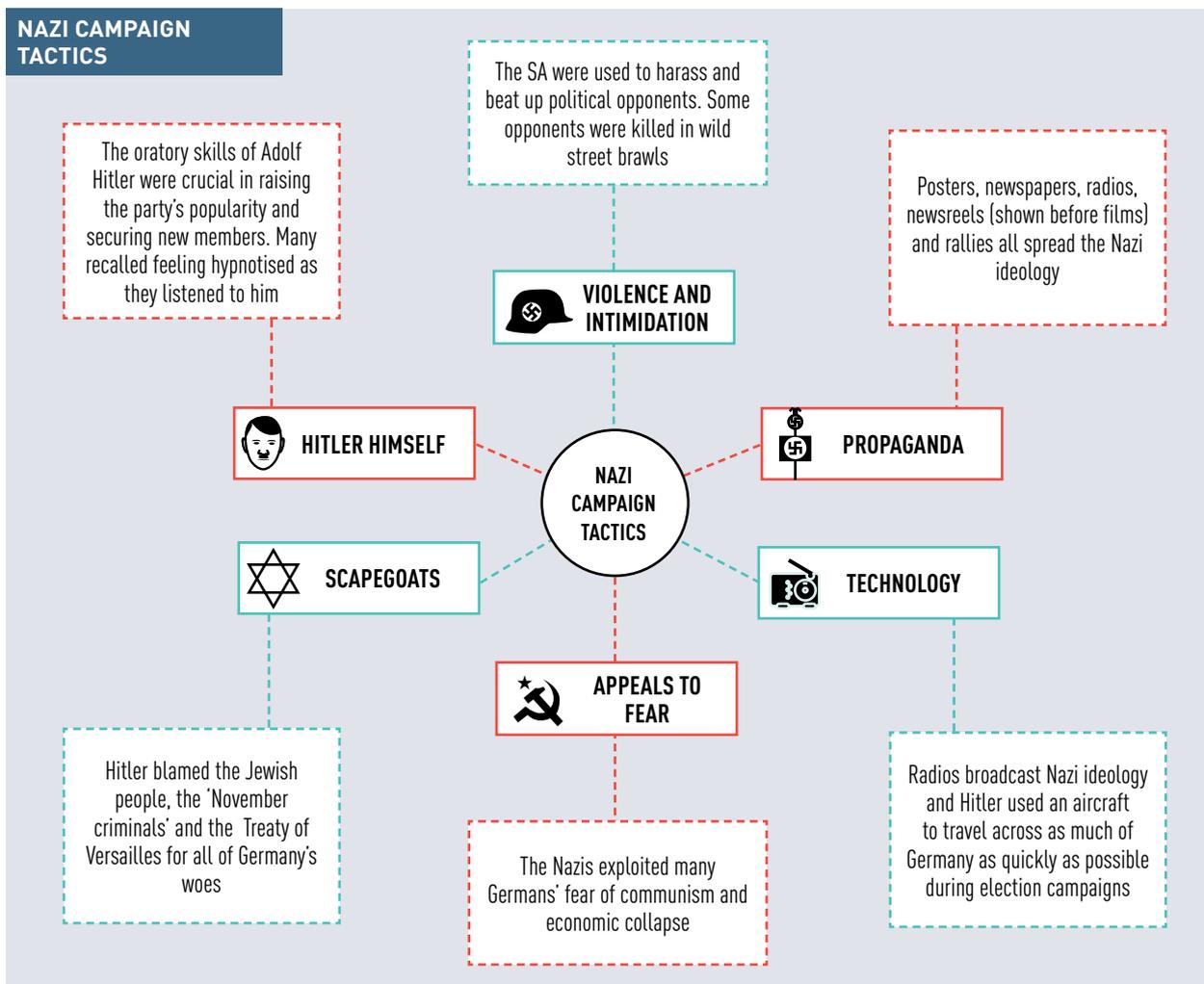


HITLER SPEAKS



NAZI PROPAGANDA

NAZI CAMPAIGN TACTICS





Heinrich Brüning, chancellor, March 1930–May 1932.

ARTICLE 48 AND BACKROOM DEALS

The chancellor at the time of the Nazi Party's breakthrough in the polls was Heinrich Brüning. A member of the Zentrum Party, Brüning was unwilling to work with either the radical left or right. Consequently, in order to pass laws, Brüning's only option was to ask President Hindenburg to resort to using Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution (see page 93). While technically legal, its overuse by Brüning (five times in 1930 and sixty-six times in 1932) weakened the democratic process in Germany and paved the way for authoritarian rule.⁴²

Brüning was blamed by many Germans for the bank closures, business failures and massive unemployment of the early 1930s. In May 1932 Hindenburg was urged by conservative politicians to dismiss Brüning. His replacement was Franz von Papen, a deeply conservative aristocrat. In July, new Reichstag elections were held (see Source 3.35) and, in a campaign marked by considerable violence, the Nazis achieved their best result thus far. While the Nazis were now the largest party in the Reichstag, they did not hold an outright majority. Hitler demanded the chancellorship but Hindenburg kept Papen in this office. Hindenburg personally despised the leader of the NSDAP, and contemptuously referred to him as *der böhmische Gefreiter*, or 'the bohemian corporal' in reference to Hitler's Austrian background and the low rank he held in World War I.⁴³

Papen struggled to muster any support in the bitterly divided Reichstag and was humiliated on 12 September when a vote of no confidence in his leadership was passed against him (512 votes to 42). As a result, Papen was forced to dissolve the Reichstag and call for new elections in November.

SOURCE 3.35

Martin Collier and Philip Pedley, *Germany 1919–45* (Oxford: Heinemann, 2000), 77.

REICHSTAG ELECTION RESULTS 1932 AND 1933

PARTY	NOVEMBER 1932 (584 SEATS)		MARCH 1933 (647 SEATS)	
	PERCENTAGE OF VOTE	NUMBER OF SEATS	PERCENTAGE OF VOTE	NUMBER OF SEATS
KPD	16.9%	100	12.3%	81
SPD	20.4%	121	18.3%	120
DDP	1.0%	2	0.9%	5
Zentrum	11.9%	70	11.2%	74
BVP	3.1%	20	2.7%	18
DVP	1.9%	11	1.1%	2
DNVP	8.3%	52	8.0%	52
NSDAP	33.1%	196	43.9%	288

DID YOU KNOW?

Hitler was not eligible to sit in the Reichstag in the 1920s because he was not a German citizen. He renounced his Austrian citizenship in 1925 but was unable to secure German citizenship. Technically he was *staatenlos*, or 'stateless'. He only became a naturalised German in April 1932 when he announced his candidacy for the presidency.

The outcome of the November elections suggested that the Nazis had already peaked in terms of their popularity. Hitler was desperate to be appointed chancellor before support for the NSDAP fell any further and election-fatigue set in. As Joseph Goebbels noted in his diary, 'We must come to power in the foreseeable future. Otherwise we'll win ourselves to death in elections.'⁴⁴ Still opposed to Hitler, von Hindenburg replaced Papen with Kurt von Schleicher on 2 December. Schleicher was a former army officer who had served under Hindenburg during the war. However, Papen wanted his revenge on Schleicher—whom he blamed for his losing the office of chancellor—and conspired to have him removed. Papen knew he had no chance of reclaiming the chancellorship himself in the short-term; he needed to promote someone whom he thought he could control.

On 4 January 1933, Papen met with Hitler and they struck a deal: Hitler would replace Schleicher as chancellor and Papen would serve as vice-chancellor. Papen managed to convince von Hindenburg that Schleicher lacked the support of the army and conservative landowners. The elderly von Hindenburg (he was now eighty-four) sacked Schleicher on 28 January. Two days later, Hitler was appointed chancellor with the support of a coalition of right-wing parties. Papen was duly appointed vice-chancellor and believed that he could control Hitler from behind the scenes. Goebbels was typically cynical and ruthless when he wrote in his diary: 'The stupidity of democracy. It will always remain one of democracy's best jokes that it provided its deadly enemies with the means by which it was destroyed.'⁴⁵



Kurt von Schleicher, chancellor, December 1932–January 1933.



Franz von Papen, chancellor, May–November 1932.

SOURCE 3.36

Hindenburg officially appoints Hitler Chancellor.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Describe how Hitler is dressed. Compare his attire with what he is wearing in Source 3.29. Explain why Hitler wore different types of clothes on different occasions.
2. How useful is this source in explaining why Hitler was appointed chancellor?



HITLER'S RISE TO POWER



HITLER'S SPEECHES

THE PATH TO DICTATORSHIP

ADOLF HITLER: 'I have given myself this one goal—to sweep these thirty political parties out of Germany.'

Despite being appointed chancellor, Hitler did not yet have total control of the German political system. The NSDAP did not have an outright majority in the Reichstag and only two of the twelve cabinet ministers were Nazis. Moreover, Hindenburg had already dismissed several chancellors since 1925 and could easily do the same to Hitler. Looking for an absolute majority in the Reichstag, Hitler called for new national elections to be held on 5 March. Before that occurred, however, Hitler was given a golden opportunity to strengthen his grip on power.

THE REICHSTAG FIRE

On the night of 27 February 1933, the Reichstag building was gutted by fire. A young Dutch communist named Marinus van der Lubbe was arrested at the scene and charged with arson. At the time, some accused the Nazis of deliberately lighting the fire or letting van der Lubbe into the building as an excuse to crack down on their political opponents. The real cause of the fire will probably never be known. However, what is of greater significance is how the Nazis cynically exploited the opportunity. Hitler and Göring, the minister in charge of the police in Prussia, quickly pointed to a larger communist plot. Through Hindenburg's use of Article 48, Hitler suspended personal freedoms and liberties and gave police the power to hold suspects without trial. Anti-Nazi newspapers and radio stations were shut down and hundreds of Hitler's opponents were locked up. In spite of these heavy-handed tactics, the Nazis failed to secure the outright majority they needed in the March Reichstag elections (see Source 3.35). Hitler was forced to rule in a coalition with the DNVP.

▼ SOURCE 3.37

The Reichstag in flames, 27 February 1933.



THE ENABLING ACT

Undeterred by this setback, Hitler pressed on with his goal of gathering all power to himself by passing the Enabling Act. In order to make the necessary changes to the constitution, however, Hitler needed two-thirds of the vote in the Reichstag. With the KPD and SPD deputies holding 200 seats, this would be impossible. Hitler won over the moderate-right and centre parties with promises to respect religious and moral values. When the Reichstag deputies met on 23 March in the Kroll Opera House to vote on the Enabling Act, the left-wing deputies—those who weren't in prison—were prevented by the SA from entering. The Enabling Act was passed by 444 votes to 94 and came into force the next day.

THE ENABLING ACT, 24 MARCH 1933

The Reichstag has passed the following law ... The requirements of legal Constitutional change have been met, it is being proclaimed herewith.

ARTICLE 1. In addition to the procedure outlined for the passage of legislation in the Constitution, the Government also is authorised to pass laws ...

ARTICLE 2. Laws passed by the government may deviate from the Constitution ... The prerogatives of the President remain unchanged.

ARTICLE 3. The laws passed by the government shall be issued by the Chancellor and published in the official gazette ...

SOURCE 3.38

"The Enabling Act," German History in Documents and Images, http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1496

DID YOU KNOW?

The actual title of the Enabling Act was 'The Law for Terminating the Suffering of the People and Nation'.

This act essentially gave Hitler and his cabinet of ministers the power to make laws by side-stepping the Reichstag and the constitution. In effect, it gave Hitler the dictatorial powers he had always demanded. He could now run Germany the way he ran the Nazi Party—as the undisputed leader.

GLEICHSCHALTUNG

As an important part of his efforts to control political and social life in Germany, Hitler initiated a policy of *Gleichschaltung*, or 'coordination.' This meant bringing all aspects of life into line with the ideologies of National Socialism. The Nazis passed a series of laws in order to realise this goal. Some of the key laws were:

7 April 1933

Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service: Jews and political opponents of the regime were thrown out of the civil service.

2 May 1933

The abolition of the German trade union movement: Trade unions were banned and replaced by the German Labour Front (DAF), which was completely controlled by the Nazis.

14 July 1933

The abolition of all political parties except the Nazi Party and the Law Against the New Establishment of Political Parties: These two laws saw all political parties in Germany, except the NSDAP, declared illegal, and no new parties could be established to replace them.

January 1934

Law for the Reconstruction of the German States: All state governments were abolished. The national government in Berlin was now the only legitimate source of political authority in Germany.

April 1934

Control of the legal system: The Nazi government established People's Courts to deal with crimes against the state, such as treason. There was no right to appeal in these courts.

ACTIVITY**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

1. Explain how the laws passed under the *Gleichschaltung* initiative would have helped the Nazis increase their power.
2. Which elements of the Nazi ideology were represented under the *Gleichschaltung* laws?
3. Explain how the Enabling Act gave Hitler and the Nazis dictatorial powers.



THE NIGHT OF THE LONG KNIVES



Heinrich Himmler, leader of the SS.

THE NIGHT OF THE LONG KNIVES

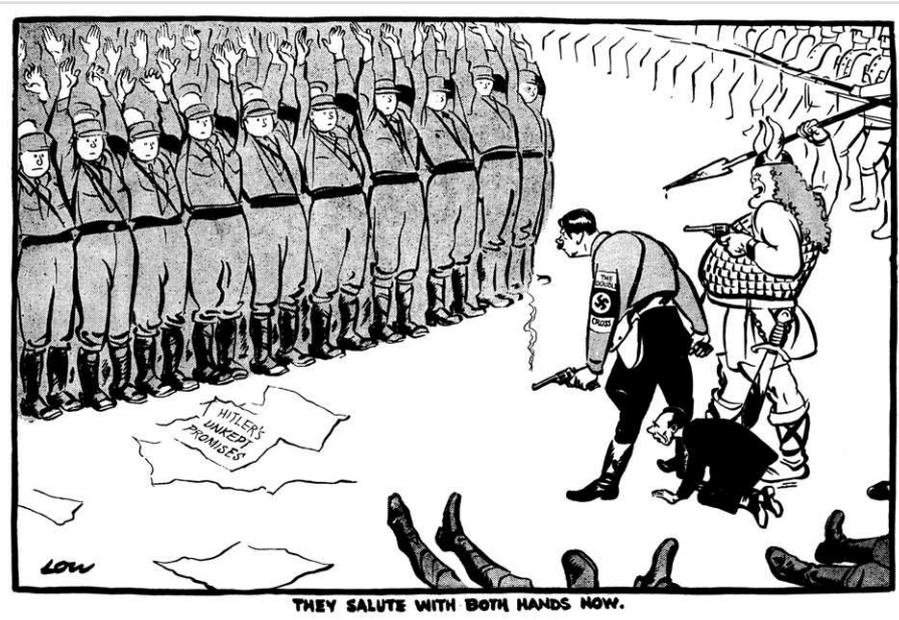
Strangely enough, the last obstacle in Hitler's path to securing total power came from *within* the NSDAP. The SA had grown to about 2 million men by 1934. Röhm, who had wanted a social and economic revolution along with Hitler's political revolution, was frustrated by the deals Hitler had made with politicians like Papen and Hindenburg. Conservatives and business leaders who supported the Nazi regime were concerned by the SA's thuggery, while the army felt that the SA wanted to replace them—which was actually one of Röhm's goals. These groups, along with powerful individuals in the Nazi Party, such as Göring and Himmler, convinced Hitler to get rid of Röhm and curtail the influence of the SA. On the night of 30 June, Hitler ordered the SS to strike.

On what became known as the 'Night of the Long Knives,' Röhm was arrested; he was shot dead two days later. Other SA leaders and potential opponents of the regime, such as former chancellor Kurt von Schleicher, were also arrested and executed by SS troops. In all, about 180 members of the Nazi Party and 200 other 'enemies' of the regime were killed in the purge.

➔ SOURCE 3.39

THE NIGHT OF THE LONG KNIVES

A political cartoon by David Low, which appeared in the British *Evening Standard* on 3 July 1934.



DID YOU KNOW?

Goebbels was always conscious of the impact of propaganda. In the lead up to the March 1933 election he wrote: 'The struggle is now a light one since we are able to employ all the means of the State. Radio and [the] press are at our disposal.'

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Identify two individuals depicted in this cartoon.
2. Explain the meaning of the phrase 'They salute with both hands now.'
3. By referring directly to the image, and using what you know about Hitler's rise to power, explain why Hitler ordered the execution of Röhm and other political opponents.
4. Evaluate the usefulness of this source in helping you understand how Hitler achieved total power in Germany. Refer to other interpretations in your response.

DER FÜHRER

On 2 August 1934, President von Hindenburg died. Hitler moved quickly to abolish the office of president and assumed all the powers of state as *der führer*. On the same day, all German soldiers were required to swear a personal oath of allegiance to Hitler rather than to the people or the constitution. The army leadership permitted this largely in gratitude that Hitler had eliminated the threat posed by the SA. On 19 August, a plebiscite was held which asked the German people to approve of Hitler becoming führer. Almost 90 per cent voted 'Yes.' Hitler was able to exploit this result to legitimise his dictatorship. He was now the sole and undisputed master of Germany.



BIOGRAPHICAL
STUDY

SOURCE 3.40

Cited in Greg Lacey and Keith Shephard, Germany 1918–1945: A Study in Depth (London: John Murray, 1997), 74.

THE SOLDIER'S OATH TO THE FÜHRER

I swear by God this sacred oath: that I will render unconditional obedience to the Führer of the German Reich and people, Adolf Hitler, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and will be ready as a brave soldier to risk my life at any time for this oath.

SOURCE 3.41

New inductees taking the oath at the beginning of their national service in a barracks of Berlin.



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How many members did the SA have prior to the Night of the Long Knives?
2. How did Hitler make use of Hindenburg's death to increase his power?
3. Explain the significance of the German army swearing a personal oath of allegiance to Hitler.

EXTENSION

Explain the possible range of reasons for the high 'Yes' vote in the plebiscite of 19 August.

SKILLS: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Explain how the Nazi regime differed from the Weimar government. To what extent did the lives of Germans change? You could write a comparative report, or present your ideas and evidence in a table.

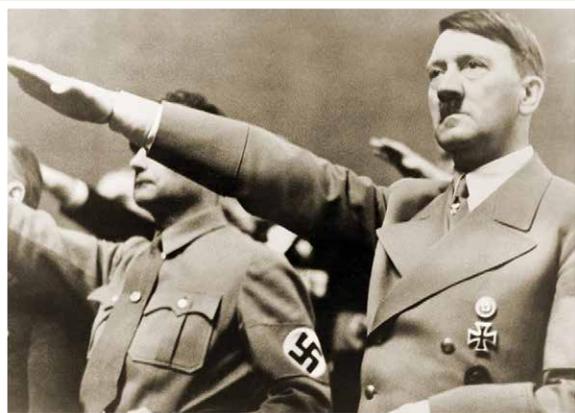
HITLER'S TRIUMPH: HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Significant historical events such as the origins of a war or the outcomes of a revolution are incredibly complex. They typically have a large number of contributing factors, ranging from political and economic to social and cultural. The roles played by key individuals and historical accident—events or consequences that were unforeseen by contemporaries—have also featured prominently in academic debate in recent decades. The triumph of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party in 1933–34 understandably provoked an intense debate among historians. Since the end of World War II, historians have studied the relevant evidence and presented a number of different interpretations as to how an aimless, failed art student came to hold supreme authority in one of the most developed countries in the world.

William L. Shirer was an American journalist who lived and worked in Europe from the 1920s. He lived in Germany from 1934 to 1940 and published his history of the Third Reich in 1960. At that time the *Sonderweg*, or 'special path' theory of the origins of the Nazi Party was popular. This held that German political, social and cultural evolution, even as far back as Martin Luther in the sixteenth century, was predisposed to authoritarian forms of government. Democracy in Germany, this argument holds, was essentially impossible because of the historical mindset of its people.



PROPAGANDA POSTCARD:
SONDERWEG



SOURCE 3.42

William L. Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich (London: Pan Books, 1964), 1081.

WILLIAM L. SHIRER

The course of German history ... made blind obedience to temporal rulers the highest virtue of the Germanic man and put a premium on servility.

A British historian, A.J.P. Taylor, also argued that the seeds of the Third Reich were buried deep in Germany's history.

SOURCE 3.43

A.J.P. Taylor, The Course of German History (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1945), i.

A.J.P. TAYLOR

It was no more a mistake for the German people to end up with Hitler than it is an accident when a river flows into the sea.

From the late 1960s and through the 1970s, many historians began to question this interpretation. German historian Martin Broszat argued that political structures and ideals since the Bismarkian era (from the mid-nineteenth century onwards) stifled the gradual development of German democracy. This became known as the 'structuralist' approach.

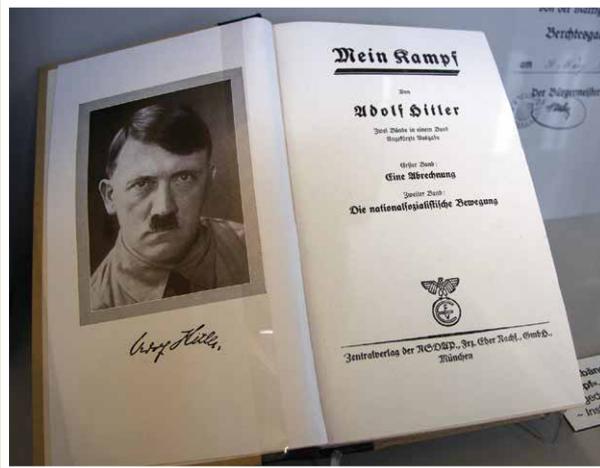
SOURCE 3.44

Martin Broszat, Hitler and the Collapse of Weimar Germany (Leamington Spa: Berg Publishers, 1987), 148.

MARTIN BROSZAT

What provided the glue for the fateful and never harmonious alliance between the conservative elites and the Nazi mass movement which made Hitler's chancellorship possible, was the aggressive rejection of Weimar parliamentarianism and of the forces that had shaped the Republic. These latter forces ... had been decried as 'Reich enemies' as early as the Bismarkian Empire ... [The Nazis] thereby made a radical break with the slow evolution towards a more democratic society, which had set in during the late Wilhelmine period and had continued under the Weimar Republic.

Later generations of historians rejected the *Sonderweg* and structuralist approaches as too deterministic, as they failed to account for the role played by key individuals and the impact of their decisions. Historians such as Ian Kershaw and Richard J. Evans suggested that the Nazi triumph wasn't inevitable; Hitler was given power by conservative politicians who naively and tragically thought they could control him for their own purposes.



↑ Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

SOURCE 3.45

Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (London: Penguin, 2003), 451.

RICHARD J. EVANS

For all his electoral successes, there has never been any doubt that Hitler came into office as the result of a backstairs political intrigue. The Germans did not elect Hitler Reich Chancellor. Nor did they give their free and democratic approval to his creation of a one-party state ... Crucial to the whole process [i.e. Hitler's coming to power] was the way in which democracy's enemies exploited the democratic constitution and democratic political culture for their own ends.

SOURCE 3.46

Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: Hubris 1889–1936* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 424.

IAN KERSHAW

There was no inevitability about Hitler's accession to power ... Hitler's rise from humble beginnings to 'seize' power by 'triumph of the will' was the stuff of Nazi legend. In fact, political miscalculation by those with regular access to the corridors of power rather than by any other actions on the part of the Nazi leader played a larger role in placing him in the Chancellor's seat.

ACTIVITIES

EXTENSION

1. Historical figures are referred to on these pages that you may not be familiar with: Martin Luther, the German kaisers and Otto von Bismark. Research the life of one of these figures and write a report on their contribution to German history. Pay particular attention to how their actions and decisions might supply evidence for either the *Sonderweg* or the structuralist approach to German history.
2. Run a class debate on the idea of inevitability in history. Can certain events in the past be deemed to have been 'always going to happen'? What consequences does this have for the notion of free will and the place of unforeseen events? Refer to Hitler's rise to power and any other relevant historical events when you present your case.

SKILLS: HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

1. Explain how the views of Shirer and Taylor are similar.
2. How are their interpretations similar and different to that of Broszat?
3. How would a member of either a centre or left-wing political party during the Weimar period respond to the *Sonderweg* and structuralist interpretations of German history?
4. In Evans' account, who were 'democracy's enemies'?
5. In the extract from Kershaw, who were 'those with regular access to the corridors of power'?
6. Which historical interpretation do you find most convincing? Support your response with reference to evidence.

CONCLUSION



From 5–10 September 1934, the Nazi Party held a rally in the city of Nuremberg (depicted here). The theme of the rally was *Tag der Einheit und Stärke* (Day of Unity and Strength) and it was intended to symbolise the triumph of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party. From obscure beginnings in a small, provincial town in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Hitler rose to become the absolute dictator of one of the most powerful nations in Europe. The NSDAP, which dwelt on the fringe of German politics for over a decade, thrived on economic and social disruption. It was not until the advent of the Great Depression that the Nazis started to gain sufficient electoral support. By 1932 they were the largest party in the Reichstag and Hitler was demanding to be appointed chancellor.

Backroom deals by cynical, conservative politicians who thought they could control Hitler saw him elevated to the office he so greatly desired. However, Hitler proved to be less manageable than the conservatives expected. He ruthlessly eliminated political opponents and passed several laws that brought Germany into line with the ideals of National Socialism. After the death of von Hindenburg, Hitler declared himself *der führer* and secured the loyalty of the army via a personal oath of allegiance. He also legitimised his regime with a huge majority in a national plebiscite. Having conquered his own people, Hitler could now set about fulfilling the ambitions he had outlined in *Mein Kampf* and conquer the people of Europe.

CHAPTER REVIEW

Using the information presented in this chapter, create a mind map or flowchart that visually demonstrates the sequence of events that led to Hitler becoming *führer* in January 1933. Include primary source quotations and images or diagrams for each event.

EXAM PRACTICE

Using three or four points:

1. Explain the consequences of the Munich Beer Hall Putsch for the NSDAP. Provide evidence to support your answer.
2. Explain some of the key features of the National Socialist ideology. Provide evidence to support your answer.

ESSAY

Write an essay, based on evidence, on one of the topics below.

- Historian Ian Kershaw argues: 'The First World War made Hitler possible.' To what extent did that conflict, and its aftermath, create the pre-conditions necessary for Hitler's rise to power? Support your response with evidence.

- The Weimar Republic fell victim to an extremist, authoritarian party due to the flaws contained within its own Constitution. To what extent do you agree with this statement? Use evidence to support your response.
- Historian Richard J. Evans argues: 'Hitler came into office as the result of backstairs political intrigue.' To what extent do you agree with this statement? Use evidence to support your response.

EXTENSION

Research the life of one of the following individuals and present a report to the class on their role in the early years of the Nazi Party (1919–1934). Your presentation should be three to five minutes in duration and make effective use of visual sources:

- Joseph Goebbels
- Hermann Göring
- Heinrich Himmler
- Rudolf Hess
- Ernst Röhm
- Erich Ludendorff
- Anton Drexler.

TEST



QUIZ – CHAPTER 3

FURTHER READING

Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*, Harmondsworth, 1952.

Bullock's book on the leader of Nazi Germany was one of the first academic works published on the topic and remains a classic in the field. Bullock believed that for Hitler, ideology was a means to an end. He was only concerned with obtaining power and would do anything to realise that goal.

Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, London, 2003.

In this highly readable book, Evans argues that the Nazis came to power as a direct result of political intrigue by naïve conservatives. The subsequent establishment of the Nazi regime enabled Hitler to transplant his race-based ideology onto the pre-existing structures of the German state.

Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, London, 1922.

Hitler completed his book while he was in the political wilderness in the mid-1920s. Part dubious autobiography, part political diatribe, *Mein Kampf* is a tediously written and hate-filled book. It provides a window into the mind of one of the greatest criminals in history.

Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: Hubris 1889–1936*, London, 1998.

The first book in a two-volume work, Kershaw's *Hubris* is a vital resource. Kershaw seeks to explain the emergence of the Nazi Party through an analysis of both Hitler's personality and the conditions in Germany after World War I that proved to be such fertile soil for Hitler's ideas.

William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, London, 1960.

Shirer was an American journalist who lived in Germany from 1934. He argues that the roots of the Third Reich were buried deep in German history. While this view was challenged by the next generation of historians, Shirer's book is still a valuable and interesting resource.

THE ORIGINS OF WORLD WAR II

'Only an adequate large space on this earth assures a nation of freedom of existence ... We must hold unflinchingly to our aim ... to secure for the German people the land and soil to which they are entitled.'

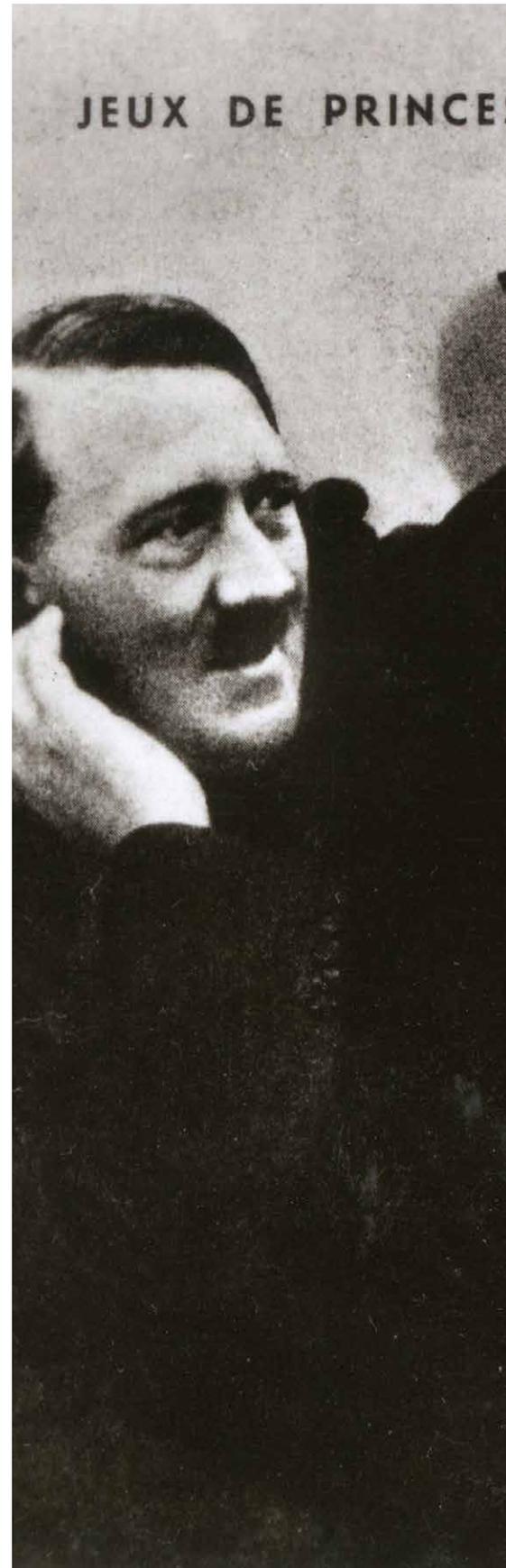
ADOLF HITLER, *MEIN KAMPF*, 1925

INTRODUCTION

On 1 September 1939, Germany's invasion of Poland plunged Europe, yet again, into the chaos of war. While Hitler's actions may have triggered the start of the war, the origins of World War II are far more complex. Just twenty years previously, the signing of the Treaty of Versailles had ended World War I, 'the war to end all wars.' The perceived injustices of the terms of the treaty were exploited by Hitler as he rose to power in Germany and began to pursue aggressive expansionist policies.

The worldwide depression caused by the Wall Street Crash was also a significant contributing factor in the outbreak of war. The emergence during the inter-war period of

fascist and militaristic regimes resulted in nations such as Japan and Italy seeking to solve their economic problems through aggressive territorial expansion. The newly formed League of Nations was unable to prevent this use of military force and failed in its objective of collective security. Countries such as Britain and France seemed reluctant to deal with these diplomatic crises as they themselves sought to overcome the problems created by the Great Depression. The policy of appeasement they pursued only seemed to encourage further aggression from Hitler and his ally Mussolini—and made war all the more likely.





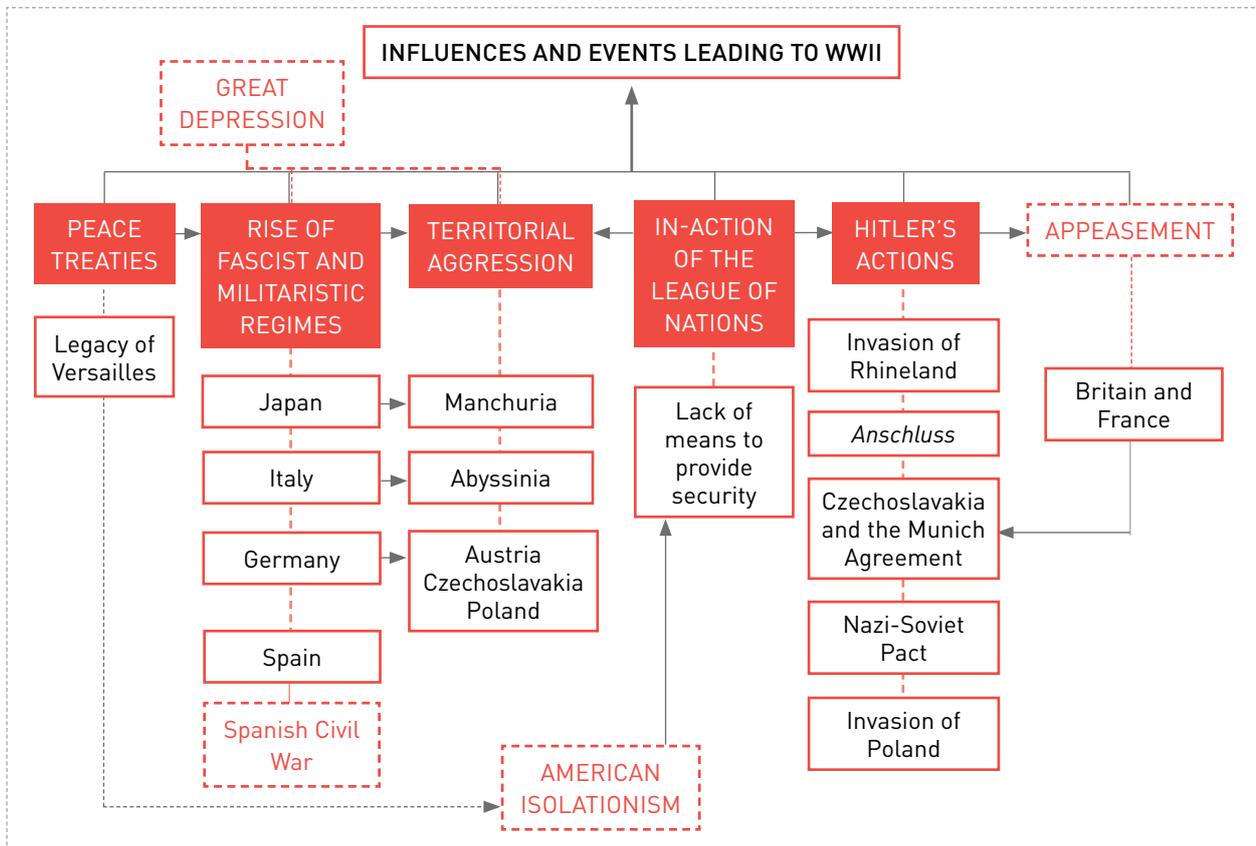
Political satire about the Munich Agreement.

OVERVIEW

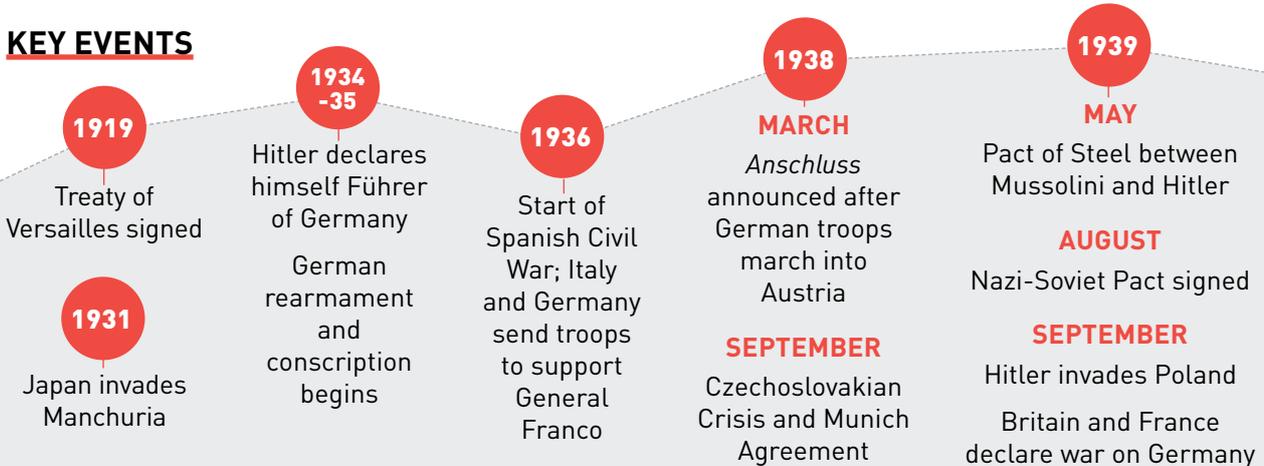
KEY QUESTIONS

- What was the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on shaping Hitler's internal and foreign policies during the 1930s?
- What were the key ideologies underpinning the aggression and tension that led to World War II?
- Why was the League of Nations unable to prevent another war?
- How did the rise of military dictatorships lead to territorial aggression which, in turn, caused international tension?
- Why did some international leaders follow a policy of appeasement in the 1930s? How did this encourage the aggressors?

IN THIS CHAPTER



KEY EVENTS



KEY PLAYERS

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN (1869–1940)

- British prime minister May 1937–May 1940.
- His determination to avert war led to a policy of appeasement towards Hitler, which culminated with the Munich Agreement.
- Chamberlain famously declared ‘peace in our time’ on his return from Munich, in September 1938.



BENITO MUSSOLINI (1883–1945)

- Made himself dictator of Italy in 1925.
- Sought to rebuild Italy’s power as a nation, invading Abyssinia in 1935 to distract Italians from the severe economic problems they were facing.



ADOLF HITLER (1889–1945)

- Became leader of Germany’s NSDAP in 1921.
- Expressed his ideology of nationalism, anti-semitism and racial purity in *Mein Kampf*.
- The Great Depression brought electoral success for the Nazi Party, and on 30 January 1933 Hitler was appointed chancellor.
- Within eighteen months had consolidated his power as a dictator.
- Pursued aggressive territorial expansion under the belief of *lebensraum*.

JOSEPH STALIN (1879–1953)

- Successfully manipulated his opponents to become the supreme leader of the Soviet Union by 1924.
- Wielding dictatorial powers, he embarked on a ruthless process of modernising the Soviet Union, which saw his country dragged into the modern era, but at the expense of tens of millions of deaths.
- Signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact in August 1939, enabling Hitler to invade Poland without a war on two fronts.



HISTORICAL INQUIRY

Some historians have suggested that it was the Wall Street Crash that was the most significant factor in causing World War II; others have suggested that it was the policy of appeasement. As you work through the chapter, use the material and your ideas to answer these questions:

1. To what extent did economic hardship result in the rise of dictators and cause the outbreak of war in 1939?
2. How did some leaders in Europe contribute World War II by pursuing a policy of appeasement?

SKILLS FOCUS

KEY TERMS

APPEASEMENT

The policy of negotiating and conceding to demands in order to avoid war. This policy was followed by Britain and France; they gave in to the demands of dictatorial powers—such as Hitler in Germany—in the hope of avoiding further conflict.

FASCISM

A nationalistic and totalitarian form of government that suppresses opposition and criticism, and limits personal freedom. It seeks to build up a country’s military strength and prestige. It is fiercely anti-communist.

ISOLATIONISM

The policy of isolating one’s nation from involvement with other countries. America followed this policy during the 1920s and 1930s.

LEBENSRAUM

The German word for ‘living space.’ Hitler used *lebensraum* to describe his desire to expand Germany’s territory into Eastern Europe.

MILITARISM

When military commanders exert excessive influence on government and policy, and when civilians, even elected representatives, have limited control. Japan in the 1930s had a militaristic government.

NATIONALISM

Championing of one’s country over others. At an extreme level, it often means that a country sees itself and its people as better, more important than, or deserving of more rights than other people and other countries. As a political movement, it often means that a country wants to assert its superiority over others—often by force.

DID YOU KNOW?

British politician Eric Campbell Geddes, famously said, 'We shall squeeze the German lemon until the pips squeak!' just before the Paris Peace Conference began.

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

HAROLD NICHOLSON, MEMBER OF THE BRITISH DELEGATION AT VERSAILLES: 'The historian, with every justification, will come to the conclusion that we were very stupid men ... We arrived determined that a Peace of justice and wisdom should be negotiated; we left the conference conscious that the treaties imposed upon our enemies were neither just nor wise.'

The Treaty of Versailles, signed in June 1919, had a significant impact on events that led to the outbreak of war in 1939. The terms of the treaty were harsh and seen as unfair, particularly in the eyes of Germans. The Treaty of Versailles was a constant reminder of Germany's defeat during World War I. The German newspaper *Deutsche Zeitung* called for vengeance, predicting that 'the German people will with unceasing work, press forward to reconquer the place among nations to which it is entitled ... for the shame of 1919.'¹

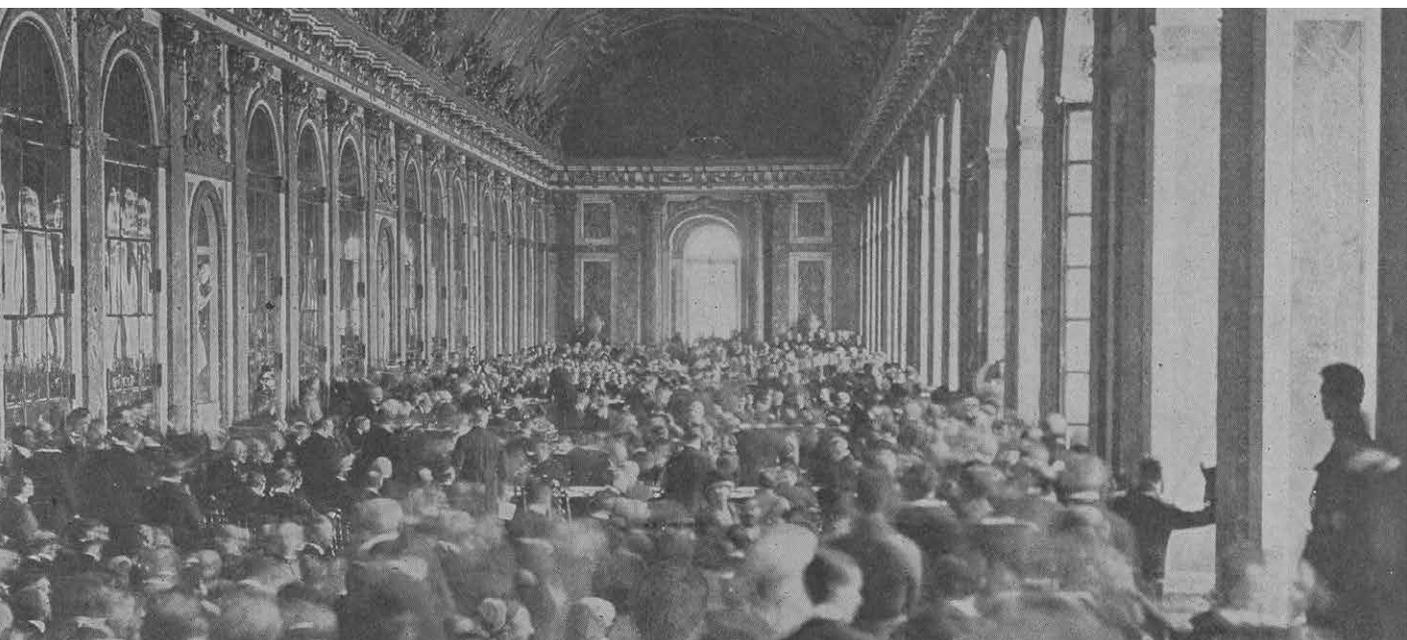
HARSH REALITY

Under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany had been stripped of productive territory and population, forced to severely restrict its army and expected to pay over £6.6 billion in reparations. Most humiliating of all, Germany was forced to accept full responsibility for starting the war and was denied membership of the new League of Nations. (See Chapter 1 for full details of the Treaty of Versailles.)

One of the aims of the Treaty of Versailles was to prevent another major war, but this was unsuccessful. Instead, the terms of the treaty led to major economic and social problems in Germany, such as hyperinflation. The economic distress, unemployment and loss of German pride created by the terms of the treaty created an environment in which extremism could flourish. Coupled with the 1930s Great Depression, the terms of the treaty provided a platform that Hitler would use to rise to power.

▼ SOURCE 4.01

Delegates gather in the Hall of Mirrors for the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on 28 June 1919.



GERMAN HUMILIATION CAUSED BY THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES



Part of Germany occupied by Allied Troops (especially African-French troops on the left bank of the Rhine)



Restriction on the size of the German army and limitations for the future.



The *Diktat* or 'dictated peace.' German leaders were not invited to the Paris Peace Conference, they were made to sign the Treaty of Versailles with no objection, including the clause that Germany was responsible for the war.

ITALIAN DISAPPOINTMENT

The Germans were not the only ones unhappy with the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Italy also felt cheated by the treaty. Although Italy had been in an alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary before the war, Italy had not joined on Germany's side at the outbreak of war in 1914, claiming that the 1882 Triple Alliance was for defensive purposes only. Germany had entered the war by attacking Belgium, so Italy no longer felt bound by the terms of the Triple Alliance.

Instead of joining Germany, Vittorio Orlando, prime minister of Italy, declared war on Germany in April 1915. Orlando was encouraged by Britain and France because war between Italy and Germany would mean that Germany had to fight on three fronts. Under the 1915 Treaty of London, Italy was promised territorial gains along the Adriatic coast in return for fighting on the Allied side. However, instead of honouring this agreement, the Treaty of Versailles allowed only the Istrian Peninsula and the region of South Tyrol to pass to Italy. The bulk of the Adriatic Peninsula was included in the newly created nation of Yugoslavia. Vittorio Orlando now felt that the sacrifices of the Italian people and the deaths of 460 000 of his countrymen were not recognised by their allies.

There was also widespread resentment among the Italian people about Italy's treatment under the Treaty of Versailles. The war had almost bankrupted Italy, unemployment was very high and there was considerable political unrest. Although Italy was to receive some reparations from Germany, the amount was very limited, and in no way compensated for Italy's war losses. Many Italians blamed Orlando and he resigned as prime minister late in 1919 and withdrew from Italian politics in 1922.

↓ Vittorio Orlando.



Some Italians were particularly unhappy that the port of Fiume (now Rijeka in Croatia) was awarded to Yugoslavia, as the population there was Italian-speaking by a narrow majority. So unhappy were Italian nationalists that Gabriele D'Annunzio led a force of 2000 ex-soldiers and seized the port of Fiume, occupying the city for three months. He only surrendered following bombardment by the Italian navy. Many people who would later support Benito Mussolini backed D'Annunzio in this venture.

Returning war veterans were subjected to abuse from the populace if they wore their uniforms, as Italians sought another target for their frustration. The economic problems suffered by Italy in the years following the Treaty of Versailles made the newly emerged *Fasci di Combattimento* (Fascist Party), founded in 1921, especially attractive to former soldiers, who blamed the sudden unemployment caused by rapid demobilisation and the 'mutilated victory' on the weakness of the ruling liberal-conservative politicians.

Thus both Italy and Germany were left severely dissatisfied by the Treaty of Versailles—and this dissatisfaction created a climate in which extremist movements would flourish.

➔ SOURCE 4.02

A.J.P. Taylor, *Origins of the Second World War* (London: Penguin, 1991), 71.

A.J.P. TAYLOR ON REPARATIONS

Reparations counted as a symbol. They created resentment, suspicion and international hostility. More than anything they cleared the way for World War II. Every touch of economic hardship stirred the Germans to shake off 'the shackles of Versailles.'

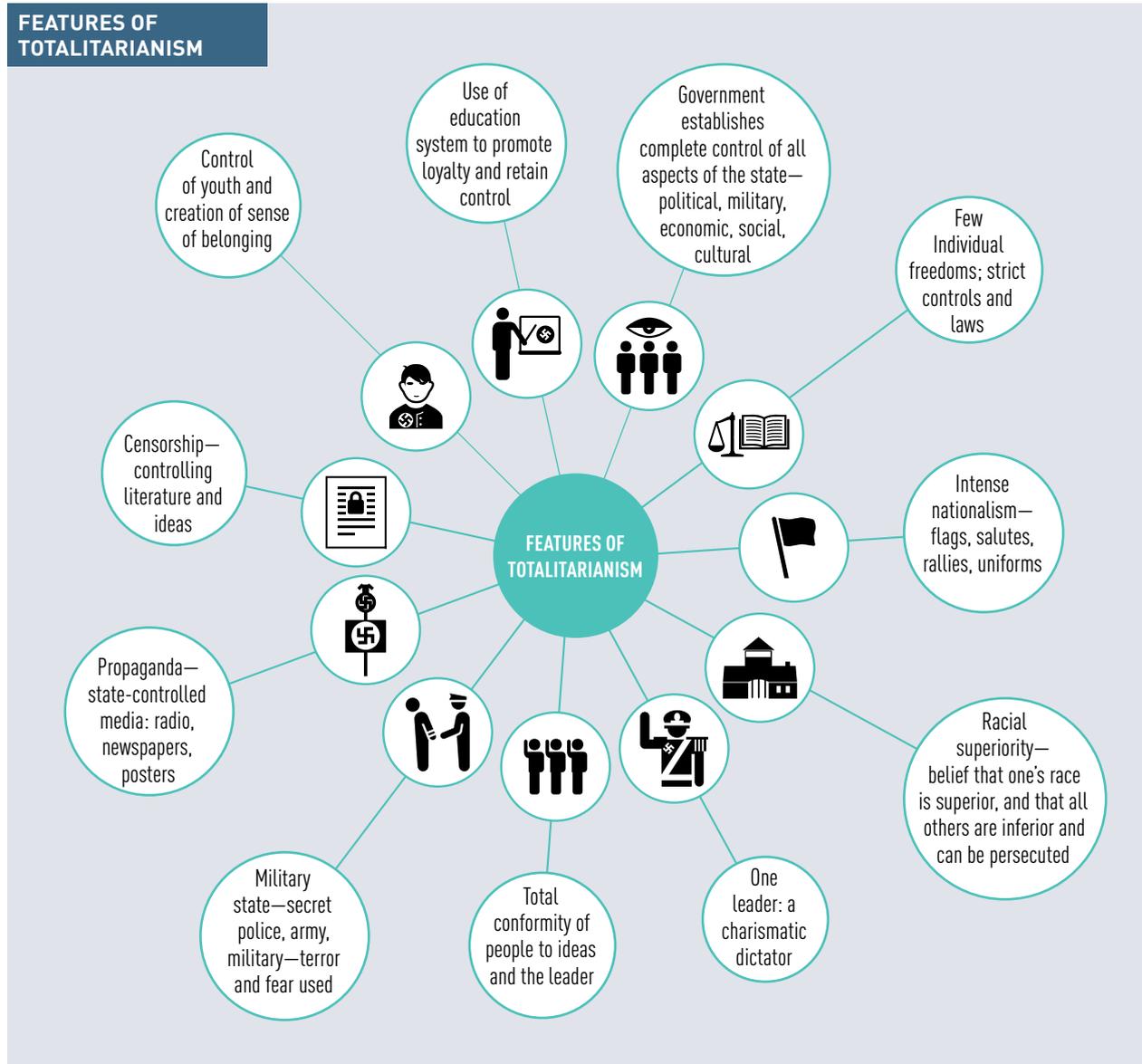
ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What is meant by the term *diktat*?
2. What were the key features of the Treaty of Versailles?
3. Why did people in Germany and Italy resent the Treaty of Versailles?

The Treaty of Versailles caused—or was blamed for—numerous problems in the two decades following World War I. It is true that many of the social and economic problems that occurred in the 1920s and 1930s can be traced back to the post-war treaties. However, other problems were the result of actual involvement in war, rather than the treaties. For example, much of the best and most productive farmland in France and Belgium had been destroyed during the fighting. However, the treaties provided extremist political movements with an easy target and a scapegoat as they campaigned for power. During the 1920s and 1930s, extremist movements flourished on both the right and the left in Germany, USSR, Italy and Japan.

TERRITORIAL AGGRESSION AND THE RISE OF EXTREMIST REGIMES



THE RISE OF JAPAN

VISCOUNT CECIL, BRITAIN'S REPRESENTATIVE AT THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, 1931: 'I do not think there is the slightest prospect of any war ... There has scarcely ever been a period in the world's history when war seemed less likely than it does at present.'

By 1919, Japan was acknowledged as a great power, with a position as a permanent member on the Council of the League of Nations. Like many of its European counterparts, Japan was a country relatively new to democracy. The Meiji Constitution, Japan's first constitution, had been introduced in 1889, establishing Japan as a constitutional monarchy. There were two houses in the



SOURCE 4.03

Britain watches calmly as Japan thrashes Russia during the 1904–1905 Russo-Japanese War.

DID YOU KNOW?

There had been a Japanese/Chinese proposal for a racial equality clause in the Treaty of Versailles, but this was rejected by the Western powers. Australian prime minister Billy Hughes was the main driver of the push to reject the racial equality clause.

southern half of Sakhalin Island. Japan had formed an alliance with Britain in 1902 and had fought on Britain's side during World War I, utilising the alliance to secure its strategic position in the Pacific region.

JAPAN AND THE GREAT DEPRESSION

In the years following World War I, the Japanese economy grew rapidly. Investment in heavy industry, including coal and iron, underpinned expansion in the building of railways and ships. Small-scale manufacturing of chemicals, china, household goods, textiles and toys provided employment, and profits for the growing middle class. However, this industrial expansion depended on trade with other countries. Japan relied on China as the major source of iron ore and coal for manufacturing, and the Japanese economy relied heavily upon China, Britain, the USA and Australia to purchase its manufactured goods.

Despite the overall prosperity, Japan faced a number of challenges during the 1920s. In 1923, over 100 000 people were killed when an earthquake destroyed much of Tokyo and left thousands of people homeless. In the countryside, many agricultural labourers struggled with low wages and poor working conditions, and there was tension between younger people who wanted to embrace Western styles of dress and music and the older generations who feared loss of traditional culture. Moreover, the decade was one of political instability.

Diet (or parliament): an upper house made up of members of the nobility, and a lower house elected by a limited section of the male population. The prime minister and the cabinet were appointed by the emperor who, according to Article XI of the Japanese Constitution, was the supreme commander of the army and navy. The emperor was the sovereign authority in Japan. However, considerable power still lay in the hands of old aristocratic families, who were closely allied to the Japanese military and navy.

Japan had undergone rapid development in the second half of the nineteenth century, improving food-production methods and expanding secondary industry and manufacturing. However, Japan lacked the raw materials and resources to support the developing industries and the land to grow sufficient food. This shortage of land was behind Japan's territorial expansion in the early twentieth century. Japan's victory over China in 1895 in the First Sino-Japanese War gave it control of the Korean Peninsula. In 1905, Japan defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese War, gaining further influence in Manchuria and the



📌 SOURCE 4.04

A devastated urban district in Japan, immediately after the 1923 earthquake.

The veneer of prosperity and stability was shattered by the Great Depression, which began in 1929. The onset of the financial crisis disrupted trade relationships and destabilised the Japanese economy. Many countries, including the USA and China, introduced trade tariffs that made it more difficult to sell manufactured goods. Unemployment rose to unprecedented heights between 1929 and 1932 and the peasants were reduced to desperation as agricultural prices plummeted.² In particular, silk workers were affected as the price of silk dropped by 50 per cent.

Attempts to deal with the crisis had mixed results. Finance Minister Takahashi Korekiyo introduced successful measures, such as the devaluation of the yen and deficit spending to control the situation. However, the army still pushed for aggressive territorial expansion, believing this would solve Japan's problems. This stance was dealt a severe blow when the government signed the Naval Treaty of London in 1930, severely limiting battleship tonnage. The Japanese military saw 'Japanese politicians kowtowing to western governments.'³ This also reinforced Japanese resentment towards the USA and Britain, who refused to acknowledge or accept Asian equality.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Who held sovereign power in Japan?
2. Why was territorial expansion important to Japan?
3. In what ways did the Great Depression affect Japan?

ACTIVITY

THE INVASION OF MANCHURIA

Manchuria was an area of China that bordered Japanese-controlled Korea. The authority of the Chinese government was weak and did not extend to Manchuria. By 1931, Japan had invested substantial amounts of money in the South Manchuria Railway Company and kept a large army in the area to protect their investment. An explosion that occurred near the railway line at Mukden (now Shenyang) was blamed upon Chinese troops. Using this as an excuse, the Japanese army claimed sabotage and invaded the whole of Manchuria, without consulting the Japanese government. In September 1932, Manchuria was renamed Manchukuo as a new government was installed under the control of the Japanese army who, despite being told to withdraw by the civilian government, continued to occupy the area.

SOURCE 4.05

Map showing Japanese territorial expansion in the 1930s.



Emperor Hirohito.

It was clear that the Japanese government had lost control of the army. The success in Manchuria was popular, and was praised in Japanese newspapers, which supported the growth of Japan as a dominant empire in East Asia. Democratically elected Japanese politicians were gradually discredited. China appealed to the League of Nations and the League ordered Japan out of Manchuria. However, the Japanese ignored this order—and withdrew from the League of Nations instead.

The incident in Manchuria demonstrated that the Japanese army was loyal to the emperor rather than the Japanese government. The military gradually began to take over Japanese politics, with several attempted coups and assassinations of key ministers, including Finance Minister Takahashi Korekiyo. In February 1936, a coup d'état led by junior officers of the Imperial Japanese army attempted to take control of the government. Initially supported by army headquarters, the rebellion was suppressed after four days when Emperor Hirohito demanded the army to put an end to the incident.

A military dictatorship was then established. This was done legally, as the constitution and Diet (Japanese Parliament) remained in place. Following the

invasion of China in 1937, the military took over Japanese politics completely. A totalitarian state was created in which students were taught to obey the emperor and government unconditionally. Critics of the regime were immediately arrested.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE 'AXIS POWERS' ALLIANCE

Japan's invasion of China led Hitler and Mussolini to realise that their regimes had some common aims. Although there was less of a threat from communism in Japan, the Japanese had faced spontaneous riots during periods when rice prices increased. A significant step towards war was taken when Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan signed the Anti-Comintern Pact on 25 November 1936. The pact was designed to limit the influence of the Communist International (Comintern). Japan and Germany promised to 'keep one another informed about the activities of the Communist International' and to 'confer upon the necessary measures for defense and carry out such measures in close cooperation.' They also agreed that in the case of attack by the Soviet Union they would take measures to 'safeguard their common interests.' When Italy joined the Anti-Comintern Pact in November 1937, the Japan–Germany–Italy alliance became known as the Axis Powers.

DISPATCH TO WASHINGTON, 13 NOVEMBER 1937

If the present triangular combination is analyzed, it becomes immediately apparent that not only is the group not merely anti-communist, but that its policies and practices equally run counter to those of the so-called democratic powers. Thus it can be seen that the question resolves itself into the simple fact that it is a combination of those states which are bent upon upsetting the status quo as opposed to those states which wish to preserve the status quo, or, more simply, of the 'have-nots' against the 'haves,' and that anticommunism is merely the banner under which the 'have-nots' are rallying. The threat to England is very real and immediately apparent upon reflection that with the addition of Japan to the Rome–Berlin axis the life-line of the British Empire is threatened from the North Sea through the Mediterranean and beyond Singapore.

SOURCE 4.06

United States Department of State, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, Japan: 1931–1941
Volume II, p. 160 (1931–1941).

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Explain the context in which this dispatch was written.
2. What does the source tell you about the author's opinion on the aims of the Anti-Comintern Pact?
3. How is the Anti-Comintern Pact a threat to Britain?
4. In what ways are the members of the Anti-Comintern Pact upsetting the 'status quo'?
5. To what extent were the suggestions in this dispatch prophetic?

Japan had invaded China in July 1937 and started a war it could not win—and could not end.⁴ Japan expected that China would be easy to defeat, given that China had been embroiled in a civil war for the last decade and that Japan had superior forces.

But the Japanese had not counted on both sides in the Chinese Civil War placing their opposition to Japan ahead of their own differences. In 1937, the communists and the nationalists, known as the Guomindang, joined forces

➔ SOURCE 4.07

The *USS Virginia* burns and sinks following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.



to attempt to drive the Japanese out of China. Western countries—especially Britain and USA—sent aid to China to help in the fight against Japan, and this increased Japanese resentment against the Western countries. By 1939, the war had reached a stalemate: China was unable to force a Japanese retreat and Japan was unable to defeat China.

As events in Europe were moving quickly towards war in the late 1930s, the eyes of Britain and the USA were temporarily distracted from Japan.

It took the 1941 Japanese invasion of French Indochina, followed by the bombing of Singapore and Pearl Harbor, to awaken Western nations to the threat of Japanese aggression. Britain and the USA declared war on Japan in December 1941.



TIMELINE TEMPLATE

ACTIVITIES

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Why did Japan invade Manchuria?
2. What impact did Japan's invasion of Manchuria have on international relations?
3. Why did the bombings of Singapore and Pearl Harbor come as a surprise to Britain and the USA?

TIMELINE

Create an annotated timeline to show Japanese territorial expansion 1900–1941.

CREATIVE RESPONSE

Imagine you are a reporter from a Japanese newspaper. Write a report on the invasion of Manchuria.

OR

Imagine you are a commander in the Japanese army. Write a speech justifying your invasion of Manchuria.

EXTENSION

To what extent can it be argued that Japan was a fascist state from the late 1920s?

THE RISE OF ITALY

BENITO MUSSOLINI: 'For my part I prefer 50 000 rifles to 5 million votes.'

During the 1920s and 1930s, Italy was also grappling with unstable government and the tension between democracy and an authoritarian government. Italy had become a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary form of government when it became a nation in 1861. The Chamber of Deputies, Italy's democratically elected governing body, was unpaid and susceptible to bribery and corruption. In 1912, the introduction of the right to vote for all males led to a fairer parliamentary system. However, this also led to political instability, as Italy was then governed by a succession of coalition governments that were ill-equipped to deal with Italy's problems.

JOHN POLLARD ON POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN ITALY

After 1919, it became very difficult to manage a system of government: the Socialists, who believed that proletariat revolution was just around the corner and that 'all we have to do is wait,' refused to participate in government at all and though the People's party did so, the uneasy alliance between the MPs of that party and the liberal-conservative political leaders like Nitti, Giolitti and Bonomi was like mixing oil and water.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Which event might the socialists have been influenced by?
2. Why was the alliance between MPs 'like mixing oil and water'?
3. What problems might this have caused for Italy?

Italy in the 1920s was economically unstable. World War I had left the country with a debt that was six times the pre-war level. Like many other countries, Italy had borrowed large amounts of money to finance the war. This problem was exacerbated by rapid demobilisation of troops after the war, which led to high unemployment levels. The lira was subject to runaway inflation and taxes rose, leading to an increase in poverty. Disruption to trade, the legacy of the war, had further damaged the economy and industrial disputes aggravated an already unstable economy.

Influenced by the Communist Revolution in Russia in 1917, Italian workers held strikes and demonstrations, demanding higher wages to compensate for inflation. These demonstrations often became violent. Increased belligerence led to the occupation of several factories in northern Italy in the autumn of 1920. Although Prime Minister Giolitti negotiated a peaceful end to the dispute, fears remained that a revolution might occur. No sooner had this political issue been resolved than another arose in the countryside. It was against this backdrop that Mussolini and his Blackshirts stepped in.

SOURCE 4.08

Dr John Pollard, 'The many problems and failures of Liberal Italy led the establishment to turn to Mussolini,' in New Perspectives for Modern History Students, vol. 9, no. 3, March 2007.

DID YOU KNOW?

Giovanni Giolitti, the Italian prime minister in 1921, dismissed Fascism as 'fireworks.'



↑ SOURCE 4.09

Benito Mussolini.

THE RISE OF MUSSOLINI

Benito Mussolini had established the *Fasci di Combattimento* on 23 March 1919. The movement was particularly popular with ex-soldiers, who were drawn to the strong militaristic and nationalist ideas promoted by the fascists. Mussolini was determined to establish a fascist Roman empire. Throughout the northern countryside, there was increasing violence between landowners and peasants. Wearing their distinctive black shirts, the fascists fought on the landowners' behalf against the peasants. Violence escalated. In the summer of 1922, the socialists organised a general strike protesting against fascist violence, but this was ignored by the government.

Many of the landowners and middle class were shaken by the threat of socialism and communism. They looked towards the fascists for law and order and Mussolini took advantage of people's fears, just as Adolf Hitler would do ten years later. In October 1922, Mussolini's *squadristi* (squads) marched on Rome, demanding that the government make changes.

Fearing that if he failed to support Mussolini he would be ousted in favour of his cousin, King Victor Emmanuel III invited Mussolini to become prime minister and form a government. This meant that, technically, Mussolini legally gained power in Italy through a constitutional appointment by the king. This was despite the Fascist Party being a minority in the parliament. Once in power, Mussolini gradually began to establish his dictatorship. Hitler would use some of the same strategies in his rise to power in Germany in the early 1930s.

Dr John Pollard argues that many in the Italian political class, including centre liberals, allowed Mussolini to take power because he would be useful to them in the short term. They were confident that they could control the political upstarts they had allowed into government when it suited them to do so. Many moderate Germans took a similar attitude to Hitler and the Nazis in the 1930s.

➔ SOURCE 4.10

Benito Mussolini, *The Doctrine of Fascism* (1932).

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Identify the features of fascism as Mussolini outlines them.
2. Which of these principles do you believe to be most dangerous to human rights? Explain why.
3. Identify three processes that a fascist state would have to put in place to achieve the aims of fascism.
4. Suggest three 'pointless' or 'harmful' freedoms that Mussolini would have sought to take away.

MUSSOLINI ON FASCISM

Above all, Fascism believes neither in the possibility nor in the usefulness of peace. War alone brings out the best in people and puts the stamp of nobility upon the people who have the courage to face it.

Fascism attacks democratic ideals. Fascism denies that the majority can rule human societies. It insists that the inequality of men is beneficial. Some men are greater than others, and these men should rule.

The Fascist State organizes the nation. It takes away pointless or harmful freedoms, and preserves those that are essential. It cannot be the individual who decides what freedoms matter, but only the State.

In the tradition of ancient Rome, the Fascist State seeks to create an empire. For Fascism, the creation of an empire is a demonstration of strength and health. Its opposite, which is staying at home, is a sign of weakness and corruption.

If every age has its own doctrine, it is clear from a thousand signs that the doctrine of the current age is Fascism. The Italian people will rise again after many centuries of abandonment and neglect. The Italian people will rise again to create a new Roman Empire, and once again the Italian people will lead the world.

The lack of a majority in parliament meant that Mussolini was forced to form a coalition government. But to counteract this, in November 1923, he used intimidation and the threat of violence to have the electoral Acerbo Law passed. This law stated that the party that won 25 per cent of all the votes would automatically get two-thirds of the seats in the parliament. In April 1924, the Fascist Party won 375 seats out of 511. Giacomo Matteotti, the outspoken leader of the Socialist Party, accused the Fascists of fraud. Matteotti disappeared on 10 June and his body was discovered a month later.

Matteotti's murder was met with outrage, as the Fascists were widely believed to be behind his death, but King Emmanuel refused to sack Mussolini. In January 1925, Mussolini declared, 'I alone assume the political, moral and historic responsibility for everything that has happened. Italy wants peace and quiet, work and calm. I will give these things with love if possible and with force if necessary.' In November 1926, all opposition political parties were banned; in 1927, the secret police force was established. Unlike Hitler, who took just months to establish a dictatorship in Germany, Mussolini took far longer to set up a totalitarian regime in Italy.

ITALY AND THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The Great Depression hit Europe in 1929, and by the early 1930s, most countries—including Italy—were suffering an economic downturn resulting in loss of trade, business closure and rising unemployment. A drop in international

SYMBOLS OF NATIONALISM



Fasces

The term *fascism* comes from the word 'fasces:' a bundle of sticks bound together, sometimes acting as the handle of an axe.

In ancient Rome, a *fasces* was carried by civil servants responsible for guarding magistrates. Today, *fasces* still represent magisterial or collective power and jurisdiction.

Imperial eagle

For over 800 years the German coat of arms had also included a link to ancient Rome—an *aquila*, or eagle—a symbol of the military.

Two years after Hitler came to power, the stylised black eagle above an oak leaf, with a swastika in its centre, became the official national emblem of Germany. The Nazis used the imperial eagle to reinforce the idea of the Third Reich—'reich' meaning 'empire.'



➤ A Roman lictor carrying a fasces.

➤ An *aquila*, or eagle, a symbol from ancient Rome.



SOURCE 4.11

Map showing Italy's invasion of Abyssinia.

trade led to a decline in the demand for Italian manufactured goods. However, the impact was not as severe for Italy as it was for more industrialised countries, as the Italian economy was largely based on agriculture.

ABYSSINIA

One of Mussolini's objectives was 'to make Italy great, respected and feared.' In order to prove Italian greatness, he planned to expand Italy's territory. Italy already had interests in Africa and it was in this direction that Mussolini turned to distract Italians from the effects of the Great Depression. The Italian economy had always been a weak, agrarian-based economy. These problems persisted throughout the 1920s, despite Mussolini's creation of a corporate state with the economy under government control. In October 1935, Italian troops invaded Abyssinia, using tanks, aircraft and poison gas. The Abyssinians were quickly defeated. The League of Nations was slow to react and was seen to be powerless, despite a half-hearted attempt to impose sanctions.

Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia is said to have encouraged Hitler to pursue his territorial ambitions in Europe. Germany invaded the Rhineland in March 1936 in contravention of the Treaty of Versailles, but no action was taken. Mussolini's territorial aggression pushed him closer to Germany, as his actions isolated him from Britain and France.

SOURCE 4.12

A.J.P. Taylor, *Origins of the Second World War* (London: Penguin, 1991), 85.

A.J.P. TAYLOR ON MUSSOLINI

Everything about Fascism was a fraud. The social peril from which it saved Italy was a fraud; the revolution by which it seized power was a fraud; the ability and policy of Mussolini were fraudulent. Fascist rule was corrupt, incompetent, empty; Mussolini himself a vain, blundering boaster without either ideas or aims. Fascist Italy lived in a state of illegality.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. A.J.P. Taylor wrote this description of Fascism in 1991. What might have happened to Taylor if he had written or spoken these words in Italy in 1939?
2. Imagine you are one of Mussolini's closest advisors and supporters. Write a response to Taylor's assessment of Fascism, answering each assertion with the kind of propaganda that would have been used in 1930s Italy.

ROME-BERLIN AXIS, 25 OCTOBER 1936

The Rome–Berlin Axis was a treaty of friendship between Mussolini and Hitler. Italy had become isolated from its allies Britain and France after conquering Abyssinia. The treaty gave Germany protection on its southern borders. The Spanish Civil War provided an opportunity for Germany and Italy to draw closer together, united in their support for the fascist General Franco. The agreement led to common foreign policies being pursued by the two powers. The treaty was extended in 1939 to become the Pact of Friendship and Alliance (commonly known as the Pact of Steel).



SOURCE 4.13

Hitler and Mussolini.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Draw a mind map to identify features of Italian Fascism.
2. Explain how Mussolini came to power legally.
3. To what extent did violence and intimidation help the fascists gain power in Italy?

SUMMARY

1. Complete a fishbone diagram to show how the combination of politics, economics, ideology and the military allowed the fascists to come to power in Italy.
2. Create a concept map to show how the rise of fascism in Italy contributed to the outbreak of World War II.

COMPARATIVE TASK

Create a Venn diagram comparing Japan with Italy and Germany in the 1920s and 1930s; consider each country's ideology, grievances, economic problems and territorial expansion.

ACTIVITIES



MIND MAP TEMPLATE



FISHBONE DIAGRAM TEMPLATE



VENN DIAGRAM TEMPLATE

THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

At the same time that extreme right-wing governments were developing in Japan, Italy and Germany, a fascist regime was emerging in Spain. Spain had been neutral during World War I but faced the same difficulties as other European nations in the 1920s and early 1930s. In April 1931, King Alfonso XIII abdicated and a republic was established. The republic was largely supported by peasants and industrial workers, and held socialist and communist-style policies. It was also secularist, which drew strong opposition from Spain's majority Catholic population.

Because of this perceived socialist influence, the parties on the right, with military support, campaigned to overthrow the democratically elected government. Spain's right-wing military attempted a coup in July 1936, under the leadership of General Francisco Franco. The coup failed, but led to civil war, with Spain divided between the republicans and the nationalists, led by Franco. The war would last three years.

The republicans received help and support from thousands of volunteers who comprised an International Brigade, which was largely organised from the USSR. The Soviet Union also sent arms, advisers and technicians.

The nationalists, however, had an advantage. Both Hitler and Mussolini supported Franco's Nationalists and, unlike the volunteers of the International Brigades, sent troops with military training. Mussolini, despite advice to the contrary, sent hundreds of planes, tanks and artillery, and over 40 000 troops. Hitler sent planes, pilots and troops to support the nationalists. He saw an opportunity to fight communism—and to give his military forces combat training. The Condor Legion of the German air force controversially bombed the city of Guernica, deliberately targeting civilians with the loss of 800 lives. Although there was international condemnation, the League of Nations looked on without interference.

SOURCE 4.14

The devastation in Guernica caused by German bombers.



The Spanish Civil War contributed to a schism in Europe between the democracies and the dictatorships. France was in no position to support the Spanish Republic despite sympathisers in the French government. Léon Blum, the newly elected Socialist leader of France, was already faced with an economic depression. Britain had no desire to become involved in the conflict and urged France to adopt a policy of non-intervention. This merely encouraged Hitler in his expansionist plans, as the Spanish Civil War—coupled with a lack of reaction to his invasion of the Rhineland in 1936—gave him the impression he could manipulate weak democracies. Ties between Italy and Germany were strengthened further a year later when

Italy joined the Anti-Comintern Pact. Furthermore, the Spanish Civil War served to increase suspicion between the Soviet Union, Britain and France, beginning the alienation of the Soviets that eventually led to the Nazi–Soviet Pact.

Following his victory in April 1939, Spain established a military dictatorship under the leadership of General Franco. During World War II, Spain occupied a position of neutrality, although it supplied arms and money to Italy and Germany. This was in recognition of the support both countries had given to the nationalists during the Civil War.

SPIDER DIAGRAM

Create a spider diagram to show the reasons why Hitler and Mussolini supported Franco in the Spanish Civil War.

CREATIVE RESPONSE

Design a poster on behalf of the International Brigade calling for volunteers in the Spanish Civil War.

ACTIVITIES



PABLO PICASSO'S
GUERNICA

PICASSO'S *GUERNICA*

Pablo Picasso created his famous mural depicting the bombing of Guernica for the Spanish Pavilion of the World Fair, held in Paris in 1937. Guernica was a Basque village in northern Spain that was subjected to sustained bombing by the German air force, resulting in hundreds of deaths. The deliberate targeting of a civilian population was a taste of the total war that was to come. *Guernica* toured the world and drew attention to the Spanish Civil War. The mural has since come to stand for the barbarity, cruelty and tragedy of modern warfare.

▼ SOURCE 4.15

A wall in the town of Guernica, Spain, displaying a mosaic-tile reproduction of Picasso's *Guernica* (1937).



AMERICAN ISOLATIONISM

WOODROW WILSON: 'If America does not join the League I can predict with absolute certainty that within a generation there will be another war.'

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, America pursued a policy of isolationism. At the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, US president Woodrow Wilson had argued for the creation of a League of Nations. This organisation was designed to provide a forum for international negotiation in the hope that future wars could be avoided. However, when the League of Nations was established in 1919, the US Congress failed to support America's involvement. Thus the organisation lost the one country that might be counted on to ensure stability in the post-war period. Further, when Warren Harding was elected US president in November 1920, he made it clear that while he expected the war debts to be paid back promptly, he was uninterested in Europe's political squabbles.

The reasons for American isolationism and unwillingness to join the League are quite complex. Some of them were:

- Perceptions of World War I – Some Americans questioned their nation's involvement in the war. It had not seemed to solve anything and the only people who appeared to benefit were businessmen who made profits from war supplies.
- The risk to American lives – As the League of Nations relied upon the armies of its members, some Americans feared that US soldiers would be sent all around the world.
- Suspicion of imperialism – America had fought for independence against the British in the 1770s. Even though the United States had gone to the aid of Britain and France in 1917, it had many questions about the large empires controlled by these nations. There were also many Irish people in America who supported the movement for independence in Ireland and did not want anything to do with Britain.
- Trade concerns – American businessmen were keen to ensure that their international trade was not affected; having to impose economic sanctions as part of the league could prove costly.
- Wilson's views – Wilson would not accept changes to the Treaty of Versailles; his inability to compromise contributed to the rejection of its terms.
- American culture – the vast majority of Americans were the descendants of people who had left Europe to escape the 'evils of the old world.' They were reluctant to become embroiled in European conflicts.

DID YOU KNOW?

American political opponents of the Treaty of Versailles said it removed their ability to declare war. They argued that Article 10, which dealt with collective security, meant the power now lay in the hands of the League of Nations Council.

America had lent the Allies billions of dollars during World War I. The economic effects of war meant that many countries struggled to pay back the loans, but despite this America refused to cancel the debts. However, in 1924, US Vice-President Charles Dawes worked with Gustav Stresemann, the chancellor of Germany, to set up a series of loans to help reduce the reparations repayments. This was known as the Dawes Plan and provided Germany with loans to aid economic recovery. The countries were locked in a vicious cycle: Germany depended on continued US loans to pay back reparations to the Allies, and the

Allies used the payments to pay back their own US loans. The situation was only worsened when the 1929 Wall Street Crash plunged the world into depression. This led to a drop in prices and profits, a 50 per cent reduction in international trade and the introduction of trade tariffs.

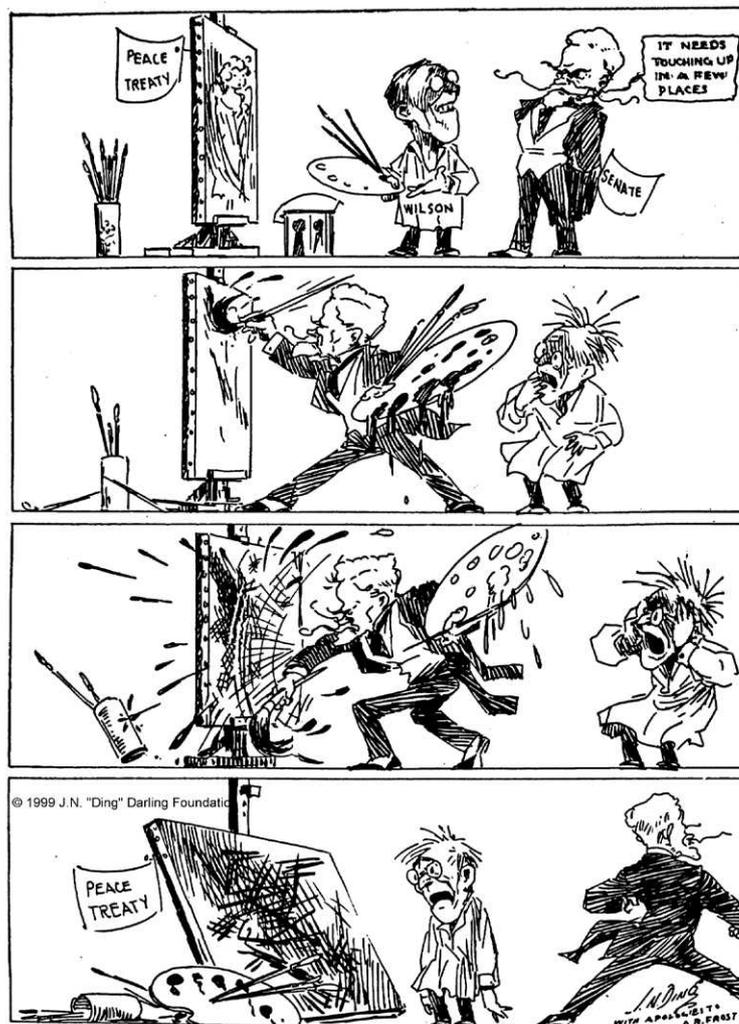
THE END OF AMERICAN ISOLATIONISM

The US government pursued the policy of isolationism, even after the 1939 outbreak of World War II. It was only after the 1941 Japanese attack on the US naval base at Pearl Harbor that the United States became involved. Some historians have argued that if the United States had been part of the League of Nations—and more actively involved in Europe in the 1930s—Hitler may have been deterred in his territorial expansion. However, Hitler did not have great respect for—or fear of—the United States. He was suspicious of the multiracial (or mongrel) nature of the population, and perceived the USA as weak and lacking the will to fight. He was reported to have said, ‘What is America but beauty queens, millionaires, stupid records and Hollywood?’⁵

America’s continued refusal to become involved in events in Europe and the passing of a series of Neutrality Acts in the mid-1930s only reinforced Hitler’s attitude. While American isolationism did not directly lead to the outbreak of World War II, it certainly undermined the League of Nations. Walsh argues that America’s failure to join was a ‘body blow to the League.’⁶

RICHARD OVERY ON AMERICAN FORCES

In the mid-1930s the USA had no more than skeleton armed forces. The army only had 100 000 men. Other countries’ armies were numbered in millions. The morale of US forces was poor. Their weapons dated from World War I. US soldiers were more at home with horses than tanks. In September 1939, the US Air Corps and Navy had together only 800 combat aircraft; many of them biplanes. Germany had 3600 aircraft. Roosevelt had very little to threaten with.



ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Identify two groups and/or individuals represented in the cartoon.
2. Identify two ideas the cartoonist is trying to make about the Treaty of Versailles.
3. Using the image and your own knowledge, explain why America failed to join the League of Nations after World War I.

📌 SOURCE 4.16

‘The art student’s masterpiece and the professor’s criticism.’
Cartoon by J.N. (Ding) Darling, 19 November 1919.

📌 SOURCE 4.17

Richard Overy, *The Road to War* (London: Penguin, 1999), p. 316.

ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What is meant by the term 'isolationist'?
2. Why did the US Senate reject the Treaty of Versailles?
3. Create a spider diagram to explain the reasons America pursued a policy of isolationism.



SOURCE ANALYSIS:
PUNCH CARTOON

DID YOU KNOW?

In German, *lebensraum* means 'living space'. Hitler used this term to describe his desire to expand Germany's territory into Eastern Europe.

SOURCE 4.18

A parade of tanks at the Nazi Party 'Rally of Freedom', Nuremberg, 1935.



The United States maintained its neutral position through the first two years of war. It was Japan rather than any of the European countries that finally drew the United States into World War II. Japanese territorial aggression in the Pacific during the 1930s had concerned the United States, and the Japanese occupation of French-Indochina in 1940 prompted American economic action in the form of cutting off oil and iron supplies. So when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the United States declared war on Japan the next day. In his announcement, President Roosevelt stated that it was 'a day that will live in infamy.' The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor also, in the eyes of historian A.J.P. Taylor, provoked Hitler into declaring war on the United States.⁷

THE ROLE OF HITLER AND THE THIRD REICH

Throughout the 1930s, extreme right-wing movements were gathering support, and fascist or militarist governments were established in Japan, Italy and Spain. One of the most extreme of these right-wing regimes was that established in Germany in 1933 by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party. Hitler shared a similar ideology to the other fascist nations, but he was also driven by a strong desire for revenge for Germany's defeat in World War I and the humiliation of the peace treaty.

One of Hitler's election promises had been to rip up the Treaty of Versailles and reverse its terms. This is exactly what he set about doing once he came to power in 1933. Hitler sought to reclaim the territory that had been lost by Germany and to establish an *Anschluss* (union) with Austria. He also wanted to ensure that Germans living as minorities in other countries became part of a Greater Germany. Furthermore, he desired an empire, a Third Reich, and to do this he would seek *lebensraum* in Eastern Europe. One of Hitler's first actions was to stop paying reparations.

HITLER BEGINS TO REARM

Rearmament was the first term of the treaty that Hitler attempted to undo. In 1919, Germany's army had been restricted to 100 000 men and its navy to six battleships. An air force was forbidden altogether. At the World Disarmament

Conference, beginning in 1932, Germany demanded that the restrictions on its armaments be lifted. When this was denied, Germany withdrew from the conference and from the League of Nations. This limited the ability of other nations to monitor the build-up of German arms and equipment.

During 1933 and 1934, the Nazis were secretly rearming and building up Germany's military strength. By 1935, the Germany Army (*Wehrmacht*) stood at 300 000 men and the air force (*Luftwaffe*) had 2500 planes. Conscription was reintroduced and, in

HITLER ON FOREIGN POLICY

Four years ago, when I was entrusted with the Chancellorship and therewith the leadership of the nation, I took upon myself the bitter duty of restoring the honour of a nation which for fifteen years had been forced to live as a pariah among the other nations of the world. The internal order which we created among the German people offered the conditions necessary to reorganize the army and also made it possible for me to throw off those shackles which we felt to be the deepest disgrace ever branded on a people. Today I shall bring this whole matter to a close by making the following few declarations:

First: The restoration of Germany's equality of rights was an event that concerned Germany alone. It was not the occasion of taking anything from anybody or causing any suffering to anybody.

Second: I now state here that, in accordance with the restoration of equality of rights, I shall divest the German Railways and the Reichsbank of the forms under which they have hitherto functioned and shall place them absolutely under the sovereign control of the Government of the German Reich.

Third: I hereby declare that the section of the Versailles Treaty which deprived our nation of the rights that it shared on an equal footing with other nations and degraded it to the level of an inferior people found its natural liquidation in virtue of the restoration of equality of status.

Fourth: Above all, I solemnly withdraw the German signature from that declaration which was extracted under duress from a weak government, acting against its better judgment, namely the declaration that Germany was responsible for the war.

Members of the German Reichstag: The vindication of the honour of the German people, which was expressed outwardly in the restoration of universal military service, the creation of a new air force, the reconstruction of a German navy and the reoccupation of the Rhineland by our troops, was the boldest task that I ever had to face and the most difficult to accomplish.

Today I must humbly thank Providence, whose grace has enabled me, who was once an unknown soldier in the War, to bring to a successful issue the struggle for the restoration of our honour and rights as a nation.

I regret to say that it was not possible to carry through all the necessary measures by way of negotiation. But at the same time it must be remembered that the honour of a people cannot be bartered away; it can only be taken away. And if it cannot be bartered away it cannot be restored through barter; it must simply be taken back.

That I carried out the measures which were necessary for this purpose without consulting our former enemies in each case, and even without informing them, was due to my conviction that the way in which I chose to act would make it easier for the other side to accept our decisions, for they would have had to accept them in any case. I should like to add here that, as all this has now been accomplished, the so-called period of surprises has come to an end.

As a State which is now on an equal judicial footing with all the other States, Germany is more conscious than ever that she has a European task before her, which is to collaborate loyally in getting rid of those problems that are the cause of anxiety to ourselves and also to the other nations.

SOURCE 4.19

*Speech made by Hitler to Reichstag, 30 January 1937.
Translated by World Future Fund
<http://www.worldfuturefund.org/wffmaster/Reading/Hitler%20Speeches/Hitler%20Speech%201937.01.30.html>*

SOURCE ANALYSIS

ACTIVITY

1. Identify Hitler's perspective on foreign policy, as shown by language used in the speech.
2. What justification does Hitler offer for aggressive actions instead of negotiation (or barter)?
3. What beliefs and attitudes does Hitler display about honour? Support your answer with quotes from the speech.
4. Suggest two other tactics that Hitler could have employed to restore Germany's honour without resorting to aggression or war.

March 1935, Hitler held a 'Freedom to Rearm' rally where he paraded the Nazis' military strength and publicly announced conscription to increase the size of the army to 550 000 men.

No country other than France questioned these rearmament policies that violated the Treaty of Versailles. Britain sympathised with Germany, believing that the Treaty of Versailles had been too harsh. The British government also believed that a strong Germany would act as a barrier against communism. Hitler's prestige grew and his popularity within Germany increased as rearmament reduced unemployment and restored German pride.

➔ SOURCE 4.20

'Cause Precedes Effect',
by British cartoonist David
Low, 20 March 1935.



ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Identify two of the leaders saluting Hitler.
2. Using your own knowledge, identify two ways Hitler broke the terms of the Treaty of Versailles by 1935.
3. Using your own knowledge and the image, explain why countries had failed to disarm in the years following World War I.
4. Evaluate the extent to which this image is useful in understanding how the actions of world leaders helped to cause World War II.

WORKING IN HITLER'S FAVOUR

One of the territorial terms of Versailles was that the Saar region, an important German coalfield, be run by the League of Nations for 15 years, after which a plebiscite (or vote) would determine sovereignty. On 13 January 1935, 90 per cent of the population voted to return to German rule.

The valuable output of the Saar coalfields was now under German control and no doubt provided Hitler with greater assurance of pursuing his Greater Germany scheme. It also reinforced French concerns about German aggression.

THE INVASION OF THE RHINELAND

On 7 March 1936, Hitler marched 22 000 troops into the Rhineland. The Rhineland, located along the Rhine River, acted as a natural barrier between Germany and France. It was a rich industrial area. Under the Treaty of Versailles, Germany retained political control but was forbidden from stationing troops there. Hitler used the excuse that Germany was under threat, referring to the Mutual Assistance Treaty signed between France and the USSR in May 1935.

Hitler was again testing the resolve of nations to enforce the Treaty of Versailles. His troops had orders to withdraw if they were opposed by France. He commented at the time that ‘our forces were not strong enough even to put up a moderate resistance ... If the French had taken any action our resistance would have been over in a matter of days’. France was in the middle of an election and was reluctant to oppose Hitler without the support of Britain. Britain was militarily weak and more concerned with events in Abyssinia; many British felt that the Germans were only ‘going into their back garden.’ Although they condemned Hitler’s actions, the British did not feel that his actions were worthy of armed retaliation. This lack of support for France put a strain on Anglo–French relations. Hitler’s gamble had paid off.

RUTH HENIG ON THE INVASION OF THE RHINELAND

In retrospect, many politicians and commentators have claimed that this was the decisive point at which Hitler should have been challenged, and that, when no action was taken in the spring and summer of 1936 to check his aggression, he could no longer be stopped from an expansionist course which would sooner or later inevitably plunge Europe into a war. However, the perception at the time, particularly in Britain, was rather different. Popular sentiment in both Britain and France was very strong that any action which might lead to hostilities and to war should be avoided. Lord Lothian’s comment that the Germans were, after all, ‘only going into their own back garden’ was widely supported. The Rhineland remilitarization coincided with the beginning of an election campaign in France, which led to a low-key approach to the crisis by politicians. Germany’s violation of its treaty obligations was referred to the League by the French government in the hope that economic sanctions against Germany might be invoked. But though the German action was condemned, no punishment was suggested. Sanctions were still in force against Italy, and many countries were feeling the economic pinch.

LETTER

Imagine that you are a British citizen whose father and brother were killed in World War I. You are horrified at the German occupation of the Rhineland and at the British government’s unwillingness to challenge Hitler. Write a letter to Lord Lothian explaining why he is wrong and outlining the dangers that Hitler embodies.

ACTIVITY

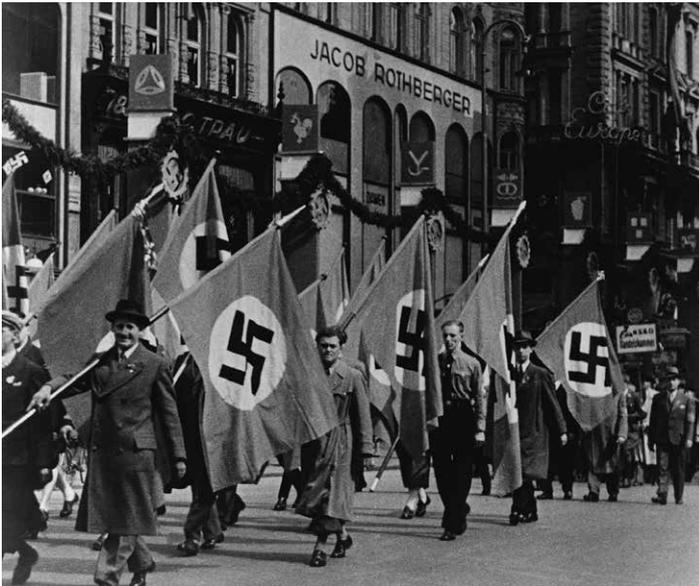


📍 SOURCE 4.21

The first units of the German army march into the Rhineland.

📖 SOURCE 4.22

Ruth Henig, The Origins of the Second World War 1933–41 (New York, Routledge: 2005), 27.



↑ SOURCE 4.23

Nazi parade in Vienna on May Day 1938. The *Anschluss* with Nazi Germany violated the Treaty of Versailles.

↓ SOURCE 4.24

Alan Farmer, *Britain Foreign Affairs: Saving Europe at a Cost? 1919–1960* (London: Hodder Education, 2009).

CHURCHILL ON THE ANSCHLUSS

Chamberlain was not opposed to the *Anschluss* as such, but to the way it had happened. He accepted that 'Nothing could have arrested this action by Germany unless we and others with us had been prepared to use force to prevent it.' Britain was not prepared to use the limited force it possessed. France, with a large army but without a government throughout the Austrian

ANSCHLUSS WITH AUSTRIA

Hitler wanted to create a Greater Germany, where all German-speaking people lived in the same country. To this end, he desired German unification with Austria. This was forbidden under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler's first attempt to achieve unification was in 1934. Austrian Nazis assassinated the Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss in an attempt to force an *Anschluss*. However, this aggressive action alarmed Mussolini. Although Mussolini, like Hitler, was a fascist leader, he was not going to stand for territorial expansion that might threaten Italy. Mussolini sent troops to the Brenner Pass, the main access point into Austria from the south, honouring his 1934 agreement with Austria to protect it from outside aggression. This

allowed the Austrian government to stabilise the unrest and restrict the Nazi threat in Austria, at least for a few years.

The new Austrian chancellor, Schuschnigg, tried to cooperate with Hitler in an attempt to appease him by allowing some Nazi officials to hold key posts in government. Austria was economically weak and there were many people in Austria who supported the idea of a union with Germany. In 1938, Schuschnigg agreed to Austrian Nazi leader Seyss-Inquart becoming minister of the interior. This was not enough to satisfy Hitler, who ordered the Austrian Nazi Party to stir up trouble and demanded that an *Anschluss* (union) take place. Schuschnigg appealed to Britain, France and Italy for help but they all refused. Schuschnigg called for a referendum but Hitler—fearing that they might lose and using the unrest he had created as an excuse—ordered Seyss-Inquart to request German support to restore order. Hitler sent his troops into Austria, forced the resignation of Schuschnigg and held a referendum. It was no surprise that the Austrians then voted in favour of the *Anschluss*. The lack of reaction from Britain and France convinced Hitler that they were unlikely to stand in his way in the future.

crisis, did nothing but protest. Mussolini, who had protected Austria in 1934, did nothing at all. It was hard to argue that a great crime had occurred when so many Austrians expressed their joy at joining the Third Reich. Perhaps the most important feature of the *Anschluss* was not that it had happened, but how it had happened. If one frontier could be changed in this way, why not others?

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. List the reasons why, according to Churchill, Hitler was able to get away with the *Anschluss*.
2. Which reason do you consider to be the most significant? Explain your choice.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE MUNICH AGREEMENT

WINSTON CHURCHILL: 'They chose between war and dishonor. They chose dishonor. They will have war!'

Hitler then decided to address the issue of *lebensraum* and turned his attentions to Eastern Europe. It became apparent that Britain and France were not going to stand up to Hitler. The first country he looked towards was Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia was a new country that had been created after World War I. It was predominantly a nation of Slavs and Czechs, but about 25 per cent of the population were German speakers who had formerly been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Most of the German speakers lived at the western end of Czechoslovakia in an area known as the Sudetenland. The Sudeten Germans identified with Germany, and claimed that they were discriminated against by the Czech government.

In 1938, led by Conrad Heinlein, the leader of the Nazis in the Sudetenland, the Germans began to call for self-government and caused civil unrest in their quest to become part of Germany. In an attempt to intimidate the leader of Czechoslovakia, Edvard Beneš, Hitler moved troops to the Czech border in May 1938. In response, the Czechs mobilised their army to counteract German troops. Hitler's own generals warned him that due to its strong modern army and mountainous defences, Czechoslovakia would not be an easy country to overcome. However, Beneš, realising that Czechoslovakia was next on the German 'menu', appealed to Britain and France seeking assurances of support should Hitler invade.

Tensions rose and countries began to prepare for war. In Britain, cities began to dig air-raid shelters expecting that war, when it came, would result in the kind of destruction experienced by the civilians of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War. At the Nuremberg Rally in September 1938, Hitler demanded self-determination for the Sudeten Germans, provoking rioting in that area. The Czechoslovakian government imposed martial law.

In an effort to avert a crisis, on 15 September 1938 Neville Chamberlain flew to Berchtesgaden, Hitler's summer retreat on the Austrian border, to discuss the situation. The two leaders agreed that any areas of the Sudetenland with a German-speaking majority who decided they wished to be part of Germany would be transferred to the Reich. Chamberlain put pressure on the French and Czechoslovakians. Beneš realised that these demands were a forerunner of more aggressive demands and he was proved right when, at Bad Godesberg on 22 September, Hitler demanded that the whole of the Sudetenland be handed over. Citing mistreatment of Germans living there, Hitler pencilled in military action to liberate them on 1 October. Chamberlain refused to give in to these demands and the British navy was mobilised.

In an attempt to avert the war that now seemed to be looming, Mussolini stepped in to act as

DID YOU KNOW?

In a conversation with British prime minister Neville Chamberlain in 1938, Hitler gave his word of honour that Czechoslovakia had nothing to fear from Germany.



CHAMBERLAIN
RETURNS WITH
MUNICH AGREEMENT

▼ SOURCE 4.25

Neville Chamberlain waves the Munich Agreement in the air after meeting with Hitler and Mussolini.



DID YOU KNOW?

After Munich, Hitler said, 'That fellow Chamberlain has ruined my entry into Prague ... Do you know why I finally yielded at Munich? I thought the Home Fleet might open fire.'

➔ SOURCE 4.26

A.J.P. Taylor, *The Myths of Munich* in *Struggles for Supremacy: Diplomatic Essays* by A.J.P. Taylor, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 276.

➔ SOURCE 4.27

'Our New Defence' by British cartoonist David Low, published in the *Evening Standard*, 5 October 1938.

➔ SOURCE 4.28

'Chamberlain Confronts Mars' by British cartoonist Sidney 'George' Strube, published in the *Evening Standard*, 3 October 1938.

ACTIVITY

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

1. How does Strube present the actions of Chamberlain?
2. In what ways does Low's perception of the events differ?
3. Which opinion do you think was more likely to have been accepted by the British public?

mediator. On 29 September 1938, a meeting attended by Mussolini, Hitler, Chamberlain and French prime minister Edouard Daladier took place in Munich. Czechoslovakia and the USSR, with whom Czechoslovakia had a treaty, were not invited. Without consulting the Czech people, it was decided to give Hitler what he wanted and the whole of the Sudetenland was ceded to Germany. In return, Chamberlain persuaded Hitler to sign an agreement not to make any more territorial demands in Europe. Chamberlain returned to a hero's welcome in Britain, declaring 'peace in our time.' Beneš resigned.

A.J.P. TAYLOR ON THE MUNICH CONFERENCE

Those who welcomed the Munich conference and its solution represented it as a victory for reason and conciliation in international affairs—appeasement as it was called at the time. The opponents of Munich saw in it an abdication by the two democratic powers, France and Britain; a surrender to fear; or a sinister conspiracy to prepare for a Nazi war of conquest against Soviet Russia. Munich was all these things.



OUR NEW DEFENCE



Within five days of the Munich Agreement, Winston Churchill made a speech in the House of Commons (see page 163) in which he condemned the agreement and predicted that within months the whole of Czechoslovakia would be invaded. His views were supported by a public opinion poll that found that 93 per cent of recipients did not believe Hitler when he said he had no more territorial ambitions.

Both Winston Churchill's speech and the opinion poll proved to be correct. Less than six months later, on 15 March 1939, Hitler invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia, and its prosperity now fed the Nazi war machine. Britain and France did nothing. But it was clear that Hitler intended to continue his eastwards expansion.

THE NAZI–SOVIET PACT

Following Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia, there was fear that Hitler's attention would now turn to Poland. France and Britain guaranteed that they would declare war on Germany if Poland was invaded. In March 1939, Joseph Stalin suggested an alliance between the Soviet Union, Britain and France against Germany. However, despite the three countries meeting to talk, this never took place. The Soviet Union was seen by many people in Britain as a bigger threat than Germany; in fact, many people in Britain felt that a stronger Germany could act as protection against the communist threat in the east.

Although France had signed a Mutual Assistance Treaty with the USSR in 1936, the failure of the French to stop the remilitarisation of the Rhineland led Stalin to doubt whether the French would honour the agreement. Stalin was suspicious about the motives of the Western democracies when he was not invited to Munich. He was also disillusioned with Britain and France when they did little to oppose Hitler's move into the Sudetenland. Chamberlain, in turn, was suspicious of the Soviet Union. He wrote, 'I must confess to the most profound distrust of Russia. I have no belief whatever in her ability to maintain an effective offensive, even if she wanted to. And I distrust her motives, which seem to me to have little connection with our ideas of liberty, and to be concerned only with getting everyone else by the ears.'⁸

The breakdown of talks among the USSR, France and Britain opened up a further opportunity that Hitler was quick to capitalise upon. Despite their mutual suspicions, on 23 August 1939, Hitler and Stalin signed the Nazi–Soviet Non-aggression Pact. The two sides agreed not to attack one another and, in private, they agreed to divide Poland between them. Hitler had known that in order to attack Poland, he would need to make some kind of agreement with the USSR. This would enable Hitler to avoid a war on two fronts—and this is precisely what Stalin relied upon. He strongly suspected that Hitler had no intention of sticking to the agreement. However, by signing the agreement, Stalin would be able to buy time to build up his own armed forces.

ACTIVITY

SKILLS: CONSTRUCTING ARGUMENTS

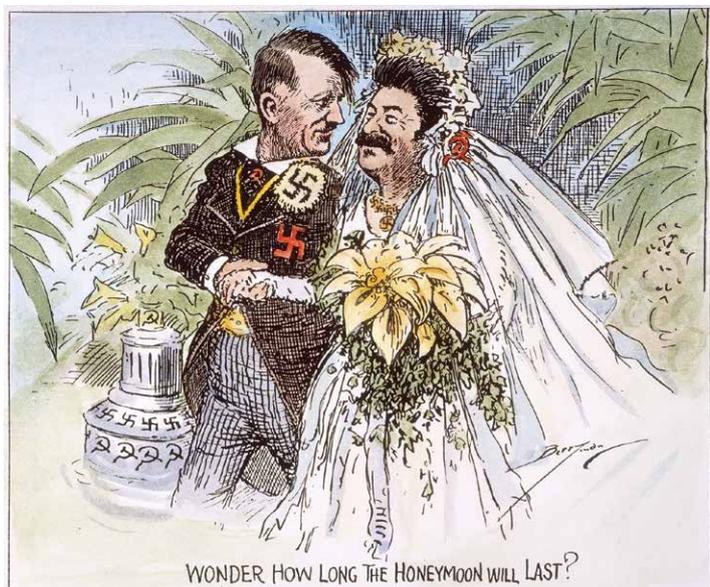
Make up a two-column chart. On one side list all the arguments that justify the handing over of the Sudetenland to Hitler. On the other side, list all the arguments that suggest it was a disastrous decision that paved the way to war.

OR

Debate this topic: 'Hitler's invasion of the Sudetenland was inevitable and unpreventable.'

📌 SOURCE 4.29

Hitler and Stalin as bride and groom. Cartoon by Clifford K. Berryman on the announcement of the Nazi–Soviet Non-aggression Pact, 1939.



SOURCE 4.30

David Ferriby and Jim McCabe,
Modern World History for
AQA Specification B (London:
Heinemann, 2002), 43.



SOURCE ANALYSIS:
THE PATH TO WAR

SOVIET HISTORIAN ON THE ANGLO-FRENCH PLAN (1969)

The Anglo-French plan was to direct Germany towards the east and involve Hitler in conflict with the Soviet Union. Munich and the negotiations of 1939 provided clear proof of the willingness of the British and French governments to form an anti-Hitler alliance. The treaty with Germany was a step which the USSR was forced to take in the difficult situation that had come about in the summer of 1939. The Soviet Government realised Hitler's aims and understood that the treaty would only bring a breathing space which would give them time to carry through the political and military measures needed in order to ensure the country's security.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What were the plans of the British and French, according to this source?
2. Identify two reasons why the Soviets signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact of Non-aggression.
3. Using the extract and your own knowledge, explain the events leading up to the 'difficult situation' in the summer of 1939.
4. Evaluate to what extent this is a reliable depiction of the reasons why Europe came a step closer to war during 1939. In your response, refer to different views of the causes of World War II.



The German army invades Poland, 1939.

INVASION OF POLAND – WORLD WAR II DECLARED

On 1 September 1939, the descent into the chaos of war came when Hitler invaded Poland. He had dismissed the Anglo-Polish agreement as an empty threat. Two days later Britain and France declared war; however, Poland was unprepared, for the *blitzkrieg* (lightning war) tactics employed by the Germany *Wehrmacht* and the expected support from Britain and France never materialised. Furthermore, Stalin ordered the Soviet invasion of Poland from the east on 17 September. Just twenty-six days after the country was invaded, Poland had been defeated.

Over the next two years, the Nazis spread their influence across Europe, controlling much of Eastern Europe, half of France and threatening Britain. It was not until 1942 that the tide began to turn against Germany, and it was another three years before the Third Reich was defeated.

ACTIVITIES

TIMELINE

Draw up a timeline of Hitler's actions in the lead up to World War II. Beside each event, note whether they were quite important or very important in contributing to the development of war. Justify your choices.

FLOWCHART

Construct a flow diagram to show when and where Hitler might have been stopped.

How might alternative actions by international leaders have prevented war?

ACTIONS OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

A.J.P. TAYLOR, 1966: 'The League died in 1935. One day it was a powerful body imposing sanctions, the next day it was a useless fraud, everybody running away from it as quickly as possible. Hitler watched.'

In any discussion of the reasons for the outbreak of World War II, the failure of the League of Nations is always considered. Along with the Great Depression and the severity of the Treaty of Versailles, the league's failures are regarded as contributing to the second breakdown of world peace in twenty-five years.

The League of Nations was established in 1919 as part of the Treaty of Versailles. It was an international organisation designed to allow nations to discuss their problems rather than using military force and aggression to solve disputes. The league had two significant weaknesses—it was poorly organised and unable to act quickly and decisively, and it had no armed forces of its own. It was also hampered by the refusal of the world's most powerful nation, the United States, to join. The league was also undermined when member countries such as Italy, Germany and Japan simply withdrew their membership when their territorial aggression was criticised. The lack of quick action in response to territorial aggression and military force made the actions of the League of Nations look weak and ineffective.

However, during the 1920s the League of Nations did experience some successes. The Refugee Commission was responsible for repatriating 400 000 refugees and prisoners of war after World War I. It successfully settled border disputes between Finland and Sweden, and between Greece and Bulgaria. The International Labour Organization attempted to establish trade union rights on an international level. The Health Organization (LNHO) attempted to wipe out leprosy and prevent epidemic diseases such as cholera, malaria and typhoid. It also sent teams to dig fresh water wells in developing nations. But these successes were overshadowed by the failings of the league.

DIFFICULTIES FACING THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

One of the league's key aims was to encourage international disarmament. It failed to do so. Only Germany had disarmed, and that was because it was forced to under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. The nearest the League came to disarmament was the 1921 agreement of Britain, France, Japan and the United States to limit the size of their armies. However, the lack of trust among nations meant no one was willing to be the first to disarm. When Germany began to rearm in 1935, nothing was done—and this made a mockery of the League's aims.

The main inadequacies of the League of Nations stemmed from its inability to respond effectively to international crises. The powers of the League relied upon moral condemnation, economic sanctions and the military force of its member countries. The last power was the most inadequate. Following World War I, most nations were unable—and, more importantly, unwilling—to use military force. Moral condemnation was insufficient in the face of militaristic authoritarian governments and the most powerful countries put their own self-interest ahead of supporting the League. The United States government, having decided not to join the League of Nations, pursued a policy of isolationism, refusing to involve itself in the affairs of the rest of the world.

The League was further hampered by its organisation, as any action taken had to be agreed upon unanimously. Britain and France were the two most powerful countries in the League and permanent members of its council. Therefore, their support was required for any action to be taken. However, neither country held the power and status that it had prior to World War I. Both had been weakened economically by the conflict. France had been left with widespread devastation to its agricultural land and industrial areas, and Britain was more interested in maintaining its empire. Italy and Japan were also permanent members of the League of Nations council—yet they were among the worst offenders in the 1930s.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND THE LEAGUE

The worldwide Great Depression sparked by the Wall Street Crash impacted on the economies of many countries. Imports and exports were subject to tariffs, and international trade was severely disrupted. Japan, heavily dependent on food imports to support its growing population, and with its industry on the brink of collapse, invaded Manchuria in 1931. The Chinese appealed to the League of Nations and Japan was ordered to withdraw its troops.

Britain and France refused to risk war with Japan. Britain was concerned that its interests, namely Singapore and Hong Kong, would be at risk. Economic sanctions were an empty threat, as one of Japan's main trading partners, the United States, was not part of the League. The League's inability to prevent

invasion by its own members only reinforced the notion that it was inadequate, weak and ineffective as an international organisation.

The failure of the League to prevent the Italian invasion of Abyssinia also undermined faith in the organisation. Driven by a desire to re-establish Italy's greatness—and to divert attention from the misery brought on by the Great Depression—Mussolini sent troops into Abyssinia in 1935. The League's inability to stop this invasion encouraged Hitler to re-occupy the Rhineland.

By 1936, it was obvious to the international community that the League of Nations was a failure.

SOURCE 4.31

'The Awful Warning.' This cartoon, published in *Punch* magazine, 1935, shows Britain and France reprimanding Mussolini.



ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Outline the aims of the League of Nations.
2. What were the weaknesses of the League of Nations as an organisation?
3. Draw up a table to show the successes and failures of the League of Nations.
4. Why was the league slow to react to Japan's invasion of Manchuria?
5. In what ways did Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia help Hitler's plans?

CHAMBERLAIN ON THE LEAGUE (1936)

I would like to make a few observations upon events of the last twelve months and their effect upon the League of Nations and the policy of collective security to which we have given so whole-hearted support with such disappointing results. The policy of collective security seemed to us, and I think it seemed to the people of the country as a whole, an attractive alternative to the old system of alliances and balance of power which nevertheless was unsuccessful in preventing the greatest war in history.

The circumstances in which the dispute between Italy and Abyssinia began appeared to offer an opportunity for the exercise of that policy which could hardly be more favourable for its success. The aggression was patent and flagrant, and there was hardly any country to which it appeared that a policy of sanctions could be exercised with a greater chance of success than upon Italy.

There is no use for us to shut our eyes to realities ... That policy has been tried out and it has failed to prevent war, failed to stop war, failed to save the victim of the aggression.

I am not blaming anyone for the failure. I merely record it now because I think it is time that we reviewed the history of these events and sought to draw what lessons and conclusions we can from those events.

There is no reason why, because the policy of collective security in the circumstances in which it was tried has failed, we should therefore abandon the idea of the League and give up the ideals for which the League stands. But if we have retained any vestige of common sense, surely we must admit that we have tried to impose upon the League a task which it was beyond its powers to fulfil.

Surely it is time that the nations who compose the League should review the situation and if it should decide so to limit the functions of the League in future that they may accord with its real powers. If that policy were to be pursued and were to be courageously carried out, I believe that it might go far to restore the prestige of the League and the moral influence which it ought to exert in the world. But if the League be limited in that sort of way it must be admitted that it could no longer be relied upon by itself to secure the peace of the world.

SOURCE 4.32

From a speech by British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain to the 1900 Club on 10 June 1936, reported in The Times (11 June 1936).

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Explain the context for this speech (i.e. what had been happening that led Chamberlain to deliver this speech).
2. Explain the two alternatives for keeping peace outlined by Chamberlain.
3. According to Chamberlain, why should the League of Nations have been able to deal with the Italian invasion of Abyssinia?
4. What indications are there in this speech that Chamberlain was optimistic about future peace? Support your answer with two quotes.
5. Using the extract and your own knowledge, explain why the League of Nations failed in the 1920s and 1930s.
6. Evaluate the usefulness of this source in understanding how the failure of the League of Nations contributed to war. In your response, refer to the extract and to different historical interpretations of the League of Nations.



THE POLICY OF APPEASEMENT

During the 1930s, as Germany, Italy and Japan showed increasing aggression, many nations, especially Britain and France, pursued a policy of appeasement. Appeasement involves giving in to someone's demands, as far as is reasonably possible, to avoid conflict. The dreadful impact of World War I was still very raw during the 1930s and certain leaders believed that every step should be taken to prevent another breakdown of peace.

One of the most noted exponents of the policy of appeasement was British prime minister Neville Chamberlain. Chamberlain was so determined to avoid another war that he took no action when Hitler invaded the Rhineland or joined with Austria. Chamberlain's most famous act of appeasement was the Munich Agreement in 1938, where he and French Premier Edouard Daladier agreed to allow Hitler to take control of the Sudetenland area of Czechoslovakia in return for a promise of no more aggression. It soon became clear that Hitler had no intention of keeping his promise, but at the time Chamberlain was praised for having secured 'peace in our time.'

There has been considerable debate as to how far appeasement was to blame for causing the outbreak of World War II in 1939. Did it encourage Hitler to assert himself more aggressively? Was it a reasonable and viable policy for politicians to have followed?

REASONS FOR APPEASEMENT

- **Financial strain** – Britain and France did not have the finances to go to war. There were still severe economic problems as a result of the Great Depression. Debt and high unemployment meant that Britain and France concentrated on the welfare of their own countries and protecting their interests.
- **Military limitations** – Germany had a head start on rearmament. The British government had reduced the size of its armed forces after World War I and believed that the nation was not ready to go to war.
- **The Treaty of Versailles** – There was a widely held belief in Britain that the treaty had been too harsh, especially on Germany. It was felt that if the injustices of Versailles were put right there would be no need for German aggression.
- **Fear of Communism** – Many countries saw Hitler as the lesser of two evils. A strong Germany would prevent the spread of communism across Europe by acting as a buffer between the Soviets in the East and the rest of the Western democracies. They feared communism more than they feared Hitler.
- **Public opinion** – Britain was the driving force behind appeasement and many people felt that Czechoslovakia wasn't worth fighting for, especially as the majority of people in the disputed area were German. It was also unlikely that British Commonwealth countries, such as Australia and Canada, would support a war in 1938. However, attitudes changed when Hitler invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia, and then invaded Poland.

- **Pacifism** – World War I had had a massive psychological impact on people. About 8 556 315 troops died and 16.5 million people (including civilians) died. Many people would do almost anything to avoid the horrors that had been experienced. In 1935, Britain held a Peace Ballot where 11.5 million people voted in favour of the League of Nations and its policy of collective security.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST APPEASEMENT

- It encouraged Hitler to be aggressive. Hitler gained more confidence every time he challenged the Treaty of Versailles and got away with it, becoming convinced that Britain and France would not oppose his expansion.
- It enabled Hitler and Germany to become stronger and more difficult to defeat as they increased their access to land, people and resources.
- Stalin had been quite prepared to form an alliance, but the failure of Britain and France to stand up to Hitler made him seek his own agreement.
- Hitler had made no secret of his determination to dominate Eastern Europe and seek *lebensraum* for Germans. It should not have been a surprise when Hitler broke his word.

RICHARD OVERY ON APPEASEMENT AND WORLD WAR II

[Appeasement] was more or less consistent with the main lines of British foreign policy going back into the nineteenth century ... By appeasement was meant a policy of adjustment and accommodation of conflicting interests broadly to conform with Britain's unique position in world affairs ...

Many British politicians had been unhappy with the treaty [Versailles] from the outset and had already made moves to conciliate Germany before Hitler came to power. The feeling was widespread that German grievances were, up to a point, justified and that a lasting peace could only be secured by removing the more vindictive aspects of the peace settlement ...

The problem was that appeasement, in order to be successful, had to be conducted from a position of some strength. Instead, the two western states found themselves offering concessions from a position of relative weakness ... The pursuit of appeasement was therefore necessary to buy time for rearmament ... There was strong pressure from pacifist opinion in both Britain and France to avoid any confrontation that might involve war ...

British and French governments were as frightened of communism as they were of fascism ...

SOURCE 4.33

Richard Overy, Origins of the Second World War (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 20–22.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Identify three or more reasons why Britain and France decided to appease Hitler, according to the extract.
2. According to the extract, appeasement should be 'conducted from a position of some strength' in order to be successful. How does Overy suggest that Britain and France were not in a strong enough position to appease Germany?
3. To what extent is the extract a reliable outline of the reasons why appeasement contributed to the outbreak of war? In your answer, refer to the extract and to other historical interpretations of the causes of World War II.

THE CAUSES OF WORLD WAR II: USING SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

➤ SOURCE 4.34

One of Geisel's early cartoons for PM.

'Ho hum! When he's finished pecking down that last tree he'll quite likely be tired.' May 22, 1941.



ACTIVITY

SKILLS: USING SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

Consider the following questions for each source on this double-page spread:

1. What message or view is conveyed by the source?
2. What language, symbols, gestures or colours are used to express a point of view in the source?
3. When and where was the source written or created? What was happening at that time?
4. How might events and conditions at the time have influenced the content of the source?
5. Can the source be corroborated with other sources? What do other sources say?
6. Is this an accurate or reliable source? Why or why not?

WINSTON CHURCHILL

We have sustained a total and unmitigated defeat ... I am not quite clear why there was so much danger of Great Britain or France being involved in a war with Germany at this juncture if, in fact, they were ready all along to sacrifice Czechoslovakia ... I believe the Czechs, left to themselves and told they were going to get no help from the Western Powers, would have been able to make better terms than they have got after all this tremendous perturbation; they could hardly have had worse ... Herr Hitler's victory, like so many of the famous struggles that have governed the fate of the world, was won upon the narrowest of margins ... I think you will find that in a period of time which may be measured by years, but may be measured only by months, Czechoslovakia will be engulfed in the Nazi regime.

🔍 SOURCE 4.35

Winston Churchill's speech in the House of Commons, 5 October 1938.

RICHARD OVERY

There is no simple answer to the question why the Second World War happened. There are short term explanations, there are long term explanations, but I think that the explanation most people reach; that without Hitler there would never have been a war is, I think, a vast over-simplification. The war happened principally because of the consequences of the First World War that distorted the international order. It created all kinds of problems for the international economy and basically marked the point where all those areas of the world that Europe had tried to dominate for the previous century were waking up and saying, what is Europe doing to us?

This created a whole series of different dis-equilibriums... All of this fed into a whole series of crises in the 1920s and the 1930s and Hitler, it seems to me, is part of that pattern but he's not the only part of that pattern.

🔍 SOURCE 4.36

*Interviewed by Laurence Rees from WW2History.com
http://ww2history.com/experts/Richard_Overy/Professor_Richard_Overy*

SIR IAN KERSHAW

It depends on your perspective, but it became a world war with the entry of the United States and Japan into this war in December 1941. But the war had been running in Europe since September 1939, and it had been running in the Far East since the beginning of the Japanese-Chinese war in July 1937. So you have two wars at opposite ends of the globe which then become a world war in December 1941. But the short answer to the question, therefore, is that this war happened because of the expansionist aims and policies of Germany and of Japan.

🔍 SOURCE 4.37

*Interviewed by Laurence Rees from WW2History.com
http://ww2history.com/experts/Sir_Ian_Kershaw/Why_the_war_started*

SKILLS: HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

1. What does Richard Overy suggest are the causes of World War II?
2. How does the opinion of Sir Ian Kershaw differ from that of Overy's?
3. To what extent do these two interpretations explain the causes of the outbreak of World War II? What other factors should be considered?
4. Referring to this book and at least two other sources, write a paragraph explaining which of the two approaches you favour. Give evidence to support your comments.

SKILLS: CONSTRUCTING ARGUMENTS

'If Chamberlain and Daladier had stood up to Hitler in the 1930s, World War II could have been averted.'
To what extent do you agree? Consider arguments on both sides and provide evidence to support your views.



CONCLUSION

The German invasion of Poland in September 1939 plunged Europe into war. The causes and events that led to World War II are numerous and often interlinked. The Treaty of Versailles gave Hitler a point around which he could rally the support of Germans, whose pride and economy had been damaged by the treaty. The economic impact of World War I was exacerbated by the Wall Street Crash and subsequent Great Depression.

The Great Depression encouraged the rise of fascist and militaristic regimes, and

encouraged countries such as Italy and Japan to seek answers to their economic and social problems outside their borders. The inaction of the League of Nations seemed, at times, to encourage this territorial aggression. Arguably, the preoccupation of politicians struggling to deal with their own economic problems caused by the Great Depression also contributed to the outbreak of war in 1939. The subsequent war lasted six years and cost the lives of over 50 million soldiers.

CHAPTER REVIEW

1. Create a mind map to show how Britain, France, Italy and the USSR contributed to the outbreak of war in 1939.
2. Summarise the following causes of World War II:
 - Treaty of Versailles
 - Japanese expansion
 - Economic depression
 - Hitler's actions
 - Appeasement
 - Militarism
 - Rise of Fascist Italy
 - Failure of the League of Nations
 - Anti-communism.
3. Prioritise the nine causes of World War II listed above, using a graphic organiser such as a 'diamond 9.' Justify your choices.

EXAM PRACTICE

Using three or four points:

- Explain how the Treaty of Versailles contributed to the outbreak of war in 1939. Provide evidence to support your answer.
- Explain how the failure of the League of Nations provoked territorial aggression in the 1930s. Provide evidence to support your answer.
- Explain how the actions of Hitler led to the outbreak of war in 1939. Provide evidence to support your answer.
- Explain how the signing of the Nazi–Soviet Pact contributed to the outbreak of war in 1939. Provide evidence to support your answer.

ESSAY

Write an essay, based on evidence, on one of the topics below.

- According to A.J.P. Taylor, war broke out not because of Hitler's design, but because of Chamberlain's blunders. To what extent do you agree? Use evidence to support your answer.
- Richard Overy wrote that 'no single factor was more important in explaining the breakdown of the diplomatic system in the 1930s than the world economic crisis'. To what extent do you agree with this assessment? Use evidence to support your answer.
- 'The League of Nations was too weak to keep the peace.' How accurate is this statement in relation to the events of 1939?
- Winston Churchill asserted that Hitler had outlined a master plan for the domination of Europe in his book *Mein Kampf*. Do you agree that Hitler was to blame for World War II? Use evidence to support your answer.
- Would the appeal of extremist movements have been weaker in the 1920s and 1930s if the Treaty of Versailles had been less severe?

TEST



QUIZ – CHAPTER 4

FURTHER READING

Ruth Henig, *The Origins of the Second World War 1933–41*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Readable analysis of the causes of World War II, this publication has a good third chapter on different historical interpretations of the causes and provides a useful overview examining how and why these interpretations exist.

A.J.P. Taylor, *Origins of the Second World War*. London: Penguin, 1991.

This book caused controversy when first published as it challenged the idea that Hitler was not entirely to blame for World War II. An in-depth study of the causes.

Ben Walsh, *GCSE Modern World History*, 2nd ed. London: Hodder Education, 2001.

Easy to read and accessible; provides overview of the causes of the war, and has lots of useful primary sources.



SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE

What continuity and what change is evident between the 1920s and 1930s in social and cultural life?

How did ideologies affect the daily lives of people?

How did cultural life both reflect and challenge the prevailing political, economic and social circumstances?

FROM WEIMAR TO NAZI GERMANY

'[F]or all the real and would-be Bohemians of [Berlin], there was one—only one—gathering place, the Romanische Café. There, in that shabbily splendid barn, gathered the writers, the artists, the art dealers, the journalists, poets, dancers, musicians, and divorce lawyers to talk endlessly over coffee and an occasional soft-boiled egg served in a glass. They talked about the opening of Brecht's *Threepenny Opera*, or the latest novel by Thomas Mann, or Erich Maria Remarque's controversial best seller, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, or the revolutionary theories of the Viennese Sigmund Freud, or Albert Einstein's work at the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft, or movies such as *The Blue Angel*, or Duke Ellington's smash hit, the jazz revue *Chocolate Kiddies*. Behind all the interbellum giddiness of Berliners lay the memory of the waste of war, the disillusioning failure of political reform, and the grinding pressure of inflation. Ahead lay the path to fascism and yet another holocaust.'¹

WOLF VON ECKARDT AND SANDER L. GILMAN, 'LOST BERLIN'

INTRODUCTION

Germany's defeat in World War I ushered in a new political system, as the former German Empire became a republic. The new political regime based at Weimar was perhaps the most democratic regime in the world in that era. It coincided with a period of new cultural expression, but also with significant economic

and social upheaval as Germany experienced the consequences of the Treaty of Versailles, hyperinflation and the worldwide Great Depression of the 1930s. The great flowering of avant-garde culture in 1920s Germany was promptly halted in 1933 under the Nazi government.





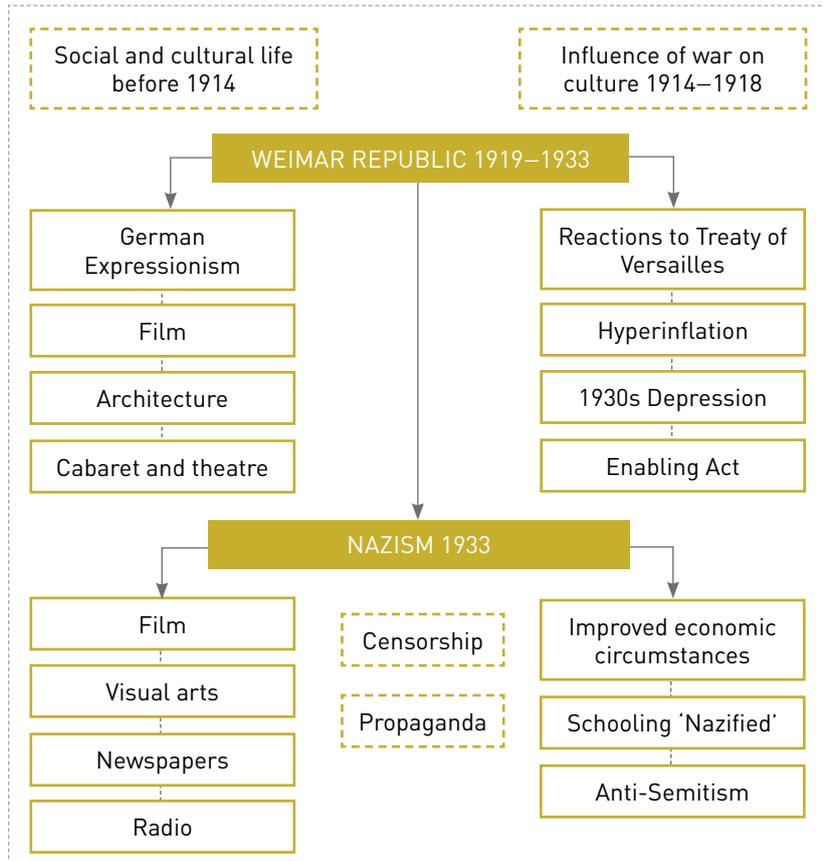
Ernst Kirchner, *Street Berlin*, 1913.

OVERVIEW

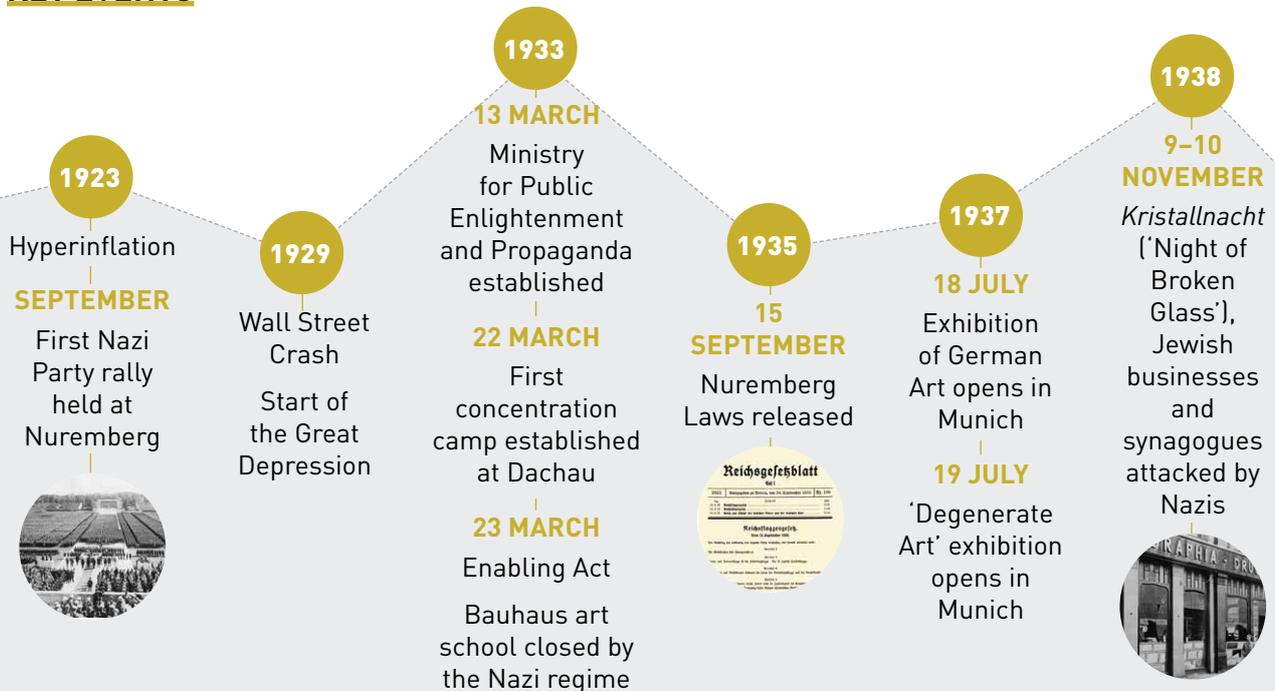
KEY QUESTIONS

- To what extent did Germany's defeat in World War I mark the beginning of a series of political, social and economic upheavals that dominated the following two decades?
- What was the political and social nature of the Weimar Republic?
- What was the influence of the Weimar Republic upon the flowering of cultural expression and the development of radical new art forms in Germany, especially in cities such as Berlin?
- What role did the inherent political instability of the Weimar Republic play in the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party by 1933?
- How were education and the media strictly controlled to become vehicles for Nazi propaganda?

IN THIS CHAPTER



KEY EVENTS



KEY PLAYERS

JOSEPH GOEBBELS (1897–1945)

- Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda under Nazism; turned Nazi Party rallies into great shows of pomp and ceremony.
- Oversaw Nazi control of the press and, through the Reich Culture Chamber, helped determine what was performed in the theatre, which books were published, which films were shown and which art exhibitions were allowed.



HEINRICH HIMMLER (1900–1945)

- Hitler's *Reichführer-SS*, meaning he was head of the SS but also held various other positions.
- Controlled the entire German police force, concentration camps, work camps and, later, extermination camps.
- Shy, almost unsocial, and a meticulous bookkeeper but also a fanatical follower of Hitler, believing 'The *führer* is never wrong.'
- Ultimately, the SS under Himmler's leadership was responsible for the reign of terror that murdered millions of Jews, Poles and gypsies, as well as Russian prisoners of war.



LENI RIEFENSTAHL (1902–2003)

- A German film director whose documentary *Triumph of the Will* (1935) (a record of the 1934 Nuremberg Rally) used dramatic film techniques to present Hitler as a 'messiah.'
- She claimed all her long life that she was making a 'pure historical film' and denied any complicity in promoting Nazism.

WALTER GROPIUS (1883–1969)

- A German architect who founded the Bauhaus School.
- Considered a pioneer of modern architecture and a key proponent of the style that combined function and beauty.

KEY TERMS

ANTI-SEMITISM

Hatred of, and discrimination, violence and legislation against Jewish people.

AVANT-GARDE

Any art and culture that innovates. Culture that is new and seen as 'cutting edge.'

BAUHAUS

A German school of design in art, architecture and design that combined function and beauty.

EXPRESSIONISM

A style of art or music where the likeness is distorted to express the artist's feeling about the object.

PROPAGANDA

An organised means of spreading a particular doctrine or practice. It uses art, literature, radio, film, media releases, education and other forms of communication to transmit a message that a government or organisation wishes to relay.

VÖLKISCH

Meaning 'art of and for the people.', the *völkisch* movement emphasised simple and traditional themes and was a reaction against many new aspects of Weimar culture.

HISTORICAL INQUIRY

It has been argued that the harshness of World War I and the humiliation of the Treaty of Versailles, together with the severe economic troubles of the post-war years, led to a 'live for today' attitude in Germany. This developed a culture that pushed the boundaries and challenged much that Germans accepted and held dear. When Nazism descended, this brash culture was an easy target, not just for the Nazis but for many Germans who felt unsettled by the changes of the preceding fourteen years.

As you work through this chapter, consider the following questions:

- How widespread was interest in and acceptance of the new cultural forms of the Weimar period?
- To what extent was the culture of the Weimar period the product of the political, economic and social problems that it faced?
- To what extent did the culture of the Weimar period actually influence further political, social and economic change?
- If Weimar culture had not been so radical and challenging, would it have been such a target once the Nazis came to power?

GERMANY'S SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE BEFORE WORLD WAR I



GERMANY BEFORE
WORLD WAR I:
COLOUR FOOTAGE

Between 1901 and the start of World War I, the German people experienced great social change. Industrialisation meant increasing urbanisation, and by 1907 more Germans worked in industry than in agriculture. By 1910, Berlin's population was over two million people, making it one of the largest cities in Europe.

How did these changes affect people's lives?

Germany's rapid industrial growth centred on a few areas and mainly had an impact on the lives of people in Berlin, central Germany and the Ruhr area. In many other areas, life might not have changed significantly for hundreds of years. In Berlin, a factory worker worked long hours and probably lived in a two-roomed flat. On the other hand, a banker may have recently had a great increase in disposable income and built a mansion to show off his wealth.

➔ SOURCE 5.01

Outside a German country inn, about 1900.



ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What are the men in the photograph doing?
2. Describe the appearance and attitudes of the men. Comment upon their standard of dress and the attitudes reflected in their expressions and body language.
3. What influences can you see in the way the waitress is dressed?
4. Compare the photograph to the information provided at the top of this page. Discuss whether this scene would have been representative of Germany as a whole.

Rapid industrialisation supported the growth of liberal democratic attitudes and middle-class values, and the political parties that represented them. By 1912, the Social Democratic Party was the largest party in the Reichstag. Trade unionism was also growing: membership of trade unions more than tripled between 1900 and 1913.²

Jewish people in Germany and Austria, particularly in cities such as Berlin and Vienna, played an important role in economic and cultural life. They were well represented in legal, medical and educational occupations, they were to be found among the literary and artistic community and they were patrons of the arts. It is ironic, in view of what happened under the Nazi regime, that Berlin and Vienna were regarded as cities in which Jewish people were relatively integrated and treated with tolerant acceptance.

Nevertheless, Germany before 1914 retained many aspects of absolute monarchy and was essentially politically and socially conservative. The great majority of Germans supported Germany's foreign policy, which included imperialism, the development of Germany as a naval power, and competition with the kaiser's British cousin, King George V.

CULTURAL LIFE

One area of German life that showed a radical, experimental side was the arts.

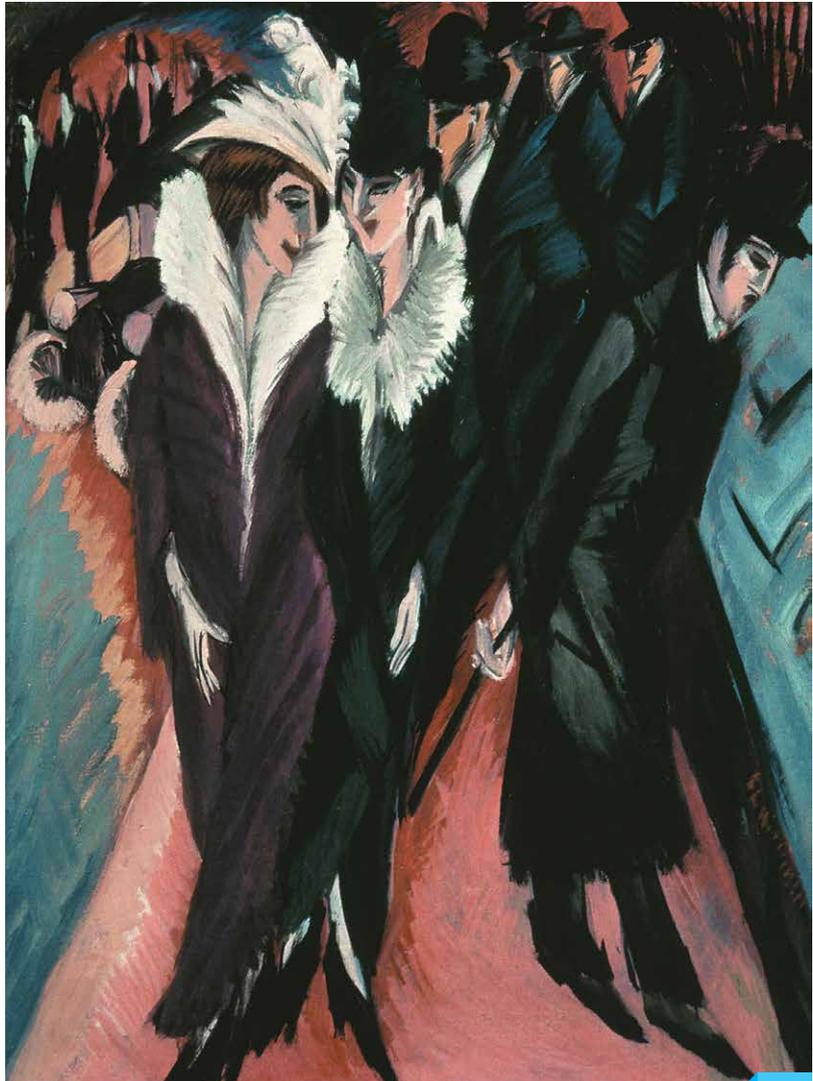
German visual arts, painting and sculpture before World War I often showed sexual liberation and expressive immediacy. The term 'Expressionism' was applied to the art of one group, which used strong colour and varied brushwork. A group of Dresden artists formed *Die Brücke* ('The Bridge') in 1906, and by 1911 most of them had moved to Berlin. They believed the role of the artist was to produce 'modern art' but also to take direct action in society. The artists in *Die Brücke* saw the social problems as Germany rapidly industrialised and admired the pre-industrial world. They opposed the materialism and militarism they saw in Germany and wanted some kind of primitive idyll. Artists such as Ernst Kirchner (1880–1938) and Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) included elements of primitive art in their works.



KIRCHNER'S STREET
BERLIN

▼ SOURCE 5.02

Ernst Kirchner's *Street, Berlin* (1913) shows a group of prostitutes and well-dressed businessmen in a Berlin street.



SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Describe the appearance of the women, including how well dressed they are, their body language, and the expressions shown on their faces.
2. What mannerisms do the men show?
3. What does this painting tell us about Berlin's wealth and society?
4. What might conservative, religious German people have thought of the subject and style of this painting?

ACTIVITY

FILM

Like most Western Europeans, Germans were able to view films from 1895, although these were mostly imported. Cinema was initially associated with the lower social classes, and competed with variety shows and circuses. Movie theatres were usually run-down and considered as places of ill repute.

In 1910, German directors began to make films, and cinema began to be considered 'artistic.' The early films were mostly filmed stage productions, often based on German literature. At the same time, viewing foreign films from Denmark or the United States was a popular pastime in German cities.

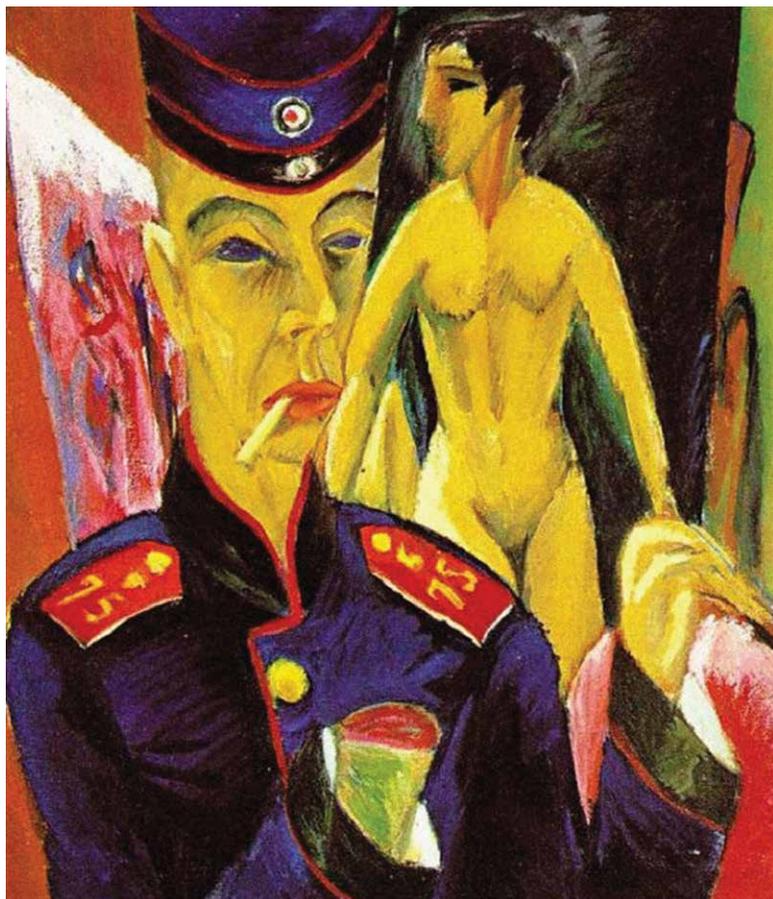
INFLUENCE OF WAR ON CULTURE

Many Germans, like others, rejoiced when their country went to war in August 1914. Newsreels showed cheering men, women and children, and Admiral von Müller recorded in his diary on 1 August 1914, 'The mood is brilliant.'³ In September 1914, the German film theoretician, Hermann Häfker, wrote of the benefits of war in the preface to his book on cinema:

May it [war] purify our public life as a thunderstorm does the atmosphere.
May it allow us to live again, and make us eager to risk our lives in deeds such as this hour commands. Peace has become insupportable.⁴

▼ SOURCE 5.03

Ernst Kirchner, *Self-portrait as a Soldier*, 1915.



War gave a tremendous boost to the German film industry, as foreign films were no longer available, and war itself created a greater demand for film. With the

outbreak of war, there was increased demand for frontline footage, and the government wanted propaganda films. Film directors, actors and all of the technicians associated with producing a film gained employment as a result of World War I.

In painting, some of the horrors of war were exposed, although many of the paintings that are associated with strong anti-war themes were completed after the war. In 1914, German Expressionist painter Otto Dix sketched *The Declaration of War 1914*, which

ACTIVITY

SKILLS: BELIEFS AND VALUES

1. Describe the appearance of the soldier.
2. Why has Kirchner placed the image of himself in an artist's studio rather than on the battlefield?
3. What does this suggest about Kirchner's attitude to war?

shows a less positive and more fearful view of war than the 1914 newsreels and photographs suggest. In Ernst Kirchner's 1915 painting *Self-portrait as a Soldier*, Kirchner depicts himself with his right hand removed at the wrist; this wasn't accurate, but it was a comment on what war could do to an artist.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How did war benefit the German film industry?
2. Would film industries in other countries have benefited in the same way as the German film industry? Explain your response.
3. Many Germans responded enthusiastically to the announcement of war in August 1914, as did many others around the world. How and why did this attitude change over the four years after 1914?

ACTIVITY

WEIMAR: THE FIRST YEARS OF THE REPUBLIC

PROCLAMATION PRINTED IN THE BERLIN PEOPLE'S GAZETTE, NOVEMBER 1918: 'Workers, Soldiers, Fellow Citizens—the Free People's State is here! Kaiser and Crown Prince have abdicated! ... The victory of the people has been achieved, it may not be dishonoured or endangered by rashness. The economy and traffic have to be allowed to continue uninterrupted, in order to secure the popular government under all circumstances. Follow all instructions of the new people's government and of their officials. It acts in closest cooperation with the workers and soldiers.'

The German Republic shall thrive!

In the final days of World War I, Germany faced a political crisis. People were war-weary; communists, inspired by the Russian Revolution, gained more support; and knowledge of imminent defeat created uncertainty. In several German cities, workers and soldiers or sailors set up councils along similar lines to workers in Russia. On 9 November 1918, the Social Democratic Party under Friedrich Ebert took power and the German Emperor abdicated. The German Empire was replaced by a republic, based in the new capital city, Weimar.

In its first years, the Weimar Republic faced difficulties from the following issues.

COMMUNIST ATTEMPTS TO GAIN POWER

The Spartacist League proclaimed a socialist republic at the same time as Ebert became chancellor, and tried to implement their plans through armed uprisings. These resulted in street battles, which were eventually defeated in January 1919 after the government asked for support from *Freikorps* (bands of former soldiers).

RIGHT-WING OPPOSITION

In 1920 the Kapp Putsch, using mostly former soldiers, attempted to overthrow the Weimar government. It failed largely because of a general strike by Berlin workers. Three years later, in 1923, another right-wing attempt was made to overthrow the government; this was the unsuccessful Munich Putsch, led by Adolf Hitler.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Spartacist League was named after Spartacus, who led a slave rebellion in the Roman Republic. Two of its founders, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, were captured in Berlin by *Freikorps* soldiers during street fighting in January 1919, tortured and executed. They became martyrs for Marxism.

ATTITUDES TO THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

Many Germans resented the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, especially the war-guilt clause and the requirement for reparations. The new Weimar government had no choice but to sign the treaty, but defeat and the harsh terms of the peace treaty were associated with the Weimar Republic forever afterwards.

The Weimar Republic was a democracy, and all Germans aged over 20 could vote. The lower house, the Reichstag, used the system of proportional representation. This meant there were many parties represented and government could only be formed by coalitions of parties. In its first four years, Weimar had nine coalition governments, which was another source of instability and uncertainty.

SOURCE 5.04

Anne McCallum, Germany 1918–1945: Democracy to Dictatorship (Heinemann Education: Port Melbourne, 1994), 50.

DID YOU KNOW?

In the new Weimar Republic voting was not compulsory, but turnout was high: in 1919, 83% of eligible women voted, in 1920, over 79% of eligible voters did so. In the two German elections in 1924, over 77% voted. In comparison, 71% voted in the 1919 Australian federal election (compulsory voting was introduced in 1924), while the United States presidential election of 1920 saw fewer than 50% vote.

1920 REICHSTAG ELECTION RESULTS

PARTY	NUMBER OF SEATS
German Nationalist People's Party (DNVP) (Very right wing and conservative)	71
German People's Party (DVP) (A moderate, middle-class party)	65
Wirtschaftsparti (A middle to right-wing party)	4
Right splinter parties (Very right-wing extremists)	5
Bavarian People's Party (BVP) (A middle to conservative party)	21
Centre Party (A moderate party)	64
Democratic Party (DDP) (Moderate, slightly left-wing party)	39
Social Democratic Party (SPD) (Moderate to slightly left-wing party)	102
Independent Socialists (USPD) (Left-wing party)	84
Communist Party (KPD) (Extreme left-wing party)	4
Total number of seats	459

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. How many seats would constitute a majority (50 per cent + 1) in the 1920 Reichstag?
2. The political parties are arranged from extreme right-wing (DNVP) to extreme left-wing (Communist Party). Explain why it would prove particularly difficult to form a coalition of the three parties with the largest number of seats.
3. Which political parties would find it easiest to form a coalition in 1920? Explain your reasoning.
4. If this voting pattern had continued in subsequent German elections, what might have been many Germans' attitude towards coalition governments?

World War I ended with Germany's defeat and the beginning of political, social and economic chaos. There was widespread poverty and long food queues as 600 000 war widows and 2 million fatherless children struggled to meet the basic needs of life. Stories of flour mixed with sawdust and families living on a diet of boiled turnips were common. In late 1918 and early 1919, tensions boiled over into violence. There was street fighting in Berlin in January 1919 and a



◀ SOURCE 5.05

The Salvation Army feeds schoolchildren in Berlin, 1920.

brief proclamation in Berlin of a socialist revolution. In 1920, the Kapp Putsch was an attempt to overthrow the Weimar government and establish a right-wing government. Despite the attempts by those on the left and the right to destroy it, the Weimar government survived those early threats.

Friedrich Lennhoff was a 15-year-old schoolboy in 1918. His father owned a factory in Berlin. In Source 5.06, Friedrich describes his life in Berlin from November 1918 to February 1919.

A 15-YEAR-OLD'S ACCOUNT OF LIFE IN BERLIN

When the Kaiser fled to Holland, the front lines had cracked, the soldiers retreated in disarray, and they were in a state of shock. The streets were full of lorries with sailors, soldiers and workers brandishing red flags, and there was fighting and gunfire in the streets around my home, which was itself damaged in many places. Electricity had been cut off and the factory was virtually at a standstill. The house was lit by a single gas lamp ... the family kept close together, often afraid to venture out in fear of stray bullets. Amidst all this turmoil mother suggested to me that I should start to keep a diary, which I did, combining it with a scrapbook to help me sort out my ... feelings about the past, present and future.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What does Lennhoff mean by 'the front lines had cracked'?
2. What political beliefs were held by the 'sailors, soldiers and workers' described by Lennhoff? How do you know this?
3. What personal hardships did Lennhoff face at the time?
4. Lennhoff wrote that his diary and scrapbook would help him sort out his feelings 'about the past.' What experiences might Lennhoff have had in the recent past?

◀ SOURCE 5.06

From Friedrich's autobiography, quoted in Robert Gibson and Jon Nichol, *Germany* (Blackwell History Project) (London: Simon & Schuster Education, 1985), 11.



SKILLS:
PERSPECTIVES

Herbert Hoover (who later became US president) was sent on a mission to Germany in 1919 to observe and to help starving people. One observer on that mission recorded the following observations.

SOURCE 5.07

Quoted in *Otto Friedrich, Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 52.

OBSERVATIONS FROM A US MISSION TO GERMANY

You think [this] is a kindergarten for the little ones. No, these are children of seven or eight years. Tiny faces, with large dull eyes, overshadowed by huge puffed, rickety foreheads, their small arms just skin and bones, and above the crooked legs with their dislocated joints the swollen pointed stomachs of the hunger edema [swollen tissue] ...

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Explain why the children described appeared to be several years younger than they were.
2. How much of the children's bodies were affected by their starvation?
3. Why might the US government have embarked on this mission?

HYPERINFLATION

Between 1922 and 1923, the German economy experienced hyperinflation, which rendered the German currency, the mark, virtually worthless. Inflation is when the price of goods rises, making the purchasing power of money fall. In most economies, inflation occurs at a gradual rate and is usually matched by wage rises, so that people are able to maintain their standard of living. However, in 1922 Germany experienced runaway inflation, where prices rose rapidly in a very short time. A loaf of bread that cost 63 marks in 1922 had risen to 1.5 million marks in September 1923, and to 200 billion marks in November 1923. People's savings became worthless. There are stories of people burning banknotes in their stoves to provide warmth because they could not afford to buy coal.

There were several reasons for this hyperinflation, including the depressed state of the economy because of war and because of the loss of rich iron- and coal-producing areas under the Treaty of Versailles. However, the most important influence was the heavy reparations that Germany was required to pay to other countries. Lacking reserves of money to meet this debt, the Weimar government simply printed more banknotes. This practice made the money increasingly worthless.

In the five years leading up to 1923, Germans had suffered defeat after four years of war, and been forced to accept the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. The nation had seen the end of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic. The people had endured street fighting and battles between left-wing and right-wing extremists and an attempted overthrow of the government. Now they faced economic madness.

Otto Friedrich, in his book on 1920s Berlin, described some of the hardships faced by Berliners during the most difficult time of the 'madness,' as he calls it.

ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. List the hardships and problems facing Germany from late 1918 to 1920.
2. Identify the hardships as either political, social or economic by placing P, S or E beside your responses.
3. Which hardship—political, social or economic—would affect working people most? Why?

OTTO FRIEDRICH, A PORTRAIT OF BERLIN IN THE 1920s

The survivors smile now at the madness of 1923, but the destruction of an economy brings considerable suffering to the poor and the helpless, and even though the inflation made everyone poor, it made some people poorer than others. Louis Lochner, who arrived in Berlin during this period ... got the usual first impression of 'cafés crowded with stylishly garbed ladies' but soon found a different story on the side streets off the fashionable boulevards. 'I visited a typical Youth Welfare Station,' he said later. 'Children who looked as though they were eight or nine years old proved to be thirteen. I learned that there were then 15000 tubercular children in Berlin; that 23 per cent of the children examined by the city health authorities were badly undernourished.' The old were equally helpless. One elderly writer named Maximilian Bern withdrew all his savings, more than 100000 marks, and spent them on one subway ticket. He took a ride around Berlin and then locked himself in his apartment and starved to death. 'Barbarism prevailed,' said George Grosz. 'The streets became dangerous ... We kept ducking in and out of doorways because restless people, unable to remain in their houses, would go up on the rooftops and shoot indiscriminately at anything they saw. Once, when one of these snipers was caught and faced with the man he had shot in the arm, his only explanation was, 'But I thought it was a big pigeon.'

SOURCE 5.08

Otto Friedrich, Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 126.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What were the two contrasting scenes Louis Lochner observed when he first arrived in Berlin?
2. Which two groups, according to Lochner, suffered most as a result of the hyperinflation?
3. What, according to George Grosz, caused the streets to become dangerous?
4. What made these people behave in this way? Include evidence from the extract to support your answer.



SOURCE 5.09

Käthe Kollwitz, Germany's Children Starve!, 1924.

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Describe two aspects of the sketch that give evidence that the children were starving.
2. What is a common theme in Sources 5.07, 5.08 and 5.09?

ACTIVITY

SKILLS: PERSPECTIVES

Explain the effects that Germany's political, economic and social instability from 1918 to 1923 might have had on different groups. For example, their effects on urban workers, farmers and teachers.

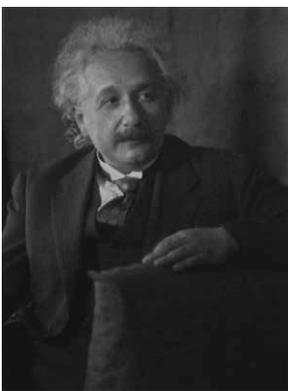
ACTIVITY



↑ Max Reinhardt.



↑ The Bauhaus art school, an iconic building designed in 1925 by architect Walter Gropius.



↑ Albert Einstein.

WEIMAR AND CULTURE

A GERMAN POET LIVING IN BERLIN IN THE 1920S DESCRIBING CULTURAL LIFE AT THE TIME: ‘Theatres, opera and concert houses were filled to capacity. European artists from Paris, London, and Rome who came to Berlin were excited by it and didn’t want to leave. The atmosphere in Berlin was electric.’⁵

The Weimar period from 1919 to 1933 is known for its extraordinary cultural and artistic flourishing. In almost every aspect of art and culture, Weimar Germany, especially Berlin, was considered among the world leaders. The period was characterised by:

- visual arts: German Expressionism and the ‘New Objectivity’
- theatre: Bertolt Brecht and Max Reinhardt and the world of cabaret
- literature: writers such as Thomas Mann and Erich Remarque
- cinema: films such as *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* and *Metropolis*
- music: Kurt Weill and Arnold Schoenberg, as well as the adoption of American jazz
- architecture and design: the Bauhaus school of architecture and design
- modern dance: dance theorists and choreographers Rudolf von Laban and Mary Wigman.

What was happening in arts and culture was also occurring in the sciences. The ‘Frankfurt School’ of philosophy included Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse. Other German philosophers with worldwide influence included Martin Heidegger and Max Weber. Physicist Albert Einstein gained prominence during his years in Berlin. The first complete and correct definition of quantum mechanics was completed in Germany. The Institute for Sexology was established in Berlin in 1919. Education philosopher Rudolf Steiner established the first Waldorf school in Germany in 1919.

While there was wide variety in the themes, techniques and approaches of the exponents of culture during the post-war period in Germany, there were also some common characteristics that distinguished Weimar culture from the periods that preceded and followed it. These included an emphasis on ordinary people and everyday themes; anti-war and anti-military attitudes; a ‘live for today’ atmosphere; alienation; simplicity and practicality in building and design; and the use of art and literature as a vehicle for social criticism and comment.

Why was there an explosion of artistic and cultural talent in Weimar Germany? Historians have put forward various explanations to explain the flourishing of arts and culture after 1919.

- Berlin in the early years of the twentieth century had become a centre of commercial and business success, which supported the growth of more urban, middle-class interests. This continued after 1919.
- After 1919, censorship ceased and new ideas in the arts, sciences and philosophy were published, discussed and debated.
- All German universities were now completely open to Jewish students. They provided great stimulus in intellectual and academic pursuits. During the Weimar years, nine Germans were awarded the Nobel Prize—five of them Jewish scientists.

- World War I, the attempted revolution in 1918–1919, the Treaty of Versailles and the hyperinflation of 1922–1923 challenged ‘old’ values. When so much of Germany’s political, social and economic foundation seemed to have been destroyed, why was there any point in saving for the future? Spend now and enjoy: this encouraged experimentation and the adoption of new ideas.

SIMPLICISSIMUS
ONLINE

SIMPLICISSIMUS

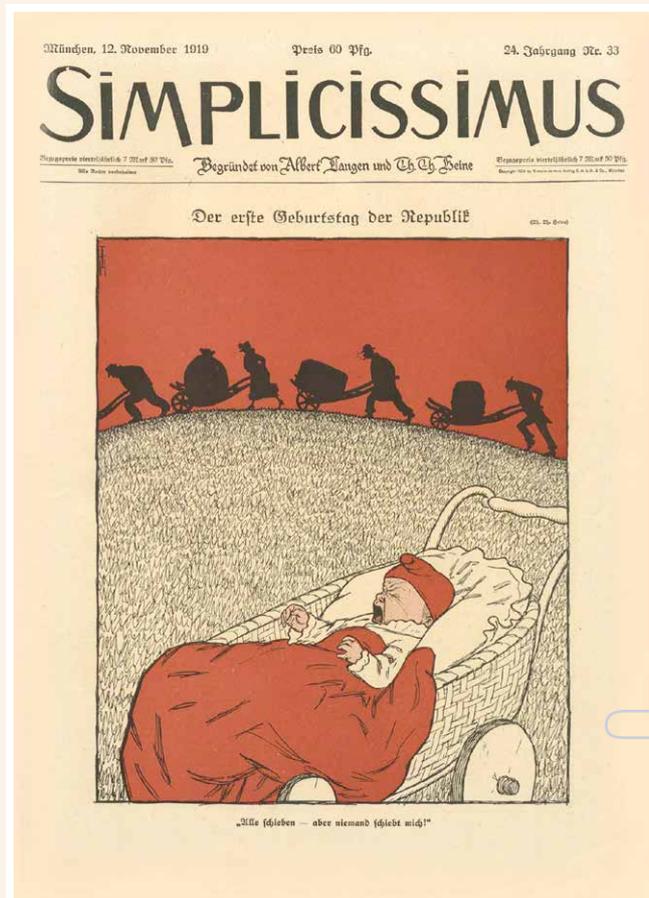
Simplicissimus was a satirical German weekly magazine. It published cartoons and articles that commented on current events in Germany, and was known for its modern graphics and daring content. Artists George Grosz and Käthe Kollwitz were key contributors.

Started by Albert Langen in 1896, it only took two years before *Simplicissimus* was suppressed, having mocked Kaiser Wilhelm II with a caricature and accompanying article. Wilhelm II was outraged and took legal action. This led to Langen spending five years in exile. The cartoonist, Thomas Heine, spent six months in prison, as did the writer.

Simplicissimus ridiculed extremism on both left and right, but faced threats and intimidation by the Nazi Party when they gained power in 1933. Declining circulation led to *Simplicissimus* ceasing publication in 1944—although it was revived again in 1954.

➔ SOURCE 5.10

‘The First Birthday of the Republic’, *Simplicissimus*, 12 November 1919. The added caption reads ‘All are pushing—but nobody pushes me.’



ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

- The cartoon is labelled ‘The First Birthday of the Republic’ and appeared on 12 November 1919. What is the Republic referred to?
- What does the baby in the pram represent?
- Who do the figures on the horizon represent, and what are they doing?
- The caption reads, ‘All are pushing—but nobody pushes me.’ Explain how ‘pushes’ is applied in two different ways in the cartoon.
- What point is the cartoonist making about Germany in 1919?

There are differing views on how extensively Germans accepted the new art styles.

One commentator, Paul Ortwin Rave, director of the Berlin Nationalgalerie in the 1930s, described the art scene from 1919 as ‘a country filled with museums actively committed to modern art, to its acquisition and display.’ Across Germany, museum directors obtained art works from all major artists of the modern style, international as well as German. Their exhibitions frequently travelled throughout Germany and exposed the general public to new German art.⁶

On the other hand, historian Eberhard Kolb identified the division within Weimar Germany, with a small, intense artistic and intellectual elite based in cities, while the majority of Germans—mostly upper- and working-class Germans, including peasants—remained conservative. This is supported by population statistics showing that, in 1925, only one-third of Germans lived in large cities, with the other two-thirds lived in small towns and rural environments.⁷



PAINTING WITH
WHITE BORDER

GERMAN EXPRESSIONISM

Expressionism was not uniquely German, and had been seen before 1914, especially in Austria. Expressionism actually grew from the influence of the Dutch artist Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890). But it was in Germany after 1919 that

Expressionism reached its peak. It is often seen as a reaction against industrialisation and the alienating nature of cities that characterised Europe before 1914.

Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) was a Russian-born painter who lived in Munich between 1896 and 1914, and returned to Germany in 1921. Between 1922 and 1933, he taught at the Bauhaus in Weimar. Kandinsky is generally credited with creating the first truly abstract painting. What mattered in art was not the imitation of nature but the expression of feelings through the choice of colours and lines. The ‘inner sound’ should replace the material world.

Expressionist art has often been compared to music, which does not need words to express feelings and moods. Kandinsky often included musical instruments in his paintings, and he wrote about a bright red affecting the viewer like the call of a trumpet.⁸



📌 SOURCE 5.11

Several Circles by
Kandinsky, 1926.

CINEMA

The term ‘Expressionist’ is applied to other artistic fields, especially German cinema of the Weimar period. Robert Wiene’s *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1920), Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* (1927) and F.W. Murnau’s *Nosferatu* (1922) are Expressionist films that broke new ground in both their content and their style.

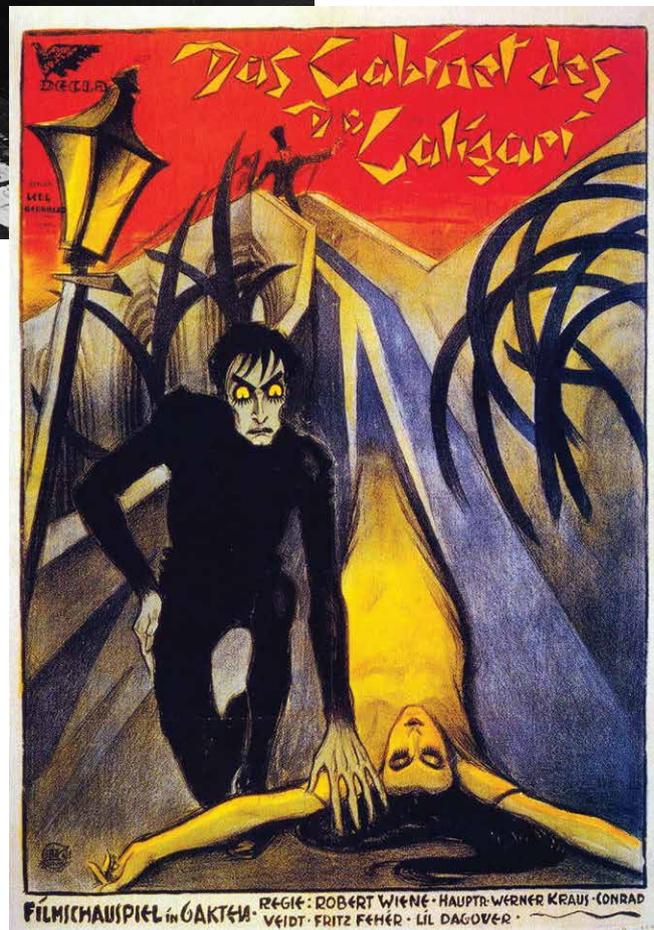


📍 SOURCE 5.12

A scene from *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* where Expressionist features are obvious: crooked windows, tilting chimneys and eerie light and shadow.

📍 SOURCE 5.13

Film poster for *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*.



The Cabinet of Dr Caligari is considered an early example of the horror film genre, as well as presenting a premonition of the rise of Nazism. The allegory has often been interpreted as a warning about how unlimited state authority idolises power. The sets were designed by three Expressionist painters; crooked windows, tilting chimneys and eerie light and shadow create insane distortion.

The film was a great success, and continues to be considered central to film history. French critics considered it an exceptional film, and coined the term *Caligarisme* to describe a post-war world they considered 'upside down.'

Film theorist Siegfried Kracauer was a journalist for a Frankfurt newspaper from 1922 to 1933, and saw at first hand the society from which *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* developed. In 1947, Kracauer wrote *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*, in which he claims that *Dr Caligari* was a premonition of Hitler. 'Caligari is a very specific premonition in the sense that he uses hypnotic power to force his will upon his tool—a technique foreshadowing, in content and purpose, that manipulation of the soul which Hitler was the first to practise on a gigantic scale.'⁹

Another German film, Fritz Lang's *Dr Mabuse the Gambler* (1922), also reflected the German social and economic situation of the time: the intertitles between scenes frequently remind the audience about 'our time' and the plot contributes 'to the sense German audiences at the time felt that money was worthless.'¹⁰



FILM STUDY: WEIMAR CINEMA

EXPRESSIONIST ARCHITECTURE

The astronomical observatory known as the Einstein Tower in Potsdam, Germany, is an example of Expressionist architecture. The architect, Erich Mendelsohn, was a member of the Bauhaus. Mendelsohn was commissioned to design the tower as a research centre for Albert Einstein's theory of relativity (which is, in Einstein's words, that 'time and space and gravitation have no separate existence from matter'). In designing

the tower, Mendelsohn 'attempted both to represent and serve Einstein's controversial new scientific theory.'¹¹ His initial sketch showed a dynamic building, curved and with no angles—an abstract sculpture—to be made from reinforced concrete. However, due to a shortage in materials in post-war Germany, the tower was built from stucco-covered brick and completed in 1921.

SOURCE 5.14

The Einstein Tower.



ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What features of the Einstein Tower appear to be Expressionist?
2. Why might a conservative German have disliked this building when it was built in the early 1920s?
3. How does this example of Expressionist architecture reinforce the view that avant-garde art and innovative science were interconnected in Weimar Germany?

BAUHAUS

The Bauhaus movement planned to reunite art and technology, and move away from 'traditional' art styles. It was revolutionary in the sense that it did not accept art's emphasis on 'pretty things,' but used function as the basis for art forms.

The movement coincided with the Weimar Republic, and was also based in Weimar. Bauhaus students were generally young and their youthful exuberance was criticised by conservative people in Weimar and the surrounding area.

The Bauhaus school began in 1919, in the city of Weimar, where the new German Republic was also based. In 1925, the school moved to Dessau, and in 1932, to Berlin. It was closed when the Nazis came to power in 1933.

Headed by the German architect Walter Gropius, the Bauhaus aimed to integrate art and crafts with modern technology. Students were taught a hands-on approach to their studies, designing buildings and fittings. They were encouraged to experiment boldly and use their imagination, but also to be utilitarian and think about how each object they were designing would be used.

Many of the furnishing and architecture styles that we take for granted today were first developed at the Bauhaus. Tubular steel chairs, geometric furniture, flat-roofed and square- or oblong-shaped buildings are typical of Bauhaus design. Materials such as concrete were often exposed. When the school moved to Dessau, the purpose-built studios were modelled on factory buildings, with unbroken interior spaces and walls made entirely from glass.

Bauhaus students were taught by German artists such as Kandinsky and Paul Klee. The new Dessau buildings were designed by Gropius, who was head of the school. The Bauhaus movement reflected the Weimar Republic: like the new government, it was experimental and questioned traditional values.



ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What features of the Dessau building are typical of Expressionism?
2. German Expressionism was often demonstrated in paintings by the use of bright colours, especially in blocks. How does this contrast with the Dessau building?



BAUHAUS ONLINE

SOURCE 5.15

Bauhaus, Dessau, designed by Walter Gropius. The artists Kandinsky and Paul Klee lived at the Bauhaus at Dessau. They painted their accommodation so that Klee had a red door, blue walls and yellow ceilings. Kandinsky, influenced by his native Russia, gilded the door frames and windows.

DID YOU KNOW?

Australian comedian and satirist Barry Humphries has had a lifelong fascination with Weimar art and music. In 2013, Humphries curated and performed in, along with cabaret artist Meow Meow and the Australian Chamber Orchestra, a 'Weimar Concert' celebrating 'degenerate' music. Humphries described the music as 'edgy and mean', representing the music of freedom before the rise of Nazism.

CABARETS AND NIGHTCLUBS

Cabaret was a popular entertainment in many European cities in the 1920s. *Kabarett* became immensely popular in Germany, especially in Berlin and Munich, from the mid-1920s. There was no censorship and the hedonism of a society that had 'lost everything' was lived out in German cabarets. There were outrageous strip clubs, and clubs that specialised in one or more particular sexual preferences. Across Berlin, a patron could buy or observe almost any kind of sexual behaviour. Dancers were sometimes naked, and homosexuality and lesbianism were overt.

During the period of hyperinflation, German currency became almost valueless, so \$US10 had enormous purchasing power. This led to an influx of international tourists who could afford to buy almost anything. Middle-class Berliners who had lost their life savings sometimes turned their houses into brothels. There is no way of knowing exactly how many prostitutes were in Berlin, but contemporary sources often comment on the visibility of male and female prostitutes in the streets.

To gain some idea of what Berlin cabaret offered, we can use photographs as the record. Photographs show the American dancer Josephine Baker naked on stage. A revue at the Apollo Theatre shows the chorus girls bare-breasted and only partly covered by flowers. At the White Mouse cabaret, Anita Berber danced naked and provocatively.

The significance of the cabaret and the morality of Weimar Germany are also explored in the 1930 German Expressionist film, *The Blue Angel*, directed by Josef von Sternberg and featuring Marlene Dietrich in her first starring role. The film was based on Heinrich Mann's novel, *Professor Unrat*, and deals with the protagonist's moral decline. Dietrich plays a femme fatale and demonstrates the period's readiness to include sex and permissiveness in popular culture. At one point in the film, Dietrich throws her underpants down onto the protagonist's head.

In 1928, the English writer Christopher Isherwood travelled to Berlin and turned his observations into two novels: *Mr Norris Changes Train* (1935) and *Goodbye*

▼ SOURCE 5.16

Revue at the Apollo Theatre in Berlin, 1925.



to *Berlin* (1939.) These novels formed the basis of a play *I am a Camera*, written by John van Druten, and then a Broadway musical by Fred Ebb and John Kander. In 1972, these became the film *Cabaret*, directed by Bob Fosse. The film won eight Oscars.

In addition to the descriptions of *kabarett* in Isherwood's books, there is also a reflection of the creeping Nazism and anti-Semitism that were to characterise 1930s Germany. Isherwood's characters display the mixed reactions to Nazism that were common in Germany at the time—from those who were horrified at what was happening to those who preferred to turn a blind eye and hope Nazism would go away.



CABARET TRAILER

FILM STUDY:
CABARET

OTTO FRIEDRICH, REFLECTING ON BERLIN IN THE 1920S

The twenties were not golden for everyone, of course, for these were the years of the great inflation, of strikes and riots, unemployment and bankruptcy, and Nazis and Communists battling in the streets. Still, the magic names keep recurring—Marlene Dietrich, Greta Garbo, Josephine Baker, the grandiose productions of Max Reinhardt's 'Theatre of the 5000,' three opera companies running simultaneously under Bruno Walter, Otto Klemperer, and Erich Kleiber, the opening night of *Wozzeck*, and *The Threepenny Opera* ... Almost overnight, the somewhat staid capital of Kaiser Wilhelm had become the center of Europe, attracting scientists like Einstein and von Neumann, writers like Auden and Isherwood, the builders and designers of the Bauhaus school, and a turbulent colony of more than fifty thousand Russian refugees. Vladimir Nabokov gave tennis lessons here, and young daredevils forced their cars to more than a hundred miles an hour on the new Avus speedway, and ladies in evening dress would proceed directly from the theatre to the pandemonium of the six-day bicycle races. Berlin's nightclubs were the most uninhibited in Europe; its booted and umbrella-waving streetwalkers the most bizarre. Above all, Berlin in the 1920s represented a state of mind, a sense of freedom and exhilaration.

← SOURCE 5.17

Otto Friedrich, Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 7–8.

ACTIVITIES

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What are the four main social and economic hardships Friedrich identifies for Berlin in the 1920s?
2. What contrasts does Friedrich see between cultural life under the kaiser and under Weimar?

POPULAR CULTURE

Draw a simple table, with the first column labelled 'Popular culture' and the second column labelled 'Example.' Use the extract from Friedrich's book in Source 5.17—and other information in this chapter—to complete a brief overview of the main cultural activities. Provide an example for each.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

The Weimar Republic did not change everything for every German. By 1925, the German economy was recovering from its crisis and prosperity was returning for some sectors of the population. By the end of the 1920s, people were buying as many luxury goods as they had in 1913. Private ownership of cars increased from 82 700 in 1922, to over half a million in 1930.¹²

The good times were not evenly spread, but the mood of the late 1920s was certainly more buoyant than it had been since the end of the war. Most Germans expected that the good times would continue.

The Great Depression affected Germany more than many other countries, although it was certainly not the most severely affected. Historians have often argued that what made the Great Depression worse for Germany was that it recalled the period of hyperinflation seven years earlier. Under hyperinflation, money became worthless for many people and they were unable to buy food; during the Great Depression, unemployment reached six million people, and those people were unable to buy food.

Even before the Nazis gained power in 1933, the government was forced to accept more right-wing policies. One of these was to increase censorship. As a result, by 1931, films with a perceived left-wing approach were sometimes banned. In December 1930, the US film based on Erich Remarque's novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* was shown in Germany, but gangs of Nazis disrupted the viewings. The film (and the novel it was based on) were seen as denigrating the German war effort. Some Germans considered that Remarque was exaggerating the horrors of war to further his own pacifist views. The censors, not yet under Hitler's strict control, banned further screenings of the film on the basis that it would endanger German prestige abroad.

As in the rest of the Western world, films of the Depression era often had a simple 'message of hope' or were escapist, taking the audience away from their troubles.

NAZISM 1933



PERSPECTIVES:
BERLIN 1930–1934

SOURCE 5.18

Book burning,
10 May 1933.



The rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party had a profound effect on German social life and culture. Nazi control began to reach into every corner of German life following the passing of the Enabling Act in March 1933. The Enabling Act gave Hitler almost complete control. Actions to marginalise Jewish people and eventually remove them from German citizenship began in 1933 with the order to boycott Jewish shops and businesses. The trade union movement was seen as a vehicle for the spreading of communist ideas, and all trade unions were declared illegal in May 1933.

Control of culture was an important tool used by the Nazis, and this was shown in the introduction of censorship in the early weeks of the Third Reich. To ensure the supervision of all cultural control, Hitler appointed Joseph Goebbels as Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda in March 1933. One of the first actions under Goebbels' leadership was the burning of books at universities across Germany. In September, the Reich Chamber of Culture was established to make sure that all aspects of German cultural life reflected the tenets of Nazism.

Under Goebbels, newspapers, newsreels, literature and film were all strictly controlled so that they presented only views consistent with Nazism.



🔍 SOURCE 5.19

Public book burning at the University of Berlin, 10 May 1933. Students had collected 20 000 'un-German books' from private and public libraries. Works included German writers Thomas and Heinrich Mann, Erich Maria Remarque, Ernst Toller and Arnold Zweig, plus non-German writers such as H.G. Wells, Jack London, Emile Zola and Marcel Proust.



NAZI BOOK BURNING

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Describe the attitudes shown by the men, including reference to their facial expressions and body language.
2. Why would the Nazis want to destroy books that were written by German writers and were highly acclaimed internationally?
3. What point is made by burning a book?



🔍 SOURCE 5.20

A page from a Nazi children's song book. The verse is from the Nazi Party anthem.

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Identify all the symbols of Nazism shown in the illustration.
2. What message does the image give about 'leaders' and 'followers'?
3. Why would the Nazis think it important to present this type of image to very young children?

ACTIVITY



Several key aspects of education, instruction and entertainment were added to German social and cultural life.

SCHOOLING

From 1934, the German education system became thoroughly 'Nazified.' Jewish teachers were sacked and all remaining teachers were required to take an oath of loyalty to Hitler. The teaching profession was one of the most politically reliable groups in society: 97 per cent of teachers belonged to the Nazi Teachers' Association and 32 per cent were members of the Nazi Party. The educational emphasis changed from academic achievement to physical education, with an emphasis on creating the 'superior race.' As Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf*, a child's 'whole education and training must be so ordered as to give him the conviction that he is absolutely superior to others.'¹³

The school curriculum was changed to emphasise German history from a Nazi perspective, and to denigrate the role of Jews.

➔ SOURCE 5.21

R.A. Brady, *The Spirit and Structure of German Fascism* (London: Gollancz, 1937), 112.

MODEL FOR A SENIOR HISTORY SYLLABUS

WEEKS	SUBJECT	RELATION TO JEWS
1–4	Pre-war Germany, the class war, profits, strikes.	The Jews at large!
5–8	From agrarian to industrial state. Colonies.	The peasant in the claws of the Jews!
9–12	Conspiracy against Germany, encirclement barrage around Germany.	The Jew reigns! War plots.
13–16	German struggle, German want. Blockage! Starvation!	The Jew becomes prosperous! Profit from German want.

Some teachers were faced with difficult choices, as shown in Source 5.22.

➔ SOURCE 5.22

Quoted in Robert Gibson and Jon Nichol, *Germany* (Blackwell Education Project) (1990), 37.

A STUDENT ABOUT HER TEACHER

He had a bad conscience. He tried to do two things. On the one hand he went out of his way to teach history from the Nazi point of view—there were three girls who belonged to the League of German Girls in the class who could have grassed on him ... On the other hand he worked for the three Jews to be allowed to take the school leaving exam, he gave them good marks. That is the only thing he dared do.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Why did the teacher feel he had to teach history from the Nazi point of view?
2. What risks was the teacher prepared to take?
3. Using the model history syllabus and the extract, explain how the education system helped to instil Nazi values in students.
4. Why do you think the three Jews might have been allowed to take the school leaving exam?

CEREMONY

Nazism raised the public ceremony to the highest level. Every opportunity was taken to show unity and celebrate Hitler's leadership. Book burnings were not done secretly; they were public events with ceremonial and militaristic gestures. From August 1934, the armed forces took a new oath of allegiance to Hitler, in public and publicised ceremonies. When the people of the Saar voted in a plebiscite in January 1935 to return to the Reich, Hitler attended the street parade.

German sociologist Max Weber explained this in terms of creating the 'charismatic personality.' Such leadership derives authority from the 'heroic character' of the leader, based on the subjective beliefs of the followers. It was not abstract rules that made people loyal, but a sense of personal loyalty to Hitler himself.

Joseph Goebbels, the Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, made sure that rallies and ceremonies were on a grand scale; the torchlight processions were moving and dramatic—and ordered. Germany before 1933 had appeared chaotic: now, everything was in order. An American news correspondent, William Shirer, described the stage-managed displays that characterised the Nazi movement.



▲ SOURCE 5.23

Joseph Goebbels at a Nazi celebration, 1935.

▼ SOURCE 5.24

*William Shirer, Berlin Diary
(London: Hamish Hamilton,
1941), 24–5.*

AMERICAN NEWS CORRESPONDENT ON NAZI PAGEANTRY

I'm beginning to comprehend, I think, some of the reasons for Hitler's outstanding success. Borrowing a chapter from the Roman church, he is restoring pageantry and colour and mysticism to the drab lives of twentieth-century Germans. This morning's opening meeting in the Luitpold Hall on the outskirts of Nuremberg was more than a gorgeous show; it also had some of the mysticism and religious fervour of an Easter or Christmas Mass in a great Gothic cathedral. The hall was a sea of brightly coloured flags. Even Hitler's arrival was made dramatic. The band stopped playing. There was a hush over the thirty thousand people packed in the hall. Then the band struck up the Badenweiler March, a very catchy tune, and used only, I'm told, when Hitler makes his big entries. Hitler appeared in the back of the auditorium and followed by his aides, Goering, Goebbels, Hess, Himmler, and the others, he strode slowly down the central

aisle while thirty thousand hands were raised in salute. It is a ritual, the old timers say, which is always followed. Then an immense symphony orchestra played Beethoven's Egmont overture. Great Klieg lights played on the stage, where Hitler sat surrounded by a hundred party officials and officers of the army and navy. Behind them the 'blood flag', the one carried down the streets of Munich in the ill-fated putsch. Behind this, four or five hundred SA standards. When the music was over, Rudolf Hess, Hitler's closest confidant, rose and slowly read the names of Nazi 'martyrs'—brownshirts who had been killed in the struggle for power—a roll call of the dead, and the thirty thousand seemed very moved.

In such an atmosphere no wonder, then, that every word dropped by Hitler seemed like an inspired Word from on high. Man's—or at least the German's—critical faculty is swept away at such moments, and every lie pronounced is accepted as high truth itself.

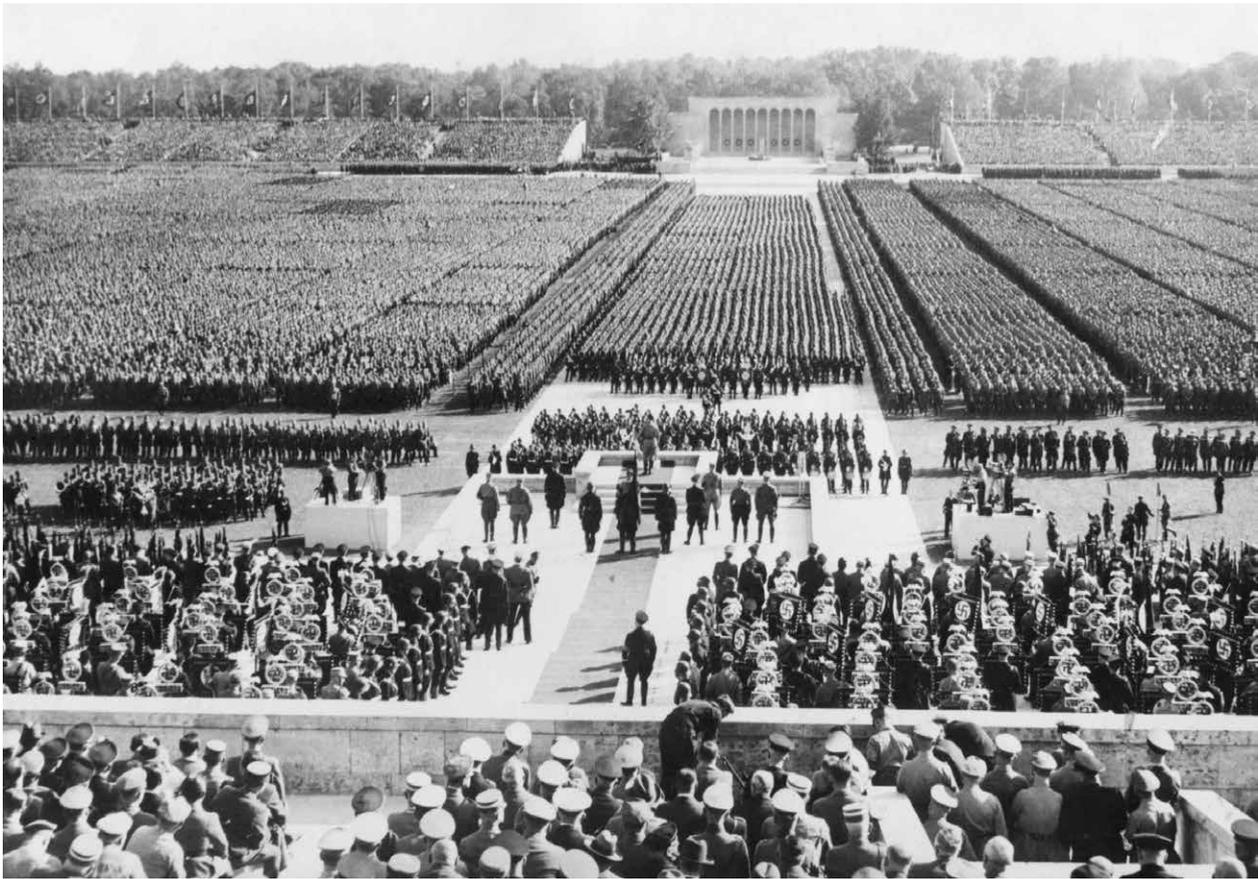
ACTIVITIES

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What is Shirer referring to by the phrase 'the drab lives of twentieth-century Germans'?
2. What were the main elements of display in the hall?
3. Why would this form an effective setting for Hitler's arrival?
4. Does Shirer believe the display was effective in its aim? Support your response with evidence from the extract.

DIALOGUE

Construct a dialogue between two people who attended the meeting described above. One is totally swept up in the emotion and pageantry, the other sees through the display and has fears about brainwashing and loss of individual thought. Each person should make five points to support their view. (This task could be done in pairs).



📍 SOURCE 5.25

Nazi soldiers at the 1936 Nuremberg Rally.

NUREMBERG RALLIES

Of all the ceremonies created under Nazism, the best known and most spectacular were the Nuremberg Rallies. The Nazi Party began holding large, public rallies in 1923. The first was held in Munich and the second at Weimar in 1926. By 1927, the rallies were held in Nuremberg, where there was a suitable stadium, and they were held annually until 1938. By then, it was not unusual for half a million people to participate in a rally.

The 1934 Nuremberg Rally was filmed by Leni Riefenstahl and formed the basis of the film *Triumph of the Will*. Hitler commissioned Riefenstahl to make the film. *Triumph of the Will* is considered by many critics to be an ‘awesome spectacle’ and a powerful propaganda film. The film opens with Hitler arriving by plane—he had adopted the then-new technology to support his authority and popularity—descending from the clouds in almost a god-like form. The *führer* is driven past cheering, saluting crowds, and one of the techniques is to have the camera ‘follow’ from behind, as if seeing everything from Hitler’s viewpoint. The camera techniques are innovative, creating a compelling view of hundreds of thousands of supporters. All the formations of troops, young people and workers are orderly and uniform.

A high point is the ‘troika’—Hitler, Heinrich Himmler (SS Commander) and Viktor Lutze (SA Commander)—walking through the huge parade ground, flanked by ordered formations of troops, to lay a wreath at a World War I memorial. The emphasis is on threes: three giant Nazi banners at the end of the parade ground, three men in uniform marching between the ranks.



RIEFENSTAHL
DOCUMENTARY



TRIUMPH OF THE
WILL

Leni Riefenstahl later denied she had been a willing supporter of Nazism's extremes, and always presented her role in making the film as that of the dispassionate filmmaker creating an historical document. Riefenstahl went on to make *Olympia* (1936), a film about the Berlin Olympic Games.

After World War II, Riefenstahl was tried and imprisoned for her role in Nazi propaganda. In the final decades of her long life (she lived to be 101, dying in 2003), Riefenstahl made several underwater documentaries, which continued to show her talented filmmaking.



📌 SOURCE 5.26

Leni Riefenstahl at the 1934 Nuremberg Rally, filming *Triumph of the Will*.

ACTIVITIES

SOURCE ANALYSIS

- In the opening titles of the film, which event is being referred to by these lines:
 - 20 years after the outbreak of the World War
 - 16 years after the start of German suffering
 - 19 months after the beginning of Germany's rebirth?
- What was the purpose of reminding viewers about German history?
- Compare Sources 5.24, 5.25 and 5.27. What similarities are there in the methods used to promote worship of Hitler?
- Many ordinary Germans who were later appalled at the excesses of Nazism became caught up in the euphoria of the early years of the Third Reich. Using Sources 5.24, 5.25 and 5.27, identify at least three tactics or techniques used by Hitler's propagandists to draw people into the thrall of Nazism.

EXTENSION

View *Triumph of the Will* and write a film review. Focus on the way the film reflects what was going on in Germany in 1934. Also comment on the impact that the film could have, especially on impressionable youth.

Choose an appropriate audience for your review: it could be for a youth magazine, a local newspaper or a blog. Write your review in a format consistent with your chosen audience.

📌 SOURCE 5.27

OPENING TITLES IN THE FILM *TRIUMPH OF THE WILL*

On September 5 1934
 20 years
 after the outbreak
 of the World War
 16 years
 after the start
 of German suffering
 19 months
 after the beginning
 of Germany's rebirth
 Adolf Hitler flew
 again to Nuremberg
 to review the columns
 of his faithful followers.

NEWSREELS

In the 1930s, before television, Western audiences commonly received 'the news' via newsreels shown in cinemas, usually prior to the feature film. Every country—including democracies—censored newsreels. For instance, British cinemas did not show newsreels of the Duke of Windsor's 1937 wedding because his abdication from the British throne was a politically tense issue. Strikes and

DID YOU KNOW?

Hitler commissioned Leni Riefenstahl to make a film of the 1934 Nuremberg Rally without prior discussion or agreement from Propaganda Minister Goebbels, who was angry and determined to sabotage the film. Goebbels tried to make the physical conditions of filming difficult for Riefenstahl. The film went on to win the Gold Medal at the Venice Film Festival in 1935 and a Grand Prix awarded by the French government at the Paris Film Festival.

demonstrations were rarely shown in any country, but stories that boosted public morale were often featured. Few viewers inside or outside Germany knew that German newsreels were made only by accredited members of the Reich Chamber of Film—and they were vetted and approved by Goebbels.

The Nazis saw great value in the film medium, as long as it was controlled. They banned films that were not ‘politically correct’, such as Pabst’s *Westfront 1918*, which was made in 1930 and banned in 1933. *Westfront 1918* was a pacifist film and Goebbels called it ‘cowardly defeatist.’ Pabst’s *Kameradschaft* (‘Comradeship’) was banned because it appealed to international solidarity among workers.

The German film industry was systematically purged of any non-Nazi influence: Jews were banned from working in any branch of filmmaking, film criticism was abolished and there was ruthless censorship. Most German film talent migrated to other countries, especially to the USA. Hollywood benefited greatly, as Fritz Lang, William Dieterle, Robert Siodmak, Edgar G. Ulmer, Douglas Sirk, Marlene Dietrich, Billy Wilder, Peter Lorre and Fred Zimmermann, among many others, left Germany over the next few decades. They all became significant members of the Hollywood film industry.

Film history often focuses on films such as *Triumph of the Will* or *The Eternal Jew* (1940) because they represent suitable examples of Nazi propaganda designed to inform and educate cinema audiences. However, like most people in Western societies, Germans went to the movies to be entertained. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s Germans viewed a series of films about Frederick the Great that mythologised the historical leader.

In Germany, the highest proportion of films shown in this period were comedies; films with direct political content formed the lowest proportion of those shown. As Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkel write in their history of German film, *The German Cinema*, the bulk of the feature films produced during the twelve-year period of the Nazi regime, numbering some 1100, were of a purely escapist nature, containing little or no political overtone. This was Goebbels’ deliberate policy in order to fill the cinemas, where the supporting section of the program, the newsreels and documentaries, carried the current Nazi message.¹⁴

▼ Poster stating that ‘all of Germany hears the leader with the people’s receiver.’



RADIO

Propaganda Minister Goebbels also recognised that radio provided a medium for reinforcing the Nazi message. He aided the development of the *Volksempfänger* (or ‘people’s receiver’), which was an affordable radio for all Germans. By 1939, 70 per cent of German households owned radios—the highest percentage anywhere in the world. Loudspeakers were also introduced in factories and streets. A poster from this period shows a picture of a radio above a crowd of thousands, with the caption, ‘All Germany listens to the Führer.’

Radio programs included speeches by Hitler and other Nazi leaders, German folk music and classical music. Programs supported patriotism and Nazism. Events such as the Nuremberg rallies were broadcast on radio and often played publicly through loudspeakers. The inexpensive radios had limited range and could generally only receive local stations, which suited the government’s desire that German people would not be able to hear foreign broadcasts.

NEWSPAPERS

In 1933, Germany had 4700 newspapers and 10 000 periodicals. By the end of 1934, the Nazis ran 436 newspapers directly; indirectly, they controlled the entire German press. Communist and socialist newspapers were closed in February 1933, and in October 1933, a law took away editorial independence, and the press could no longer criticise the German government. By 1944, 82 per cent of all German newspapers were run by the Nazis; the remainder were run directly by the Nazi Party publisher.

NAZI ART

In October 1933, Hitler announced that he would give German people four years to adjust to the cultural policies of the new government. Four years later, in July 1937, Hitler presided over the opening of Munich's House of German Art, exhibiting 'the immortal achievements of the German artistic heritage.' Hitler announced that, 'From now on we are going to wage a merciless war of destruction against the last remaining elements of cultural disintegration.' If there was still anyone sustaining 'cliques of chatterers, dilettantes, and art forgers' they will be 'picked up and liquidated.' He called them 'prehistoric Stone-Age culture barbarians and art stutters.'¹⁵

Each year thereafter, until 1944, there were annual exhibitions to present what was interpreted as the best of German art. At the time of each opening there was an elaborate pageant on 'German Art Day.' Participants in historical costumes, riding on floats featuring models of well-known works of art, were driven through the streets of Munich.

Under the Nazis, German art was to be realistic, heroic and understood by the average German. The term applied to it was *völkisch*, meaning art of and for the people. Classical Greek and Roman statues fitted Hitler's view of 'racial purity' and much German sculpture of the period shows young German men and women as heroic classical figures. German art was to be aesthetically conservative, which was another element of Nazi propaganda.

As with all other cultural expressions, the Nazis immediately moved against the visual arts that they believed undermined or challenged the Nazi ideal. The Nazi Party became influential on the Dessau City Council by 1931, leading the Bauhaus to move to Berlin in 1932, led by the architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. When

SOURCE 5.28

The parade on German Arts Day in Munich, 1938.



ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What type of artworks are being displayed in the pageant?
2. Does the pageant appear popular? Give evidence to support your response.
3. What evidence is given in the photograph that this was part of the Nazi propaganda campaign?

the Nazis came to power in 1933, the Bauhaus was closed. It was considered un-German, and its avant-garde style was attacked by the Nazis who wanted a return to realism.

DEGENERATE ART

The day after the opening of the first exhibition of the House of German Art, another display was opened just across the park. It was the *Entartete Kunst* or ‘Degenerate Art’ exhibition. Over 650 examples of the works of art the Nazis had designated ‘un-German’ and unacceptable to the Reich were displayed. During the four months it was on view in Munich, over two million people visited. The exhibition travelled throughout Germany and Austria for three years.

The purpose of the Degenerate Art exhibition was to show German people which type of art was unacceptable; to mock and deride avant-garde and experimental art. The exhibition included examples of modern art by Otto Dix, George Grosz, Ernst Kirchner, Max Beckmann and Paul Klee, along with sculptures and wood carvings. Examples of art from the great twentieth century art movements—Abstractionism, Cubism, Primitivism, Expressionism—that was not realistic or immediately understood by the average German was gathered from galleries throughout Germany and labelled ‘degenerate.’ Art produced by Jews was included, but the exhibition was not specifically anti-Semitic.

If you visit an art gallery today, you will see an explanation alongside the exhibits, perhaps placing the work in context, drawing the viewer’s eye to particular aspects and offering some explanation. In the Degenerate Art exhibition, however, paintings were accompanied by brief quotes from Hitler, or comment such as, ‘This section can only be entitled “Sheer Insanity” or ‘Even this was taken seriously and bought for good money!’¹⁶

▼ SOURCE 5.29

An official Nazi Party poster about the Degenerate Art Exhibition. One of the headlines reads: ‘The products were of spiritual decay.’

On the wall of the exhibition was an inscription that read: ‘They say it themselves: We act as if we were painters, poets, or whatever, but what we are is simply and ecstatically impudent. In our impudence we take the world for a ride and train snobs to lick our boots!’ The statement is from a 1915 socialist manifesto.



ACTIVITY

SKILLS: BELIEFS AND VALUES

1. Why do you think the quote from a socialist manifesto was included in the exhibition?
2. Apart from some of the artworks displayed here being the work of socialists, what criteria might have been used in selecting these works to represent ‘degenerate’ art?
3. How important do you believe the Nazi art policy and the Degenerate Art exhibition were in spreading Nazi power and control? (You could compare the art policies with other Nazi policies, including education, anti-Semitic laws and Nazi control of the courts.)

THE RISE OF ANTI-SEMITISM

The persecution of Jews and the execution of up to six million Jewish people under the Nazi regime is one of the greatest horrors in human history.

There was nothing new about anti-Semitism. For almost 2000 years, the Jewish people had faced suspicion, discrimination and persecution. Most European countries had some history of mistreatment of Jewish people.

Ironically, Germany in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was seen as one of the more tolerant nations, and many Jews fleeing persecution in Russia and Eastern Europe had settled in Germany.

The reasons for anti-Semitism are complex, but some historians suggest that it may date back to the early years of Christianity, when Christians blamed Jews for the death of Christ. Other possible factors include the common human suspicion and fear of people who seem different and who have a strong and ritualised religious or cultural identity.

Jealousy and resentment were key elements in anti-Semitism. In many countries, including Germany, Jewish people were perceived to be wealthy and successful. They were lawyers, doctors, bankers, businesspeople, jewellers and clothing traders. This was partly true; although only 1 per cent of Germany's population was Jewish, 17 per cent of bankers and 16 per cent of lawyers were Jewish.

There is another irony here. For most of the preceding 2000 years, Jews were forbidden to own land. In most European countries, land was the measure of wealth and status. Because Jews could not buy land, they developed other ways of making a living through crafts—such as clothing, jewellery and leatherwork—and they constantly ploughed profits back into their businesses. As Jews became wealthier, they began lending money, and this is how many of the great banking families of Europe developed. Many gentiles (non-Jewish people) borrowed from Jewish banks but resented the interest they had to pay. It is likely that many wealthy Jews would have been happier spending their money on land than lending it through banks, but they were unable to do this.

There was also jealousy of the rich cultural, artistic, musical and operatic traditions of the Jews. In most European cities, Jewish people dominated intellectual and cultural life. In Weimar Germany, many of the new artistic traditions were led by Jewish artists, writers and filmmakers. Hitler's resentment of Jews is said to have stemmed from his time in Austria as a struggling artist—he certainly blamed Jews for his rejection from the Vienna Art School!

Against this background, it is essential to ask: What was different about the Holocaust?

What was different about the Holocaust?

The Holocaust was a systematic process of discrimination *supported by law* to persecute and eliminate all Jews from Europe. Although Hitler made his feelings about Jews clear in *Mein Kampf*, few people in Germany took him seriously until he started to pass laws against Jewish people. Even then, many Germans—both Jewish and non-Jewish—did not take the threat seriously.

There were several stages to Hitler's anti-Semitic policies.

1933–1935: Discrimination

A massive wave of anti-Jewish propaganda urged people not to employ Jewish people and to boycott Jewish businesses. Jews were sacked from positions in schools, universities, galleries and libraries. Jewish children were mocked and made to feel uncomfortable at school. If Jews were attacked or their property was damaged, police would take no action. Many Germans did not take this seriously and believed that it would pass. Some Germans—even some Jewish people—took the view that they would put up with anti-Semitism in the short term, because Hitler was also fighting the communists. The statement, 'We'll let Hitler get rid of the communists, then we'll get rid of Hitler' was common in this era.

1935–1938: The Nuremberg Laws

Many anti-Jewish practices were enshrined in law for the first time under the Nuremberg Laws. Jews lost their citizenship and the right to vote or to inherit property. Marriage between Jews and gentiles was banned; Jews were forced to wear the yellow Star of David on their clothing; and they were banned from public places such as restaurants, theatres, swimming pools and parks. Some Jews (including prominent people such as Albert Einstein) began leaving Germany.

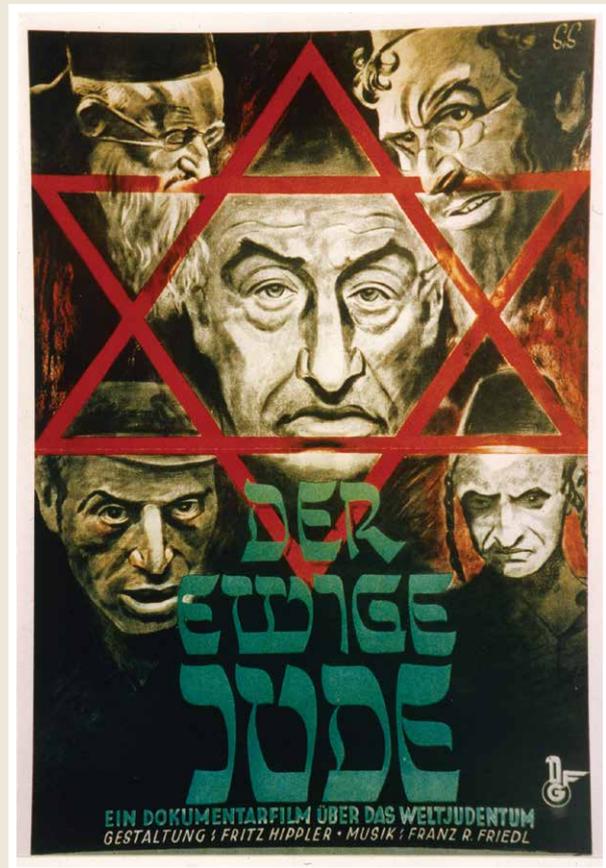
SOURCE 5.30

The Star of David.



1938–1939: Violence

The anti-Jewish campaign moved into a higher gear following *Kristallnacht* (Night of the Broken Glass). On this night there was a wave of violence across Germany directed at Jewish shops, homes and synagogues. There was little doubt that the violence originated with the Nazis, but Hitler portrayed the events as a spontaneous attack on the Jews by ordinary German people. Hitler and Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda Joseph Goebbels used the violence to support their claims that they were only reflecting the will of the German people in their anti-Semitic campaigns. A small number of Jewish people managed to leave Germany after *Kristallnacht*, but it was becoming increasingly difficult for Jewish people to leave because they were denied official papers or passports.



SOURCE 5.31

A poster for *The Eternal Jew*, a propaganda documentary produced by Goebbels, which stirred up anti-Semitic violence.

SOURCE 5.32

The windows of a Jewish-owned printing business smashed during *Kristallnacht*.



1939–1941: Outright persecution

Once the war began, Hitler made no attempt to hide his plans to wipe out the Jews. As the Nazis moved into other countries—France, Poland, the Netherlands, Norway, Yugoslavia and Greece—they quickly rounded up the Jews and put them in ghettos (walled-off sections of cities) or concentration camps. In Germany, no more pretexts were required for Jews to be arrested. Hundreds of thousands of people were rounded up and put in concentration camps just because they were Jewish. Concentration camps were built in occupied Poland, and many German Jews were sent there by train.

1941–1945: The Final Solution

During 1941, as the Germans moved into Russia, some 500 000 Russian Jews were shot and buried in mass graves. This gave Hitler and SS Chief Heinrich Himmler a blueprint for what should be done with the Jews. Late in 1941, the decision was taken to eliminate all Jews from Europe. The key to the plan was the setting up of six extermination camps in Poland.



THE SURVIVOR'S
VOICE

▼ SOURCE 5.33

Nazi concentration camp
in Auschwitz, Poland.



Various methods of killing were tried prior to the development of gas chambers to kill large numbers of people at once, and large furnaces to dispose of their bodies. Auschwitz was the most infamous of these extermination camps.

Over the next three years, some six million people—mainly Jews, but also communists, gypsies, homosexuals, political opponents of Nazism and disabled people—were killed in this manner.

▼ SOURCE 5.34

Bodies of dead inmates at Nordhausen, a concentration camp in Germany. The photo was taken shortly after the camp's liberation by the US Army in April 1945.





CONCLUSION

The Weimar Republic developed from a defeated Germany and immediately faced political, social and economic confusion. But cultural themes that had begun before 1914, such as the beginnings of cinema and bold new art forms, found a perfect setting in the republic. Weimar was politically bold, one of the most democratic nations in the world. Could art also be as bold? In the fourteen Weimar years, with little or no censorship, new technologies and an influx of immigrants from rural Germany and abroad, German cultural expression flourished. In popular culture and in everyday life, similar attitudes and values were played out.

As Germans went through the destruction of their old certainties—the German Empire gone in 1918, the war lost, the Treaty of Versailles insisting on German guilt, hyperinflation and economic depression—some of their old values also disappeared. People could experiment with

new ideas. In the popular cabarets, in film and art, sexual freedom seemed possible.

Nazism was a reaction against everything that had happened in Germany since 1918. It was a totalitarian regime; it not only demanded total political devotion but also social and cultural devotion. Everything that represented Weimar culture was deliberately and specifically condemned by the Nazis, who used the Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda to control what Germans viewed and read, built and experienced. Formal education and public displays reinforced Nazi values so that the majority of Germans either accepted the loss of the Weimar cultural freedoms, or were too afraid to protest. Many of the artists either learned to accept the new order or left Germany. Those unable or unwilling to do either, especially if they were Jewish, became part of the great persecution or the 'Final Solution.'

CHAPTER REVIEW

Select two examples of German cultural expression, one from the Weimar period and one from the period of Nazism. Give a presentation that uses the two examples to explore continuity and change in Germany from 1919 to 1940. You might compare an abstract sculpture with a piece of Nazi 'folk art', or you could contrast a Bauhaus architectural work with Albert Speer's New Reich Chancellery. Include similarities and differences, the main influences on each style and contemporary commentators' reactions to each.

EXAM PRACTICE

Using three or four points, answer the question below:

'German cultural expression in the 1920s and 1930s often reflected German political, social and economic circumstances.' To what extent do you agree? Use evidence to support your answer.

ESSAY

Write an essay, based on evidence, on one of the topics below.

- After World War II, Hitler's chief architect, Albert Speer, reflected on the power Hitler had over him. He wrote, 'How is it possible that he captivated me, and for more than a decade?' To what extent does the Nazis' education system, enlightenment and propaganda help to explain why Germany was so captivated by Hitler? Use evidence to support your answer.

- 'If the Weimar artists had not pushed the boundaries so strongly in the 1920s, they would not have been such a target for criticism during the Nazi years.' To what extent do you agree? Support your answer with reference to the culture of both periods.

EXTENSION

Research an example of cultural expression from the Weimar period that has not been covered in detail in this chapter. Examples include the paintings of George Grosz, Kurt Weil's *The Threepenny Opera*, Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (the novel, the film or both) or the dance of Josephine Baker.

Write a report in which you explain how your chosen artwork was a reflection of the social, economic or political environment in Germany during the Weimar years.

RESEARCH

Select one of the artists or writers mentioned in this chapter. Research their life and career and create a display of their key works. Investigate how museums and galleries exhibit artists' works and apply some of these methods to a small display along a wall of your classroom. Include written explanations that inform the viewer about the artist, their work and the historical context.

TEST



QUIZ – CHAPTER 5

FURTHER READING

Christabel Bielenberg, *The Past is Myself*. Corgi Books, 1990.

The author was a young Englishwoman who married a German and lived in Germany from 1934 to 1945. This is her story of those years, as a young mother living in Germany through the rise of Nazism and World War II. The book was made into a BBC television series in 1988, starring Elizabeth Hurley as Christabel.

Christopher Isherwood, *Goodbye to Berlin*. Methuen, 1987; first published 1939.

Isherwood lived in Berlin in the late 1920s and early 1930s and saw at first hand the transition from Weimar to Nazism. This collection of short stories is loosely based on characters he knew and the rise of Nazism in Berlin.

Cabaret (1972), directed by Bob Fosse.

Film based on the characters and storyline from Christopher Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin*, the play *I Am a*

Camera and the 1966 stage show *Cabaret*. The film gives an excellent insight into the transition from Weimar Republic to Nazi dictatorship. It won eight Academy Awards and is very watchable.

Triumph of the Will (1934), directed by Leni Riefenstahl.

The film is almost two hours long and in black and white. Even today, viewers are moved by the power of the images, which was Riefenstahl's intention. It gives an excellent insight into the power of ceremony in Nazi Germany.

← A wooden sculpture by Erich Heckel at the Degenerate Art Exhibition, Berlin 1938.

CHAPTER

6

THE USSR: FROM LENIN'S NEP TO STALIN'S COLLECTIVISATION

'But it is no time to argue about theoretical deviations when one of them is bound up with the tremendous preponderance of peasants in the country, when their dissatisfaction with the proletarian dictatorship is mounting ...'¹

VLADIMIR LENIN AT THE 10th PARTY CONGRESS, 8 MARCH 1921

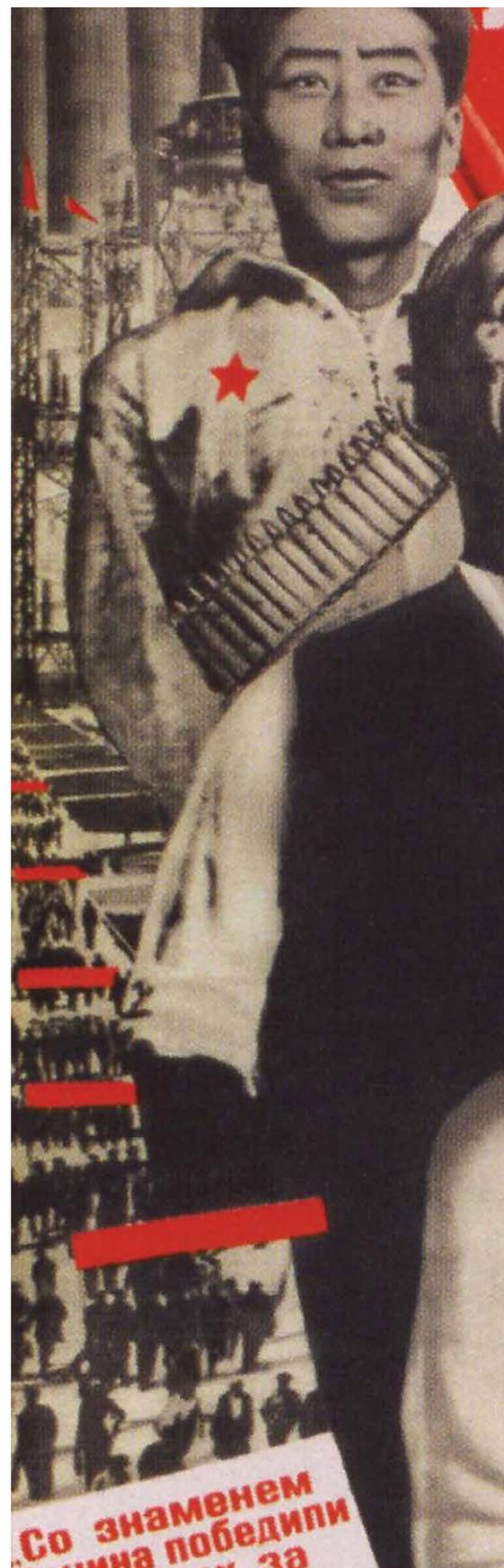
INTRODUCTION

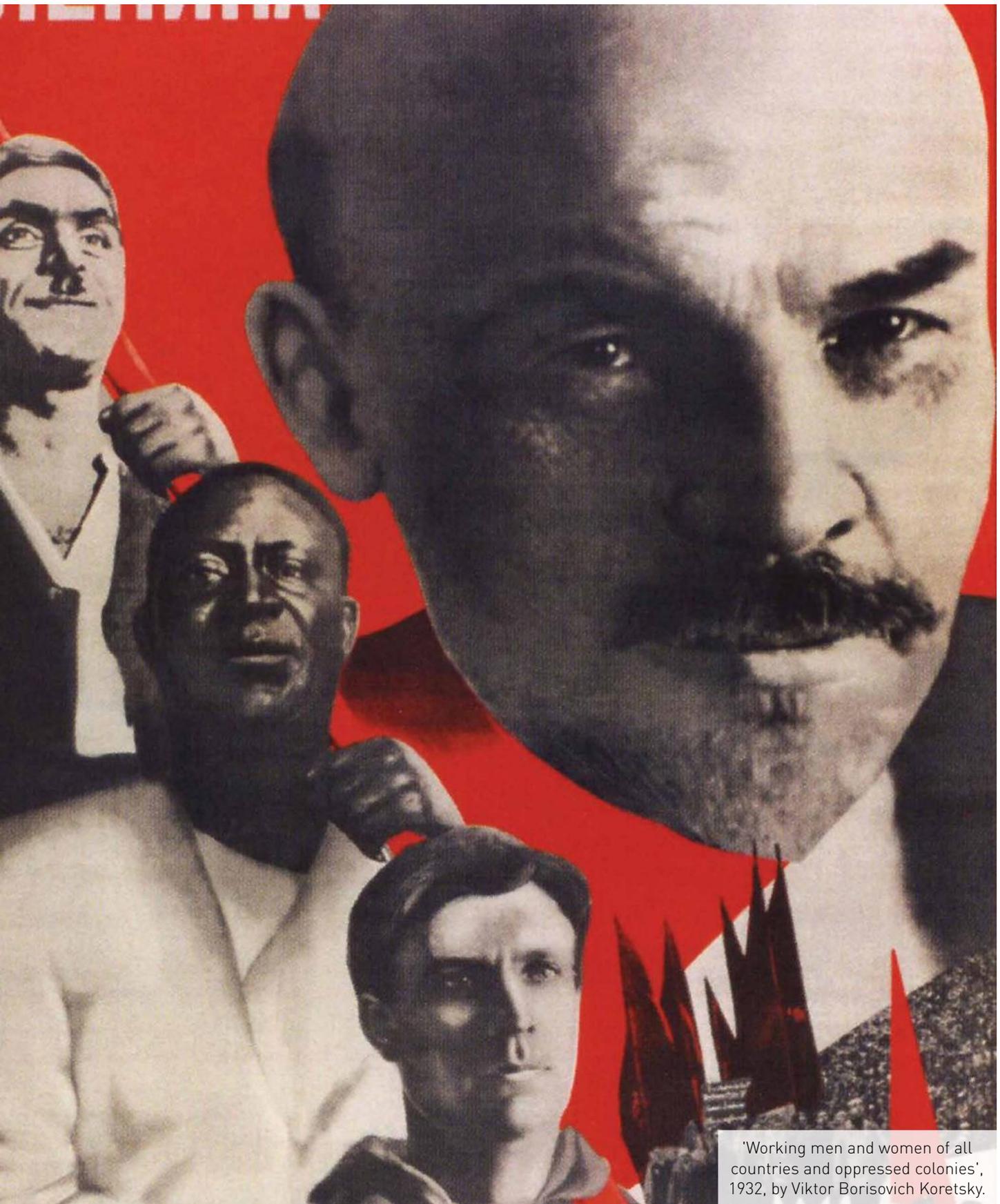
Marx and Engels famously proclaimed in their 1848 *Communist Manifesto* that a 'spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of communism.' Historian William Chamberlin notably asserted that the 'spectre that haunted the Kremlin at the end of 1920 and the beginning of 1921 was ... of sheer collapse from within, as a result of the profound mood of disillusionment and dissatisfaction among the masses ...'²

Acutely aware of the crisis confronting revolutionary Russia, Vladimir Lenin, the Bolshevik leader, made the key strategic decision to introduce the New Economic Policy (NEP) at the

10th party congress in March 1921. The Kronstadt rebellion, in which the mainly peasant sailors threatened 'a third revolution', made him realise that War Communism could no longer be sustained. As he later acknowledged, events at Kronstadt were 'like a flash of lightning which threw more of a glare upon reality than anything else.'³

Lenin concluded that a temporary compromise was unavoidable. In particular, he believed that in the absence of revolutions in other countries, 'only agreement with the peasantry [at least 80 per cent of the population] can save the socialist revolution in Russia.'





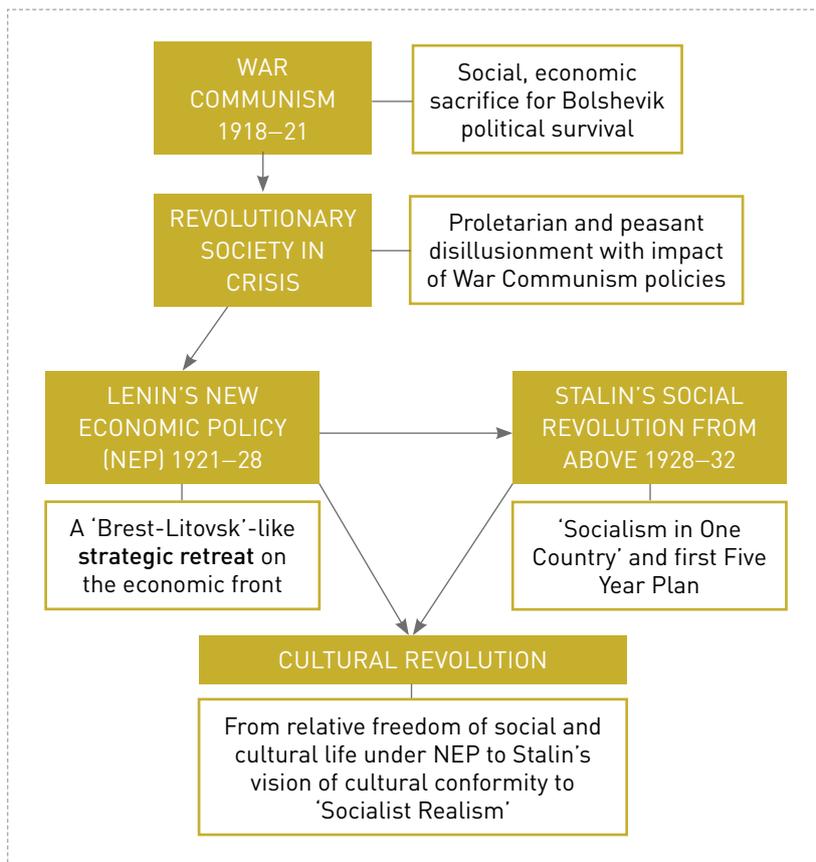
'Working men and women of all countries and oppressed colonies', 1932, by Viktor Borisovich Koretsky.

OVERVIEW

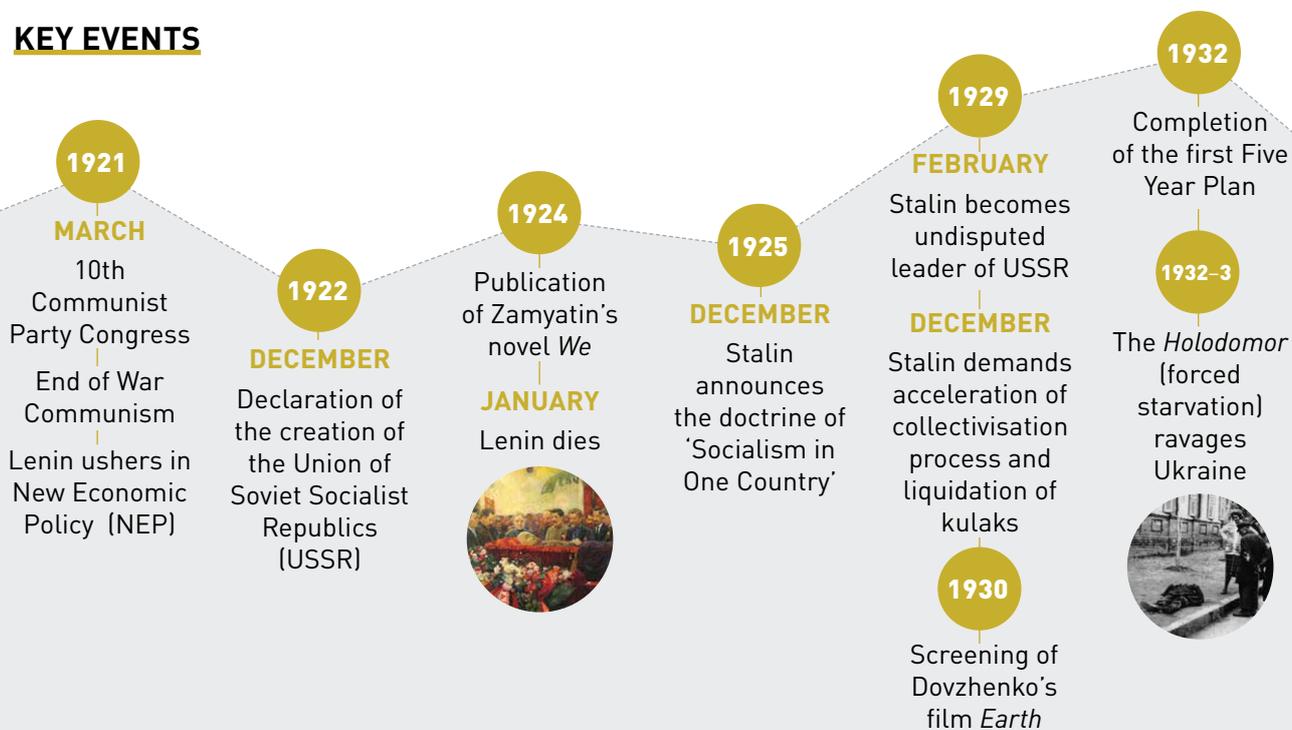
KEY QUESTIONS

- How did Lenin's 1921–28 New Economic Policy (NEP) signal recognition of War Communism's economic failure and the opposition it generated among the peasantry and proletariat?
- How did Stalin's triumph in the power struggle after Lenin's death lead to NEP being abandoned?
- How did the launch of a 'revolution from above'—prioritising rapid industrialisation and collectivisation—lead to Ukraine's 1932–33 Great Famine?
- To what extent did the growth of Stalinism stifle the relative freedom of cultural expression under NEP?
- In what ways were the economic and social circumstances of the USSR in the 1920s and 1930s reflected in the member nations' culture?

IN THIS CHAPTER



KEY EVENTS



KEY PLAYERS

VLADIMIR LENIN (1870–1924)

- Iconic Bolshevik leader whose 'April Theses' formed the blueprint for the October Revolution, which ushered in seventy years of communist rule in the USSR.
- His concept of 'cultural revolution' centred on assimilating what was of cultural value from the past and promoting features of civilisation (e.g. literacy) useful to mass education in a socialist society.



JOSEPH STALIN (1879–1953)

- General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) while Lenin was alive, Stalin triumphed in the power struggle for Bolshevik leadership that eventually led to Trotsky's exile.
- He is widely perceived as fathering a totalitarian system in the Soviet Union.
- His view of cultural artists was that they should function as 'engineers of the soul,' serving the ideological needs of the Soviet system. Thus he rejected the relatively permissive nature of cultural life under NEP.



LEON TROTSKY (1879–1940)

- Originally a Menshevik, Trotsky later joined the Bolsheviks, playing a pivotal role in engineering the October Revolution and organising the Red Army in the Civil War.
- He viewed the cultural growth of humanity under communism in glowing terms, believing that all the cultural arts would develop to their highest point due to the heightened consciousness of 'Communist Man.'



HISTORICAL INQUIRY

Over the period 1918–1939, the Soviet Union underwent three changes of economic policy: War Communism, New Economic Policy and the Five Year Plans involving industrialisation and collectivisation. As you work through this chapter, evaluate each of the policies and answer the following questions:

- What were the major features of each policy? How did each policy affect the lives of ordinary people?
- To what extent was each policy designed to improve the economy and the standard of living, and to what extent was it designed to increase the power and control of the leadership?
- Under which of the three policies was there the greatest cultural freedom? Support your answer with reference to specific examples of culture.

SKILLS FOCUS

KEY TERMS

WAR COMMUNISM

A series of economic policies serving the militaristic and political objectives of the Bolshevik Party in civil war conditions.

NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

Lenin's pragmatic compromise to promote economic recovery by allowing concessions to the market economy.

SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY

Stalin's doctrine stressing the Russian Revolution's self-sufficiency and focusing on rapid industrialisation and collectivisation to fortify the political security of the Soviet state.

MARXISM–LENINISM

The official ideology of the USSR, which was a synthesis of Marx's original ideas and Lenin's further theoretical development.

TOTALITARIANISM

A political system in which the state (typically headed by the dictatorial leader of a party) exerts absolute control over all facets of social existence.

STALINISM

Joseph Stalin's mode of totalitarian rule over all spheres of Soviet life.

COLLECTIVISATION

Persuading or coercing peasants to relinquish their individual landholdings and join state-controlled collective farms.

HOLODOMOR

A Ukrainian expression referring to the 'manufactured' famine of 1932–33, meaning 'death by forced starvation.'



📍 SOURCE 6.01

Vladimir Lenin.

DID YOU KNOW?

When Lenin was still a young man, his circle of friends in St Petersburg nicknamed him *Starik* ('old man') to reflect both the depth of his Marxist learning and his serious demeanour.

➡ SOURCE 6.02

Peasants at work winnowing grain.



REVOLUTIONARY SOCIETY IN TRANSITION: LENIN'S 'NEW ECONOMIC POLICY' (1921–28)

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin came to power in the USSR at the head of the Bolshevik (communist) party in October 1917. Against a backdrop of war and extreme poverty, Lenin promised the people 'peace, bread and land.' The peace with Germany was achieved at a very high price. Under the 1918 Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Russia lost valuable land, industry, railways and coalmines, and had to pay reparations of 300 million gold roubles to Germany. Lenin also faced opposition to his policies in his first year in office. This opposition, together with the fallout from the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, led to a civil war fought between the Red Army (communists) and the White Armies (anti-communists) from 1918 to 1920.

CHALLENGES TO WAR COMMUNISM

During the Civil War (1918–20), the Bolsheviks' desperate battle for political survival saw the introduction of a policy known as War Communism. Its policies had a severe impact on workers' lives and conditions. Under War Communism, all resources—human and material—were systematically mobilised to support the Red Army at 'the Front.' This included the government takeover of all means of production, factories, farms and trade. For the proletariat (working-class people) in major urban centres such as Moscow and Petrograd (which was renamed Leningrad in 1924), the regimentation and militarisation of social and economic life meant strict obedience to Party-dictated work assignments.

When the Bolsheviks won the Civil War, Lenin faced opposition from within his own support base over the policies known as 'War Communism.' Urban workers began demanding better conditions in a state calling itself a 'dictatorship of the proletariat.' Many people rebelled. Significant uprisings at Kronstadt and Tambov convinced Lenin that War Communism had been a failure. In the words of historian Richard Pipes, 'War Communism had all but destroyed Russia's economy.'⁴

Faced with plummeting industrial and agricultural output and a famine starting to ravage much of Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, Lenin reintroduced concessions to private enterprise and market principles. In doing so, he hoped to achieve economic recovery and overcome the hostility towards War Communism shown by peasantry and proletariat alike. It was a worrying sign that, by 1921, no more than 3 per cent of Bolshevik Party members actually originated from the industrial working class. In the context of this escalating crisis, Lenin was forced to reconsider his previous policies. Out of this reconsideration emerged the New Economic Policy.

THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

The New Economic Policy (NEP) relaxed many of the hardline policies of War Communism and allowed capitalist elements to creep back into the economy:

- Private ownership of some land was reintroduced.
- Private ownership of small factories was allowed.
- Private trading was allowed on a small scale.
- Peasants could sell their excess produce on the open market.
- Wages were to be paid in cash.

Hardline Bolshevik Marxists initially bristled at NEP. For them, it was a compromise with the peasantry and with capitalist practices, and betrayed ideological purity. However, Lenin stood firm. He was prepared to compromise because he realised that in dire economic circumstances, made worse by millions of alienated peasants and workers, a temporary retreat was a strategic necessity. It was essential to stabilise a society still engaged with the pain and process of revolutionary change.

ANOTHER 'BREST-LITOVSK'

For Lenin, NEP was a strategic retreat giving the Bolsheviks 'breathing space' to resolve the critical issues on which their political survival hinged. Lenin wrestled with the problem that, although the Russian Revolution was fought in the name of the proletariat, it triumphed in a mainly peasant society. Lenin decided that for the urban working class to be fed, there had to be 'personal incentives' spurring peasants on to produce and market more grain. 'Self-interest will develop production,' he wrote in *Pravda* on 31 October 1921. '[W]e must first develop production at all costs ...'⁵

Despite the NEP's temporary concessions to 'capitalist culture', Lenin remained cool and calculating. Indeed, he tightened the Bolshevik grip on political power and the Party's overall control of the 'commanding heights' of the economy—

DID YOU KNOW?

Apart from politics, Lenin's obsession in his youth was chess. However, he believed that his chess addiction was draining his nervous energy, and stopped playing the game after the October Revolution.

DID YOU KNOW?

After finishing street decorations to help celebrate the October Revolution's first anniversary, avant-garde painter Marc Chagall was interrogated by agitated Bolshevik officials. The officials asked him, 'Why is the cow green and why is the house flying through the sky...? What's the connection with Marx and Engels?'

DID YOU KNOW?

After his death, Lenin's brain was dispatched to the Lenin Institute so that scientists could analyse what made him a genius. A final autopsy, conducted in 1994, concluded that Lenin's brain was perfectly average.



POET VLADIMIR
MAYAKOVSKY

▼ SOURCE 6.03

'Conversation with Comrade Lenin' by Mayakovsky.

'CONVERSATION WITH COMRADE LENIN'

On snow-covered lands
And on stubbly fields,
In smoky plants
And on factory sites
With you in our hearts,
Comrade Lenin,
We build, we think, we breathe, we live, and we fight!
Awhirl with events,
Packed with jobs one too many,
The day slowly sinks as the night shadows fall.
There are two in the room:
I and Lenin – a photograph on the whiteness of wall.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read this poem carefully and conduct further research into Mayakovsky to answer the following questions:

1. What was Mayakovsky's attitude to Lenin? Refer to words or phrases in the poem to support your answer.
2. To what extent were the views expressed in this poem widely held?
3. The poem was written in 1929, five years after Lenin's death. Research what had happened in Russia in between 1924 and 1929. Can you suggest an alternative motive that Mayakovsky may have had in writing the poem?

such as large-scale factories, banking, foreign and wholesale trade—so that his government could steer its way out of the crisis.

ON THE LITERARY FRONT

Meanwhile, Russian novelist Yevgeny Zamyatin was also reacting against the regimentation and militaristic control of social and economic life. In 1921, Zamyatin completed his career-defining work *We*. Although banned in his homeland, an English-language translation of *We* appeared in New York in 1924. The novel was a satire on a future world in which individuality was erased in favour of precisely programmed robot-like humans identified only by letters and numbers. For example, the hero of *We* was simply known as D-503. Zamyatin's satire so unnerved Soviet authorities that they banned it for over sixty years. (Unsurprisingly, *We* also inspired George Orwell's novel of a nightmarish totalitarian future: *1984*.)⁶

Writers who were not officially approved struggled to be published, but those who voiced pro-Bolshevik sentiments or toed the Party line had the opportunity to prosper. At least initially, writers who fitted the philosophy of Bolshevik Russia—such as Aleksandr Blok, Andrey Bely, Valery Bryusov and the enigmatic Vladimir Mayakovsky—found favour with Soviet authorities. Such writers, especially

between 1921 and 1924, lauded the Bolshevik revolution in more or less romantic terms.

Besides praising the virtues of Marxist–Leninist ideology and twentieth-century factory machinery, Mayakovsky wrote an epic poem after Lenin's death in 1924, depicting Lenin as a human being who became a 'Marxist messiah.'⁷ Mayakovsky also wrote a sequel entitled 'Conversation with Comrade Lenin,' the excerpt (Source 6.03) shows how he was culturally useful to the Soviet system.

Given the potential for writers to influence the ways in which people thought about the society they lived in, Soviet authorities increasingly controlled what could be published. In fact, pre-publication censorship was revived through a government agency called *Glavlit*.

Later, in the Stalinist era, any artistic trend dabbling in suspect themes such as spirituality or individual emotion was squashed during the first Five Year Plan by the writer-activists of the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP). Under their dominance, freedom of the written word was increasingly stifled as book authors and magazine contributors were forced to conform to the Party's vision of a Marxist–Leninist society.

UNFOLDING WORK REALITIES OF A NEW DAWN

As far as a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' was concerned, factory workers still found themselves ruled by a 'boss' in a leadership structure supported by well-paid technical specialists (*spetsy*). The workers increasingly resented the power of their managers, who pressured them to produce goods cheaply enough and in adequate quantities to entice peasants to the marketplace.⁸

Securing work itself became a major challenge in the early 1920s. Besides demobilised Red Army troops now competing for jobs, peasant migrants were streaming into towns from the famine-stricken areas extending from southern Ukraine to Russia's Volga region. They were desperate to find any job that gave them the prospect of survival.

Workers registered with trade unions could claim something unprecedented in Russia's new social system if they happened to be jobless—financial help, however minimal. When a worker gained employment, a series of other life-improving benefits—although limited in real value—began to accrue. Workers could expect an eight-hour working day, subsidised rent and transport, free medical care and disability aid. In addition, women who found work qualified for maternity benefits.⁹

As inhabitants of towns or cities, workers were also reaping the benefits of progressive electrification in line with Lenin's formula that, 'Communism equals Soviet power plus the electrification of the entire country.' However, outdated factory machinery often malfunctioned, and neglect of work-safety issues led to a high number of deaths and injuries from industrial accidents.

A TRADE-FUELLED SOCIAL RESURRECTION

From Nevsky Prospekt, Petrograd's main boulevard, to the Sukhareva market in central Moscow, NEP's legalisation of private trade resuscitated urban social life—and shopping. If NEP created an economic 'breathing space', it also breathed new life into cities that had been social deserts during the Civil War.

Eyewitness accounts of the period describe the social change that NEP led to on streets previously empty of retail trade.

SOURCE 6.04

Lenin pointing the way forwards.



ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What message is conveyed about Lenin's role in the construction of a socialist future?
2. Which visual elements suggest the way forward for building socialism?



↑ SOURCE 6.05

Nevsky Prospekt, Petrograd.



↑ SOURCE 6.06

Sukharev square, Moscow.

➔ SOURCE 6.07

Cited in Figes, A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891–1924, 771.

EMMA GOLDMAN, VISITING MOSCOW DURING NEP

Shops and stores sprang up overnight, mysteriously stacked with delicacies Russia had not seen for years. Large quantities of butter, cheese and meat were displayed for sale; pastry, rare fruit, and sweets of every variety were to be purchased.

➔ SOURCE 6.08

Cited in Ronald Grigor Suny, The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 175.

VISITOR TO MOSCOW

Everywhere you look is an agitated, noisy human crowd, buying and selling ... Here currencies are bought and sold, there food products; further along, textiles, tobacco, cafes and restaurants, booksellers...

➔ SOURCE 6.09

Cited in Alan Ball, 'Private Trade and Traders during NEP', in Russia in the Era of NEP: Explorations in Soviet Society and Culture, eds. Sheila Fitzpatrick, Alexander Rabinowitch, Richard Stites (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 89.

A YOUNG BOLSHEVIK

[NEP] very soon showed its fruits in improved conditions of living. Food was better and more plentiful ... there was ... an undeniable sense of lessened tension.' However, the reappearance of money—that it had once more become 'the touchstone of social life'—troubled him. 'If money was reappearing, wouldn't rich people reappear too? Weren't we on the slippery slope that led back to capitalism?'

➔ SOURCE 6.10

Cited in Alan Ball, 'Private Trade and Traders during NEP', 89.

ARMAND HAMMER, AMERICAN INDUSTRIALIST

[NEP's] immediate effect was to bring forth untold quantities of goods of every variety which suddenly appeared as if by magic ... In addition, to a great variety of food products and delicacies, one could buy the choicest French wines ... and the best of Havana cigars.

ACTIVITY

SKILLS: PERSPECTIVES

1. What evidence of social or commercial revival do the quoted observations reveal? Support your answer with reference to three eyewitness accounts.
2. What made the young Bolshevik fearful that the revolutionary social change they had struggled to achieve was under threat? To what extent were his fears justified?

THE QUESTION OF PEASANT LIFE

LENIN, AT THE CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, JULY 1921: 'We are assisting the peasantry because it is absolutely necessary to do so in order that we may retain political power.'

The Bolsheviks classified the peasantry by categories: poor peasants, middle peasants, and kulaks. Kulaks were comparatively wealthy peasants who owned—rather than rented—small parcels of land and often had several head of cows, pigs or sheep. Although kulaks only made up about 4 per cent of all peasants, they were generally the most productive and prosperous. While the Bolsheviks sought an alliance of the poor peasants with the *proletariat*, they attacked the kulaks as *petit-bourgeois* class enemies. However, Bolshevik efforts to incite a rural class struggle often failed because of the solidarity of the peasant class.

During the War Communism years, life for peasants in rural Russia was precarious. Cheka-reinforced food-requisition squads from cities menaced peasants' lives daily as they combed the countryside in search of grain to feed the Red Army and town workers. The bitterness and the scale of anti-Bolshevik rebellion that this provoked convinced Lenin to temporarily change tactics. Surprised kulaks learnt that Lenin now stressed the importance of granting 'personal incentives' to peasants. Another leading Bolshevik, Nikolai Bukharin, chimed in with encouragement for kulaks to 'enrich yourselves.' In the wake of this policy change, peasants gleefully seized the chance to market their surplus grain for private profit.

Regardless of peasant category, villages in the mid-1920s were relatively free from state meddling. Also, by 1926–27, grain production had recovered to pre-war levels, and peasants and their animals had more to eat. However, the peasants still preferred to trade with other villages rather than deal on the urban marketplace. But as less grain was being marketed, alarm bells started going off in the Kremlin. Government patience was exhausted. By 1928, as Stalin started to unroll his 'revolution from above,' the peasantry had to brace themselves for the end of NEP, compulsory state collection of their grain and the brave new world of collective farming.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Which category of peasant did the Bolsheviks attack as 'class enemies'?
2. How did War Communism provoke opposition from the proletariat and peasantry?
3. Did Lenin totally abandon 'ideological purity' by introducing NEP?

SKILLS: PERSPECTIVES

Examine the impact of NEP from the viewpoint of each of the following:

- A peasant
- An industrial worker and Party member
- A member of the former bourgeoisie

For which group was the NEP most beneficial?

RESEARCH

Research how Lenin's introduction of the New Economic Policy in March 1921 was received by the following Bolsheviks:

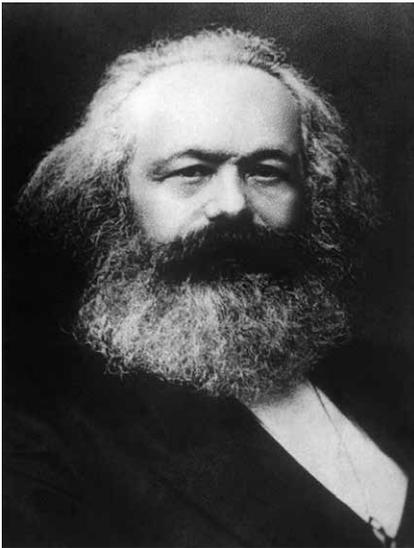
- Leon Trotsky
- Joseph Stalin
- Nikolai Bukharin (a one-time Stalin ally)
- Yevgeni Preobrazhensky (revolutionary leader and ally of Trotsky).

Then answer the following questions.

1. Was their initial reaction positive or negative?
2. Did their view or perception of NEP change?
3. If it changed, why do you think this was the case?

A NEW SOVIET MAN, WOMAN, CHILD AND LIFE

KARL MARX: 'All history is nothing but a continuous transformation of human nature.'



↑ For Marx, only communist society could give full scope to human rationality and creativity.

DID YOU KNOW?

Not only did the Soviet League of the Militant Godless organise 'godless factories' and 'godless collective farms,' it also established anti-religious museums and arranged flights above cloud level to prove the non-existence of God.



↑ Leon Trotsky was a political thorn in Stalin's side until his assassination in Mexico, 1940.

Apart from the revolutionary political and economic transformation of Russia, the Bolsheviks also had an agenda for radical social change to reflect the creation of a new order. The birth–marriage–death cycle of life, according to historian Richard Stites, was to be draped in 'revolutionary clothing.'

Traditionally, the Russian Orthodox Church played an important role in people's passage through life. However, according to atheistic Marxism, the church was a reactionary survivor of an historical era that the Bolsheviks sought to dismantle. The Bolsheviks rushed into a program of social renewal that would start from the moment an infant was welcomed into the arms of the new Soviet family. Little did the new children of the revolution know that by 1929 Christmas trees would be banned and, somewhat comically, Santa Claus would be exposed as an evil accomplice of the priest—and of the kulak!¹⁰

Instead of the traditional church baptism with Christian icons, the Bolsheviks tried (with limited success) to popularise the ritual of 'Octobering,' using icons of Lenin. An instance of Octobering was recorded in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv in 1923. In accepting a gift for their baby daughter—a portrait of the infant Lenin—the proud parents pledged to rear their newborn in the communist spirit. At a Moscow Octobering, before her baby was folded in a red banner, the mother reportedly declared: 'The child belongs to me only physically. For spiritual upbringing I present it to society.'¹¹

Just as they had done during the French Revolution over a century earlier, some parents began to name their children in ways that symbolised the birth of a new social reality. Some of these revolutionary names were Party-inspired: Marks, Engelina, Ninel ('Lenin' spelt backwards); others looked back to heroes of the French Revolution: Mara (Marat), Robespierre, Danton; while other names were based on the realities of the new society: Smychka (a reference to the worker–peasant alliance), Molot ('hammer') and Iskra ('spark'; also the name of a socialist newspaper once managed by Lenin).¹²

Soviet authorities urged couples to celebrate 'Red Weddings' instead of church ceremonies. Red Weddings promised formal legal recognition of equality between men and women in their married life. As a sign of the times, couples standing before a table draped in revolutionary red would not only pledge vows to each other, but also to communist ideology. While accepting a socialist gift—for example, Lenin's works—a rendition of the revolutionary anthem, the Internationale, would typically be sung as part of the newlyweds' celebration. The functional nature of the 'Red Wedding' appealed to some workers; however, to peasants as a whole, it was another practice totally alien to rural culture.¹³

The revolutionary agitator, Leon Trotsky, supported a Bolshevik mode of consummating the life cycle by substituting cremation for the traditional burial. (Trotsky himself was cremated in Mexico in 1940, after being murdered with an ice-pick by an assassin hired by Stalin.) In 1927, Moscow's Donskoy Monastery's hospital was converted into the first Soviet crematorium.

GOING TO THE FLICKS

For the new Soviet family, as in pre-revolutionary times, movie-going was a popular leisure activity. According to Taylor, 'When the Bolsheviks came to power cinema was already the most popular form of entertainment for the urban masses of the Russian empire ...'¹⁴ Both Lenin and Stalin rated cinema as the most important cultural means of changing human nature and reshaping society in their image of socialism. Its value as a propaganda tool was already proven by the work of the so-called 'agit-trains'. These trains served as mobile cinemas, dazzling audiences with seemingly magical moving pictures of leaders such as Lenin strolling on Kremlin grounds.¹⁵

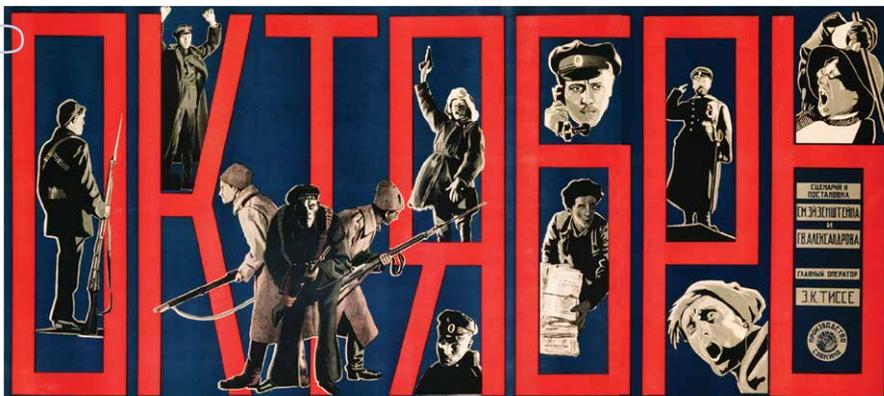
A group of Russian directors—including Vsevolod Pudovkin, Dziga Vertov and Sergei Eisenstein—rose to prominence in the 1920s as key figures of Soviet montage cinema. Eisenstein, in particular, quickly established his reputation around his trinity of films—*Strike* (1924), *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) and *October* (1927)—which featured anti-tsarist and pro-Bolshevik revolutionary themes. However, audiences struggled to interpret the meaning of Eisenstein's political messages because of his experimental use of montage as a filmmaking technique.

Despite the official promotion of films focused on political education of the masses, most people preferred movies of a pre-revolutionary flavour. Conventional Russian films were watched for their 'costume drama, action and adventure', and

American or European films for their 'comedy [...] adventure narratives, crime stories, [...] romance, intrigue, and exotic settings.'¹⁶ Crowds flocked to see escapist entertainment such as *Robin Hood* or *The Thief of Baghdad* rather than propaganda or experimental domestic films.

From the mid-1930s, 'Socialist Realism'—with Stalin's approval—became official cultural policy, and unconventional filmmaking and experimentation were frowned upon. Under Socialist Realism, a straightforward, uncomplicated narrative presenting a positive hero was to shape the future of film, with calls to show Soviet virtues—like 'optimism over self-pity' and 'comradely devotion over sex'¹⁷—not only in a 'realistic' fashion, but in a way that conformed to the Party's view of what ought to be the case. In the plot of the hit Soviet film, *Chapaev* (1934), for instance, the main character sharing the title's name was a civil war hero who learnt to 'use his talents and control his impulses thanks to a wise, cool-headed political commissar.'¹⁸ Although Chapaev was eventually killed, the optimistic ending mandated by Socialist Realism meant that his death was 'avenged by the victory of the Red Forces. The hero might die, but the cause is invincible.'¹⁹

Under Socialist Realism, what the Party—as personified by Stalin—demanded was not an honest or frank portrayal of Soviet Russian society, but cultural productions that served and reflected the Party's agenda and worldview.



SERGEI EISENSTEIN:
FATHER OF MONTAGE

SOURCE 6.11

Poster advertising the film *October*.

EMPATHY

Despite all the money, expertise and effort put into creating films that reflected and furthered the Bolshevik message, Soviet people preferred traditional and romantic movies. Do you think that this was because of the grim reality of life in the Soviet Union at the time? Or do you believe that it was because human beings generally prefer to be entertained rather than lectured to?

In your answer, you should refer to the film industry in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s, and also to the modern film industry.

THE BESPRIZORNYE

VICTOR SERGE: 'I saw them in Leningrad and Moscow, living in sewers, in billboard kiosks, in the vaults of cemeteries ... holding conferences at night in urinals; travelling on the roofs of trains ...'

SOURCE 6.12

Homeless children at a Moscow street market, 1922.



After the Civil War, there were millions of abandoned children or orphans—the *besprizornye*—who spent their lives homeless. The *besprizornye* congregated in packs or gangs: they were the 'street kids' of their era.

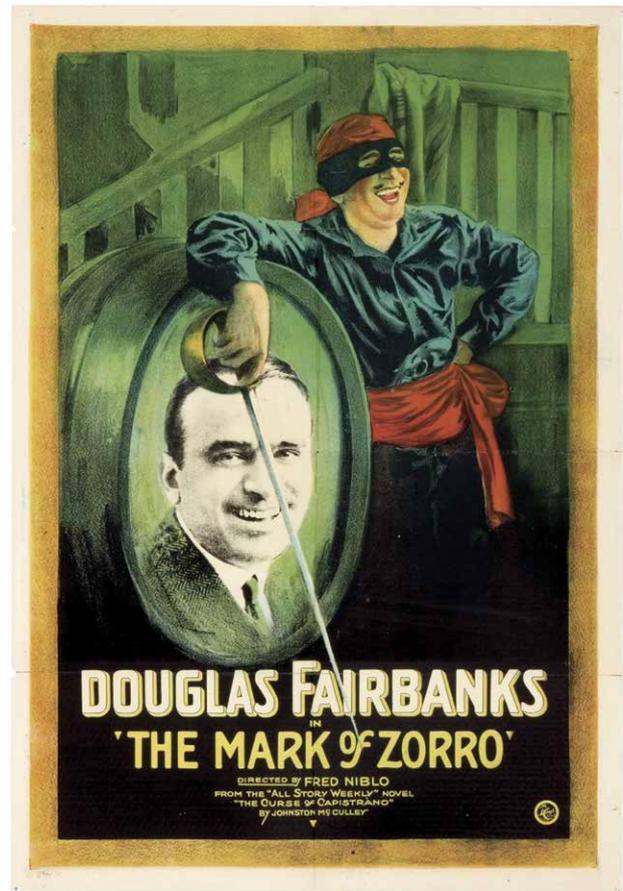
According to Figes, the estimated seven million orphans roaming Russian streets in the 1920s were one of the 'saddest legacies of the revolution' and a 'symbol of Russia's social breakdown.' Drug addiction, alcoholism, pre-teenage pregnancy, pickpocketing, mugging, housebreaking, almost universal casual prostitution and even 'employment' in paedophilic brothels summed up the daily misery of these children.²⁰

Desperate for solutions, Bolshevik authorities allowed factories to hire and exploit child labour, with twelve- to fourteen-hour work days not unusual. Young teenagers also joined the ranks of the Red Army and were valued for their combat-readiness, a quality developed by their struggle for survival on the streets, as well as their experience of civil war.²¹ So-called 'children's camps' were even hastily set up in the Gulag labour camp system. Still unresolved as a social problem

by the early 1930s, *besprizornye* were then targeted in blitzes to remove them from streets and deport them to 'special children's colonies' for Soviet-style rehabilitation and eventual reintegration into society as industrial labourers.²²

The problem of the *besprizornye* found cultural expression in film, fiction and song about their lives wasted in places such as caves, dumps and railway stations. Like present-day street gangs, the *besprizornye* created their own subculture, including nicknames, songs and a code of honour. When possible, watching films—such as the US movie *The Mark of Zorro*—was reportedly one of their favourite distractions.²³

The hit movie about the *besprizornye* themselves, however, was the classic *Start in Life*, set in 1923. *Start in Life*, which also pioneered the use of sound in film, explored the theme of homelessness when it was a very sensitive social issue. As Stites sums it up, the movie contrasted the life of homeless youth 'amid the criminal world of NEP' with 'the purifying nature of communal life (set against work songs and band marches).' In the end, a recently built railway transported the reformed but murdered 'little hero' of the plot to his new Soviet home for burial.²⁴



↑ SOURCE 6.13

Movie poster for *The Mark of Zorro*.

MUSIC AND SOCIALISM

Apart from cinema, Soviet citizens were fond of music as a cultural expression—either making music, listening to it or dancing. However, the October Revolution triggered musical experimentation in innovative ways. Industrial-sound inspired 'machine' or 'noise music' premiered with a concert of factory sirens in Petrograd in 1918. From 1922 to 1932, the First Symphonic Ensemble, based mainly in Moscow, sought to mirror the spirit of communism by staging 'conductorless' performances.²⁵ The Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (RAPM) sprang up, dedicated to purifying music by only writing factory or political songs. RAPM lashed out at all types of music: 'classical for its association with the past; jazz for its links with the West; gypsy ... for its roots in the bourgeoisie; folk for its 'backwardness'... [However, the] people—proletarians included—continued to like light melodies, popular songs, dance music, and words that were fun to sing.' Trotsky urged people to '[b]egin and complete your work to the sound of socialist songs...' In keeping with Trotsky's encouragement, choruses from workers' clubs echoed throughout the country.²⁶

The relative cultural freedom of the NEP years led to the return of jazz music. As it did during the Roaring Twenties in the United States, jazz, especially hot swing, ignited a dance craze. By the end of NEP, Soviet bands had replaced visiting Afro-American ensembles and enjoyed popularity among urban professionals and some workers—and even government officials.

DID YOU KNOW?

Trotsky harboured high hopes for communism in the future. 'The average human type,' he wrote, 'will rise to the height of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx. And above this ridge new peaks will rise.'

ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Who were the *bessprizornye*?
2. What aspects of traditional 'birth-marriage-death' cycles were targets of the Bolsheviks' agenda for radical social change?
3. Why and how were cinema and music matters of revolutionary concern?

Under Stalin, the start of the first Five Year Plan in 1928 led to renewed militancy within RAPM. Once again, jazz was attacked as being degenerate and counter-revolutionary. The famous Russian novelist, Maxim Gorky, likened jazz bands to 'an orchestra of sexually driven madmen.' In 1929, banning saxophones was proposed; at one stage, just listening to US jazz records risked a six-month jail term.²⁷

The breaking of RAPM's 'iron musical dictatorship' in 1932 allowed a temporary revival of jazz—the so-called 'red jazz age.' As one visitor recalled, ordinary workers could be spotted dancing the foxtrot and rumba in the parks at night. However, after 1936, the freedom expressed in the 'swinging spontaneity' of jazz faced a full frontal assault when performers were victimised both by anti-US nationalist conservatives and jealous rivals from other musical styles. Soviet authorities forced the surviving jazz musicians to convert 'their jazz into a Soviet product cleansed of "decadence."' State Jazz [Orchestras] were formed ... that played ... smoothed out 'jazz' in carefully written arrangements ... As a whole, Stalin's clean up of jazz resembled that in Hitler's Germany where dance music had to be slow and smooth.²⁸ Thus jazz, as a kind of last bastion of cultural freedom, was finally Stalinised.

DEALING WITH OPPOSITION – PARIAS OF THE SOVIET STATE

The 1918 Soviet Russian Constitution explicitly identified the categories of people to be excluded from political participation in the new social order.

Losing voting rights clearly announced to certain people that they were unwelcome in the new Soviet state; however, that was infinitely better than being deported to the Gulag camps, which dotted the Russian landscape and were a massive exclusion zone from mainstream life.



1918 SOVIET RUSSIAN CONSTITUTION

▼ SOURCE 6.14

ARTICLE 4, CHAPTER 13, SECTION 65 OF THE 1918 SOVIET RUSSIAN CONSTITUTION

[The] following persons enjoy neither the right to vote nor the right to be voted for ... :

- a) Persons who employ hired labor in order to obtain from it an increase in profits;
- b) Persons who have an income without doing any work, such as interest from capital, receipts from property, etc.;
- c) Private merchants, trade and commercial brokers;
- d) Monks and clergy of all denominations;
- e) Employees and agents of the former police, the gendarme corps, and the Okhrana [tsar's secret service], also members of the former reigning dynasty;
- f) Persons who have in legal form been declared demented or mentally deficient, and also persons under guardianship;
- g) Persons who have been deprived by a soviet of their rights of citizenship because of selfish or dishonourable offences, for the period fixed by the sentence.²⁹

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Identify the groups or categories of people excluded from the voting process.
2. In cases a–d listed, explain why the Bolsheviks excluded certain people from a participatory role in the life of the new Soviet order.
3. What can you learn about the philosophy and values of a communist state from these exclusions? Support your answer with quotes.

BANISHED TO THE GULAG – SOCIALIST SLAVE LABOUR



⤴ Russian writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn was expelled from Russia in 1974.

Lenin had no qualms about getting rid of perceived opponents. Whole categories of 'opponents' were arrested by the secret police: anarchists, surviving Kronstadt sailors, clergy, kulaks, Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries and former White Army officers. The Cheka (secret police), were renamed GPU in 1922, then renamed OGPU less than two years later. Whatever the title, state security demanded that potentially hostile elements be identified and removed from Soviet society. An estimated 18 million people spent time in the labour concentration camp system that Solzhenitsyn famously called the 'Gulag Archipelago.'

⤵ **SOURCE 6.15**

Extract from Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's The Gulag Archipelago 1918–1956.

ALEKSANDR SOLZHENITSYN ON THE GULAG

How do people get to this clandestine Archipelago? Hour by hour planes fly there, ships steer their course there, and trains thunder off to it—but all with nary a mark on them to tell of their destination. And at ticket windows or at travel bureaus for Soviet or foreign tourists the employees would be astounded if you were to ask for a ticket to go there. They know nothing and they've never heard of the Archipelago.



⤵ **SOURCE 6.16**

This slogan is on the wall of a gulag punishment cell. It reads: 'Soviet power does not punish, it corrects.'

ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What did Solzhenitsyn mean by the term ‘Gulag Archipelago?’
2. What functions did the Gulag serve under Stalin’s leadership?
3. Under Lenin, how did the word *Gulag* come to symbolise a system that used terror and repression as a means of control?

Despite its innocuous-sounding meaning, which in Russian was ‘Chief Administration of Corrective Labour Camps’, the word *Gulag* came to symbolise a system that used terror and repression as a means of social control—and could change anyone’s life permanently.

Under the legal code of 1926, even children as young as twelve years of age could face criminal conviction for a variety of offences—from petty theft to murder—that were punishable by transportation to the Gulag. Solzhenitsyn, himself a former inmate, points out that ‘nearly half the entire Archipelago in 1927 consisted of youths whom the October Revolution had caught between the ages of six and fourteen... [T]he Archipelago never was short of young people.’³⁰

As well as being a place of punishment, Stalin saw to it that the Gulag performed an important economic role. Hundreds of thousands of adults and children were used as forced labourers for everything from mining and forestry to the manufacture of bricks. Gulag prisoners, for example, built the White Sea Canal across rugged granite terrain. Applebaum notes that ‘Stalin was the chief promoter of the White Sea Canal—and Stalin specifically wanted the canal to be built with prison labour.’³¹ Forced Gulag labour also helped build the new city of Magnitogorsk—the gigantic steel-manufacturing hub of the Urals.



↑ Magnitogorsk.

DID YOU KNOW?

When Lenin died in 1924, Stalin grasped the propaganda opportunity to immortalise Lenin by having him mummified, an idea partly inspired—according to Figes—by the 1922 discovery of Tutankhamen’s tomb in Egypt. Nearly two dozen scientists worked to develop an embalming fluid to ensure that Lenin’s body didn’t decompose.

ACTIVITIES

FACT FILE

Research and write a brief profile of each nation (e.g. capital city, language spoken) that made up the USSR in order of population size during any year in the NEP era.

SECRET POLICE INVESTIGATION

Research and write a historical profile of the Cheka/GPU/OGPU. Include information relating to such points as: date of formation; leadership (e.g. Felix Dzerzhinsky); powers and functions; similarities and/or differences to the tsarist Okhrana; and its role in the management of the Gulag system.

THE 'GREAT TURNING POINT'—STALIN'S 'REVOLUTION FROM ABOVE'

ISAAC DEUTSCHER: 'In 1929, five years after Lenin's death, Soviet Russia embarked upon her second revolution, which was directed solely and exclusively by Stalin.'

▼ SOURCE 6.17

Joseph Stalin, Lenin's successor as the new Great Helmsman of the USSR, 1933.



Lenin died in January 1924. His death led to a power struggle between Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky, which Stalin won. Stalin sent Trotsky into exile and made himself dictator of the USSR, a role he occupied until his death in 1953.



The year 1929 marked a critical watershed. Stalin began to consolidate his power and navigate a departure from NEP's policies and compromises. He embarked upon a series of Five Year Plans. These plans were designed to modernise the Soviet economy by speeding up industrialisation and collectivising farmland.

◀ SOURCE 6.18

The cover of a propaganda book extolling the virtues of Stalin's Five Year Plan.



HISTORICAL FOOTAGE:
LENIN AND STALIN



THE INDUSTRIAL IMPERATIVE AND DAILY LIFE

JOSEPH STALIN: 'People who babble about the necessity to slow down the tempo of our industrialisation are enemies of socialism, agents of our class enemies.'

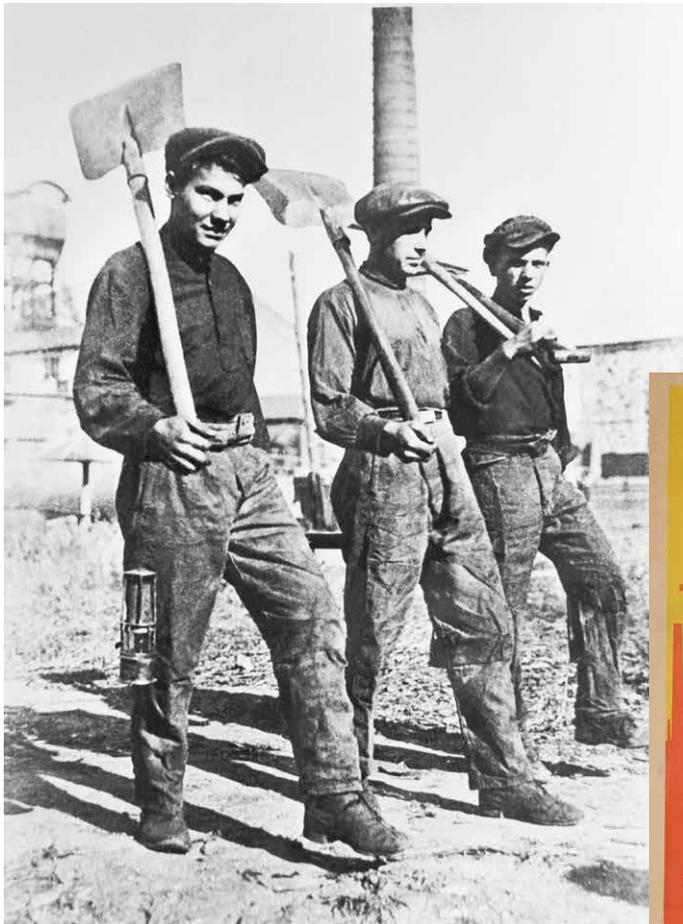
Stalin's deep conviction of Russia's backwardness and the urgent need for rapid industrialisation to safeguard the Soviet state in an era of 'capitalist encirclement' was echoed in the following speech extract:

➔ SOURCE 6.19

Cited in [www.marxists.org/
reference/archive/stalin/
works/1931/02/04.htm](http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1931/02/04.htm).

STALIN, 4 FEBRUARY 1931

One feature of the history of old Russia was the continual beatings she suffered because of her backwardness ... All beat her because of her backwardness, because of her military backwardness, cultural backwardness, political backwardness, industrial backwardness, agricultural backwardness ... That is why we must no longer lag behind.



Social sacrifice on a massive scale was crucial if national and political security was to be achieved through Stalin's modernisation and industrialisation programs. 'In the name of Socialism in One Country,' as Deutscher puts it, 'the people were presently asked to give up all civil liberties and bear heavy sacrifices and privation' by a Stalin-led bureaucratic elite that 'craved security for themselves and their Russia.'³²

⬆ SOURCE 6.20

Industrial works in the Donets Basin, 1929. Stalin's first Five Year Plan prioritised the rapid growth of heavy industry.

➔ SOURCE 6.21

A 1930 propaganda poster urging completion of the Five Year Plan in four years.



STALIN'S COLLECTIVISATION JUGGERNAUT

A SLOGAN OF THE COLLECTIVISATION DRIVE: 'Who does not join the kolkhoz is an enemy of Soviet power.'

Stalin's thinking at the start of the first Five Year Plan focused on industrialisation at breakneck speed—but he was also determined to reach two other related objectives. The first was the collectivisation of agriculture throughout the Soviet Union, including Ukraine, Kazakhstan and the Northern Caucasus. The second related objective was *dekulakisation*: the destruction of the kulaks (prosperous peasants) as a social class, as this would automatically exclude them from future collective farm membership.

Peasant households cultivating their own fields had traditionally been the social and economic nucleus of the rural community. Collectivisation, by making peasant families join a *kolkhoz* (collective farm) or a *sovkhoz* (state farm) threatened the kulaks' traditional way of life—and it also took away their control of the grain they produced and that the state demanded. Grain would feed the proletariat in the cities, and grain could be exported overseas to finance the capital and technological needs of industrialisation.

Predictably, the peasantry rebelled against Stalin's blueprint for revolutionising agriculture, and opted to slaughter their horses, cows, pigs and sheep rather than give them up. While Soviet authorities appeared to relent, they continued with wholesale deportations of kulaks to the Gulag. By 1933, the collectivisation juggernaut was set in motion: the combined forces of the Red Army, OGPU and militant Bolshevik workers swarmed the countryside to smash what remained of peasant opposition to collectivisation. This action effectively tore apart Lenin's previous hope for a *smychka* (proletarian–peasant alliance). Many peasants fled in desperation toward towns; others surrendered to a future life of strict grain collection quotas and suffered penalties if they failed to meet their quota.

The first Five Year Plan had dubious success. Despite official proclamations of full employment, living standards dropped for many blue-collar workers, and their income was cut in half.³³ Even with the money they earned, ordinary workers struggled to obtain the basic necessities of life. The abolition of businesses and private trade in the cities meant the state assumed responsibility for the distribution of consumer goods—and the manufacture of consumer goods was second in place behind the needs of heavy industry.

Chronic scarcity led to the reintroduction of food rationing for traditional essentials, such as bread. However, the system was weighted in favour of Party members and industrial workers. Queuing for basic foodstuffs

▼ SOURCE 6.22

Photos showing collective farming in the 1930s.



ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What was the likely propaganda purpose of these photos?
2. What specific features promote the 'benefits' of collective farming?
3. How reliable are these photos as representations of collectivisation?

ACTIVITY

REBEL PAMPHLET

Imagine you belong to a group of rebels disillusioned with Soviet society under Stalin's rule. You plan to print a subversive pamphlet and distribute it anonymously. After holding a group discussion, incorporate all of your points of criticism in a pamphlet that also features a provocative background image.



ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF
UKRAINE

became a constant feature of everyday life for the average working-class family in Leningrad and Moscow. Acute shortages affected the availability of food, ranging from milk and meat to vegetables and fish. Fitzpatrick points out that at the start of the 1930s, workers in public cafeterias were even queuing for plates, bowls, forks and spoons—as well as queuing for food itself.³⁴

ACTIVITIES

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What was *dekulakisation*?
2. How did Stalin justify the nature of his first Five Year Plan?
3. What was the social impact of Stalin's 'Revolution from Above'?

SKILLS: CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE

Explain the consequences of the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (RAPM) for musical expression in Soviet society. How did RAPM exercise its 'iron musical dictatorship'?

THE 'UKRAINIAN RENAISSANCE'

Ukraine is a large country on the south-western border of Russia. The Red Army invaded Ukraine at various times during the Civil War years, and in 1922 Bolshevik-conquered Ukraine became one of the four initial members of the Russian-dominated Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

The collectivisation drive that Stalin unleashed in Ukraine was particularly ferocious, culminating in the Great Famine of 1932–33. It was a 'forced' famine of genocidal proportions, comparable to Hitler's Final Solution. But to gain a deeper insight into the human tragedy that unfolded in Ukraine in 1932–33, it is necessary to start with the national cultural revival that took place in Ukraine during the middle years of NEP.

When the Red Army invaded Ukraine for the third and last time in 1919 in order to 'bolshevise' the country, the question remained of how to deal with the Ukrainians, who were the most numerous non-Russian nationality of the former tsarist empire. At least one in five soon-to-be Soviet citizens was Ukrainian.

After the October Revolution, a nationalist movement had developed among the Ukrainian peasantry. However, the peasantry—which helped spearhead demands for the 'Ukrainisation' of government administration, army and schools—had an arch-rival in high-ranking Bolshevik official Dmitrii Lebed. Lebed advanced his 'Theory of the Struggle of Two Cultures'. According to this theory, Russian culture was inherently superior because its source was the 'progressive' Russian proletariat, whereas Ukrainian culture still retained its links to the 'backward' old world of the peasantry.

Despite Lebed's theory, in 1923 the 12th Party Congress gave the green light to a policy of *korenizatsiia* ('taking roots'), which in Ukraine meant 'Ukrainisation'.³⁵ Ukrainians were actively recruited into the Communist Party and state administration. Moreover, Ukrainian was promoted as the language of government, education, publishing, and artistic or scholarly work.³⁶ A cultural renaissance was beginning to blossom and all sections of Ukrainian society could enjoy the feeling of national regeneration.

ALEXANDER DOVZHENKO

As the winds of change blew through Ukraine in the NEP era, one individual stood out. Filmmaker Alexander Dovzhenko reflected that change and influenced reactions. After starting as a novice at Ukraine's Odessa Film Studio in 1926, Dovzhenko directed the films *Zvenyhora* (1927), *Arsenal* (1928) and *Earth* (1930). These films catapulted him to international recognition in the film world.

Apart from pioneering the use of montage as an experimental filmmaking technique, Dovzhenko fathered what became known as 'poetic cinema': the expression of poetic sentiments using striking, sensuous images. This was particularly so in his silent film masterpiece *Earth* (in Ukrainian: *Zemlya*), released in 1930, two years before the social trauma of Ukraine's Great Famine. According to Herbert Marshall, 'Dovzhenko was the first Soviet cinematographer to bring the theme of collectivisation on to the screen.'³⁷ On the surface, it appeared to be a politically correct pro-collectivisation tale of the struggle against kulak resistance. Beneath the surface, however, it was a complex, lyrical celebration of family unity between generations and the birth-to-death life cycle. It celebrated a traditional Ukraine, nourished by the fruits of Mother Earth. A moonlit scene showing the protagonist, Vasyl, spontaneously dancing the *hopak* (a Ukrainian folk dance) also symbolised the influence of Dovzhenko's cultural roots.

As George Liber remarks, Dovzhenko's filmmaking techniques influenced such notable successors in the USSR as Yuri Ilyenko, Andrei Tarkovsky and Sergei Parajanov. However, the spirit of 'poetic cinema', Ukrainian 'folk modernism' and other more daring creative impulses that drove Dovzhenko's work, also raised critics' eyebrows. For a start, the themes of nature, life, love and death in *Earth* were seen as overriding the more urgent concept of class struggle. Two scenes made Dovzhenko notorious—but also suffered at the hands of Soviet censors. One related to the newly arrived tractor that stopped near



↑ Alexander Dovzhenko.

the village. Realising that the radiator needed water, Vasyl urged his fellow peasants to urinate in the radiator to get the tractor going again. More shocking was Dovzhenko's pioneering filming of female nudity in a scene where news of Vasyl's murder caused Natalia, his lover, to tear her clothes off and hit the walls in grief.³⁸

One of Stalin's favourite poets, Demyan Bedny, denounced *Earth* as a 'Kulak cinema film', 'unnatural', and a 'counter-revolutionary obscenity.'³⁹ The Soviet Russian newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* also attacked the film for its failure to incite a proper hatred of *kulaks*.⁴⁰



↑ Alexander Dovzhenko directing *Earth*.

Dovzhenko's first sound film, *Ivan*, screened in 1932, raised the question of whether to use the Ukrainian or Russian language. This was at a time when Stalin was reversing the 1920s 'Ukrainisation' policy and reasserting the primacy of Russian in the USSR. Dovzhenko chose Ukrainian even though, as Riley states, 'Stalinist centralisation ran head-on against Ukrainian nationalism.'⁴¹ Russian critics were quick to pounce on Dovzhenko for his use of Ukrainian language and the portrayal of *Ivan* as an 'unheroic' working-class hero. One critic, V. Grossman-Roshchin complained: '[O]ur semi-knowledge of the Ukrainian language is far worse than our not understanding it at all.'⁴²

Despite the compromises he made to survive in the Stalinist order, Dovzhenko never gave up his dream of planting Ukrainian national cinema on the world stage. Liber comments on how Dovzhenko's 'masterful integration of man and culture on the screen raised him to the pantheon of the world's first pioneers of cinema. Tightly woven Ukrainian symbols and images powered his films, especially *Zvenyhora*, *Arsenal*, *Earth* and *Shchors*, which defined Ukrainian cinematography ...' Moreover, Dovzhenko's later autobiographical work—namely, *The Enchanted Desna*—inspired the Ukrainian intellectuals and artists of the 1960s 'who challenged the limits of Socialist Realism there and led the 'second Soviet republic' to independence in 1991.'⁴³

Dovzhenko died of a heart attack in November, 1956, six days before a ceremony in Paris to honour the living founders of world cinema such as himself, Charlie Chaplin and Luis Buñuel. Fittingly, he was buried dressed in a traditional, embroidered Ukrainian shirt. Evoking scenes from *Earth*, fruit and flowers draped his coffin, and two sheaves of Ukrainian wheat, tied in bands, stood at his feet.⁴⁴

CASE STUDY

Research the life and career of Ukrainian filmmaker Alexander Dovzhenko, and write a biographical account that includes responses to the following questions.

1. How did Dovzhenko's national and social origins shape or influence his work?
2. How was the 'contradictory and paradoxical' side of Dovzhenko's character revealed in his relationship with Stalin?
3. Dovzhenko's *Earth* is described as an integral part of a 'trilogy' including *Zvenyhora* and *Arsenal*. What themes did the latter two films explore, and did they generate the same critical reaction as *Earth*?
4. How and why did Dovzhenko end up exiled in Moscow?
5. How successful was Dovzhenko in his mission to develop Ukrainian films in the Stalinist era?

FILM ANALYSIS

Watch Dovzhenko's film *Earth* and respond to the following questions.

1. What are the main themes of the film? Which scenes illustrate these themes?
2. What qualities or aspects of the film undermine the political message it appears to be conveying?
3. What evidence supports Liber's claim that Dovzhenko, in this film, 'raised important questions about the relationship between the old and new, between tradition and revolution, between the countryside and the cities, between life and death, and between people and the soil'?
4. Discuss your responses in small groups and appoint a note-taker to report the contents of the discussion to the class.

ACTIVITIES

DID YOU KNOW?

In the classic Woody Allen film, *Manhattan* (1979), the characters Ike (Woody Allen) and Mary (Diane Keaton) attend a screening of Alexander Dovzhenko's *Earth* at the Colony movie theatre in New York.

THE TURNAROUND

STALIN: '[The Ukrainisation movement] which is very frequently led by non-communist intellectuals, may here and there assume the character of ... a struggle against 'Moscow' in general, against the Russians in general, against Russian culture and its highest achievement—Leninism.'⁴⁵

With this 1926 declaration, Stalin revealed his fear of Ukraine's renaissance. Together with his Five Year Plan—and acting on his view that 'Ukrainisation' had gone too far for political comfort—Stalin initiated a stunning reversal of policy. In what historian Robert Conquest calls the 'decapitation' of the nation, Stalin began attacking Ukraine's intelligentsia. From 1929–30, the alleged 'Union for the Liberation of Ukraine' was targeted, resulting in the mass arrest of Ukrainian academics, critics, writers and linguists. One of the charges levelled at the show trial of those arrested was a conspiracy to 'make Ukrainian as distinct as possible from Russian'! Some students from Kyiv [Kiev] were convicted and reportedly shipped to the Solovetsky Islands in the 'Gulag Archipelago.'⁴⁶ As Ukraine's literary circles, philosophers, artists, teachers, university students and patriotic Soviet officials stood up to protest against the suffering of peasants, their days were numbered.

➔ SOURCE 6.23

Cited in *Subtelny, Ukraine: A History, 2nd edition, 419.*

REPORT FROM PAVEL POSTYSHEV, STALIN'S SPECIAL TROUBLESHOOTER IN UKRAINE, NOVEMBER 1933

[T]he discovery of Skrypnyk's nationalist deviation [Skrypnyk was the patriotically minded Commissar of Education who suicided in despair] gave us the opportunity to rid ... the structure of Ukrainian socialist culture of all ... nationalist elements ... It is enough to say that we cleaned out 2000 men of the nationalist element ... from the People's Commissariat of Education alone.' In no uncertain terms, Postyshev condemned 'Ukrainisation' as a 'cultural counter-revolution' isolating Ukrainian workers 'from the positive influence of Russian culture.'



MORE ON THE
HOLODOMOR

THE 'HOLODOMOR'

STALIN: 'But it is also beyond doubt that, after all, the peasant question is ... the quintessence ... of the national question ... [The] peasantry constitutes the main army of the national movement ...'

TROTSKY: 'National ideology for the peasantry ... is an explosive force of immense proportions.'

LITVINOV: 'Food is a weapon.'

The years 1932–33 were a critical turning point for Ukraine: its traditional peasant class—80 per cent of the nation's population—was decimated in an artificial famine that has since become commemorated as the *Holodomor*: death by forced starvation.

➔ SOURCE 6.24

Passers-by look at the corpse of a man who starved during the *Holodomor*.



Among historians, estimates of the number of people who died during the famine range from three to five million people. Regardless of the precise total, the fact that millions perished in this forced famine became a tragedy permanently etched on the Ukrainian national psyche, and signified for Ukrainians what the Holocaust would soon mean for Jews.

The following statistics show population figures for the three eastern Slavic nationalities in the 1926 and 1939 censuses, revealing a reduction in the Ukrainian population of at least three million people. The statistics were not published in the Soviet Union until 1975.⁴⁷

Historians such as Robert Conquest and James E. Mace have accused Stalin of a politically motivated, genocidal famine aimed at 'solving' the problem posed by Ukrainian nationalism. Through compulsory collectivisation and unrealistic grain requisition quotas, the vast majority of peasants were left starving. Stalin saw this as a means of crushing the peasants, and ensuring that Ukraine would not become a political force that might one day flirt with the idea of saying 'no' to Soviet Russian control.

While harvests were organised like a military offensive and Red Army detachments guarded the wheatfields, the Ukrainian–Russian border was sealed to prevent starving peasants from escaping. Soviet Russian censors tried to conceal the mass starvation in Ukraine by confining foreign press correspondents to Moscow as much as possible. Famine relief was also rejected, in line with Stalin's official denial that there even was a famine devastating Ukraine.

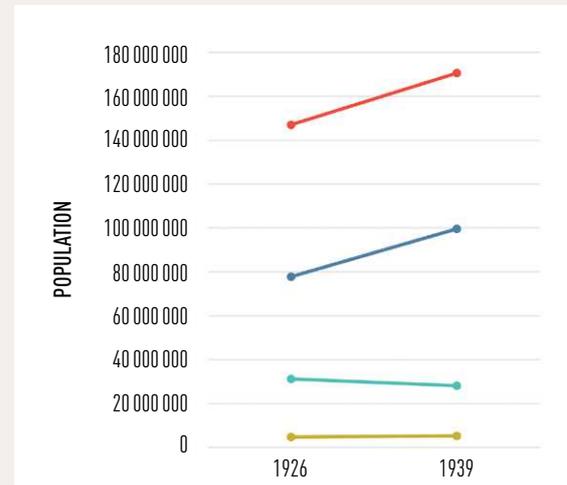
From Mace's perspective, the Ukrainian famine 'seemed to represent a means used by Stalin to impose a 'final solution' on the most pressing nationality

▼ SOURCE 6.25

Population figures, 1926 and 1939.

COMPARING POPULATION FIGURES

	1926	1939	% change
USSR (total)	147 027 900	170 577 100	+15.7%
Russians	77 791 100	99 591 000	+28.0%
Belarusians	4 738 900	5 275 400	+11.3%
Ukrainians	31 195 000	28 111 000	-9.9%



◀ SOURCE 6.26

Lorries loaded with grain harvested from the Kakhovka collective farm, in Ukraine.

DID YOU KNOW?

In his book *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, psychoanalyst Erich Fromm described Stalin as one of 'the outstanding historical examples of both mental and physical sadism', sometimes personally dictating the torture to be used on prisoners of interest.

SOURCE 6.27

Ukrainians in Kyiv in 2012, marching to commemorate the victims of the Great Famine of 1932–33 on Holodomor Remembrance Day.



ACTIVITY

SKILLS: HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Compare the views of the historians James E. Mace, Robert Service and Ronald Suny on the question of whether the Stalin-engineered ‘Holodomor’ in Ukraine reflected a genocidal intent aimed at ethnic Ukrainians.

problem in the Soviet Union. According to internationally accepted definitions, this constitutes an act of genocide.⁴⁸

On the other hand, Robert Service suggests that if genocide means killing a national group entirely, the man-made Ukraine famine falls short of this definition. ‘In any case,’ he says, ‘Stalin needed Ukrainians as well as Russians to take up jobs in the factories, mines and railheads.’⁴⁹ Suny argues that as German, Jewish and Russian villages on Ukrainian territory also suffered, the vicious nature of Stalin’s policy was ‘not directed specifically against ethnic Ukrainians.’ Nonetheless, he concedes that Stalin was ‘determined to break the back of the independent Ukrainian peasantry’⁵⁰ as a potentially dangerous threat to Russian imperialist power.

Stalin effectively crippled the Ukrainian nation-building process of the 1920s. In Subtelny’s words, the Great Famine of 1932–33 ‘traumatized the nation, leaving it with deep social, psychological, political and demographic scars that it carries to this day.’⁵¹

ACTIVITIES

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What does the Ukrainian expression *Holodomor* mean?
2. How did Stalin act on his fear of Ukraine’s ‘renaissance’?
3. What does historian James E. Mace mean when he says that the *Holodomor* ‘seemed to represent a means used by Stalin to impose a “final solution” on the most pressing nationality problem in the Soviet Union?’

DIALOGUE

Construct a dialogue between Alexander Dovzhenko and Joseph Stalin in 1932. Each person should speak six times. The issues to be explored in the conversation could include:

- ‘Ukrainisation’
- the use of Ukrainian language
- collectivisation, the Great Famine and genocide
- characters and themes in Dovzhenko’s films
- the different views of Stalin and Dovzhenko towards Ukraine.

FROM UKRAINE TO AUSTRALIA—MEMORIES OF TRAUMATIC LIVES

For all the academic debate and statistical evidence about the Ukrainian famine, it's the images conjured up from exposure to personal or eyewitness accounts of what happened that evoke the full human tragedy of the *Holodomor*.

In her book *Silent Memories*, Lesa Melnyczuk pieced together the recollections of Ukrainian migrants to Western Australia who survived the Great Famine. The following snapshots paint a nightmarish picture of their social experience as victims and observers of the famine's effects:

She was eight or ten years old. Her legs were swollen like bottles ... They were leaking. Like broken glass, water was dripping from those legs.⁵²

Blood was dripping. They each had one end in their mouths, and were sucking. (Orysia, an interviewee, recalling the scene of a brother and sister who managed to catch a rat.)⁵³

Our parents did not let us out of the house, because they were afraid that somebody would abduct us and eat us. If there were dead people lying around who had died of hunger, someone would cut off a piece of flesh and eat it.⁵⁴

In his book *Forever Flowing*, Vasily Grossman (who was then a Party activist) witnessed similar scenes:

'People had swollen faces and legs and stomachs. They could not contain their urine. And now they ate anything at all. They caught mice, rats, sparrows, ants, earthworms ...'⁵⁵



SOURCE 6.28

Monument to the *Holodomor* victims in Kyiv, Ukraine.

By the end of 1933, with grain collection quotas having been belatedly eased, some hints of normality began to return to the Ukrainian countryside.

REPORT

Despite Stalin's restrictions on travel, imagine you are a foreign journalist determined to investigate disturbing rumours about the consequences of collectivisation in the Ukrainian countryside in the period 1932–33.

Using this text and at least three other sources, write a newspaper-style report based on the evidence you have discovered.

CONCLUSION

Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP) produced some semblance of what he had hoped for: economic recovery following the failure of War Communism. Following Lenin's death in 1924, Stalin emerged from the ensuing power struggle as Lenin's successor at the Kremlin. As the newly established Soviet leader, Stalin scrapped the compromises of NEP and launched his first Five Year Plan. By the end of 1929, industrialisation at breakneck speed was combined with the collectivisation of agriculture. Collectivisation in Ukraine had particularly lethal consequences in the shape of the Great Famine of 1932–33: the Holodomor.

At the same time that the USSR was undergoing Stalin's brand of socialist reconstruction, a darkly alternative social sphere, the 'Gulag Archipelago', was having its numbers replenished by those expelled from Soviet society. Slave labour in the

Gulags was part of Stalin's blueprint to rescue Russia from its economic 'backwardness.' Under Stalin, Marxism-Leninism—the new ruling ideology—translated into a justification for executing 'socialist modernisation' regardless of the human cost. This ideology led to a repressive state that used secret police to maintain social control and to eliminate real or imaginary opposition. The seeds of totalitarianism were sown in the system Stalin set up to boost his autocratic power.

On the cultural front, the relative freedom of NEP was suppressed when the policy of Socialist Realism, under Stalin's rule, prescribed the style and content of all future artistic creation. So the original Marxist dream of a liberated humanity that began while Lenin was still alive quickly dissolved into a Stalinist dictatorship that would extend beyond the end of World War II in 1945.

CHAPTER REVIEW

Compare social and cultural life in the Soviet Union of the 1920s NEP era and the Stalinist 1930s. (Apart from this text, use at least three other sources.)

What evidence of change or continuity can you find? Using a slideshow or similar format, deliver a comprehensive, comparative analysis to the class.

EXAM PRACTICE

Using three or four points:

1. Explain why Vladimir Lenin abandoned War Communism and adopted his New Economic Policy in 1921. Provide evidence to support your answer.
2. Explain how social and cultural life changed in the USSR in the transition from Lenin's New Economic Policy to Stalin's first Five Year Plan. Provide evidence to support your answer.

ESSAY

Write an essay, based on evidence, on one of the topics below.

- 'Lenin's decision to scrap War Communism and switch to the New Economic Policy represented a fundamental betrayal of Marxist principles.'

To what extent do you agree with this statement? Provide evidence to support your argument.

- 'The nature of Stalin's rule during the first Five Year Plan was one of tragic oppression of the Soviet people.'
- To what degree is this assertion justified? Provide evidence to support your response.

SKILLS: HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Choose three of the topics below and research how different historians (e.g. Pipes, Figes, Fitzpatrick, Conquest, Mace, Suny) have interpreted the event/policy/process.

Which assessment do you find most convincing? Explain why.

- The New Economic Policy (NEP)
- The first Five Year Plan
- Ukraine's Holodomor
- Stalin's Cultural Revolution

TEST



QUIZ – CHAPTER 6

FURTHER READING

Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*. London: Hutchinson, 1986.

This critical analysis of Soviet collectivisation and the 'terror-famine' in Ukraine stands as a scathing indictment of Stalin's regime.

Orland Figes, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891–1924*. London: Penguin Books, 1998.

A monumental yet very readable book, panoramic in scope and peppered with countless interesting details.

George O. Liber, *Alexander Dovzhenko: A Life in Soviet Film*. London: British Film Institute, 2002.

A balanced, critical evaluation of the life and career of the Ukrainian filmmaker. Still one of the best biographical accounts in the English language.

Lesa Melnyczuk, *Silent Memories—Traumatic Lives: Ukrainian Migrant Refugees in Western Australia*. Welshpool: Western Australian Museum, 2012.

A fascinating, pioneer study of Ukrainian migrants to Western Australia who survived the 1930s *Holodomor*.

Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 2nd edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988).

A well-written text with a comprehensive section on the history of twentieth century Ukraine.

Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

An engaging, comprehensive account of the political, social and cultural aspects of the USSR, leading up to its dissolution.

CHAPTER
7

FROM DANCING TO DUSTBOWL: AMERICA IN THE 20s AND 30s

'This is pre-eminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. Nor need we shrink from honestly facing conditions in our country today. This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So first of all let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.'

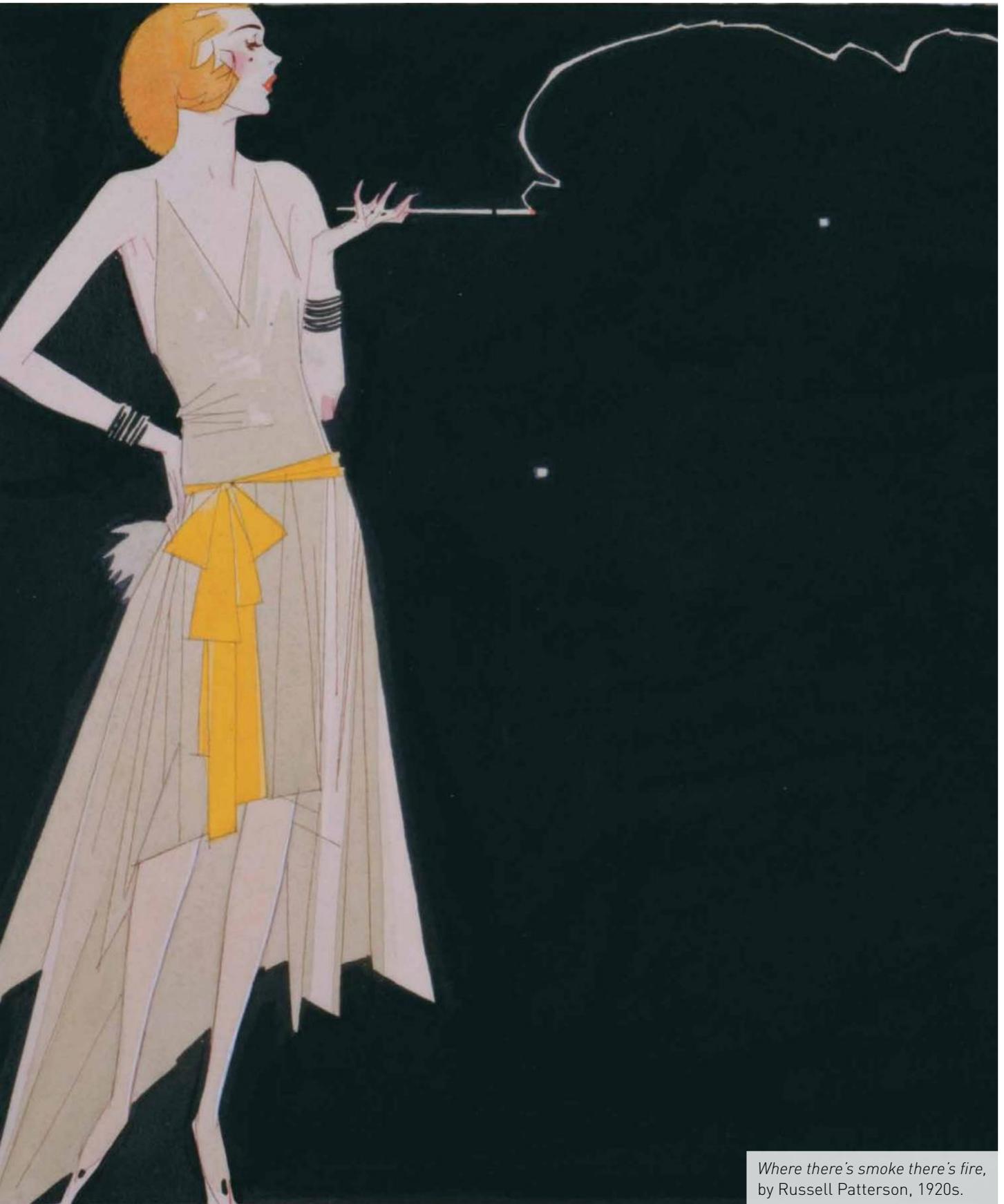
FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT

INTRODUCTION

The period between the two world wars was a time of great contrast and complexity for the USA. In the immediate post-war years, there was relief that the war was over and a determination to isolate America from the rest of the world. The 1920s were generally prosperous, but the good life did not extend to African Americans, most women or to the uneducated and unskilled. A 'live for today' attitude characterised much of the popular culture, but there was also a sense of disillusionment reflected in some of the art and literature of the decade.

The 'Roaring Twenties' came to an abrupt end with the Wall Street stockmarket crash in October 1929. The boom of the 1920s turned to bust in the 1930s with dire implications for the USA—and the rest of the world. Yet the Great Depression—with its bankruptcies, debt and unemployment—also led to new developments in literature, art and film. Culture reflected the gritty struggles of the Depression era but also gave rise to a body of escapist literature, film and music to relieve the misery of people's daily lives.





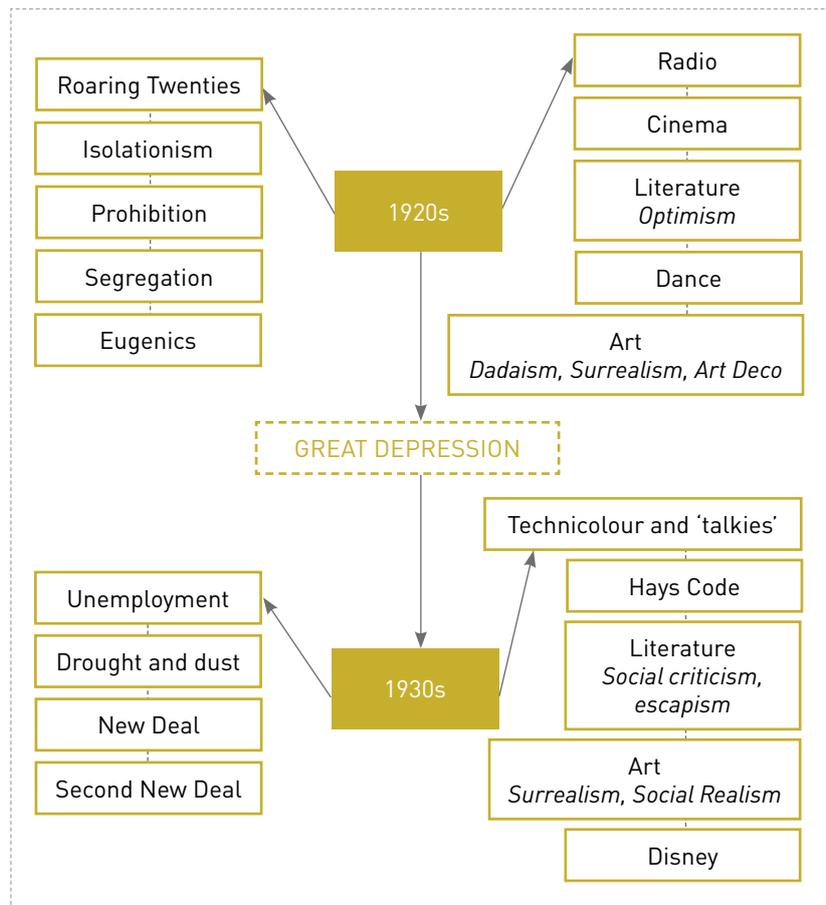
Where there's smoke there's fire,
by Russell Patterson, 1920s.

OVERVIEW

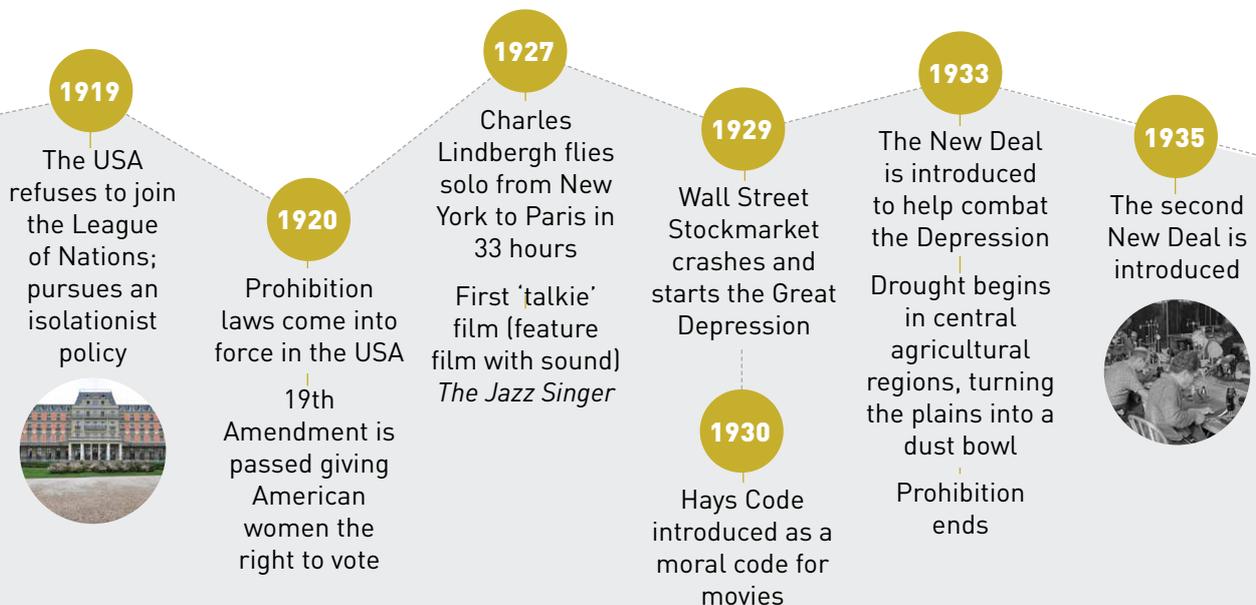
KEY QUESTIONS

- To what extent was the USA in the 1920s a land of opportunity in which people could achieve the 'American Dream'?
- Which people were denied access to the American Dream, and why?
- How were the positive and negative aspects of American life in the 1920s reflected in popular culture, including literature, film, radio and music, fashion, architecture and design?
- To what extent did the American economy and society change from the 1920s to the 1930s?
- What were the political, economic and social responses to the Great Depression?
- How were the economic challenges and hardships of the 1930s reflected in popular culture?

IN THIS CHAPTER



KEY EVENTS



KEY PLAYERS

HERBERT HOOVER (1874–1964)

- Was president of the United States from 1929 to 1933, during one of the country's most difficult periods.
- Approached economic disaster by emphasising the 'American character' and encouraging hard work and sacrifice.
- Unfortunately this did not solve the problem and he lost the 1932 election to Franklin D. Roosevelt.
- Died in 1964 after playing important roles with famine relief during and after World War II.



FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (1882–1945)

- In 1910 began his political career in the Democratic Party, following in the path of distant cousin Theodore Roosevelt [Republican president 1901–1909].
- In 1921 contracted polio, an incurable disease that left his legs paralysed; he was able to regain some use of his legs.
- In 1928 became the governor of New York.
- When the Great Depression continued on into the early 1930s, he used the familiar Roosevelt name to win the presidency by promising to fix the economy.
- Created the New Deal to help create work and stimulate the economy.
- Was president of the United States 1933–1945, winning four consecutive terms.
- Died in office shortly before the end of World War II. His wife Eleanor Roosevelt became the first chair of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.



KEY TERMS

SEGREGATION

Separating groups in society. In the USA in the 1920s and 30s, racial groups were often separated on the basis of race and colour. Segregation was the law in most of the southern states.

MISCEGENATION

Intermarrying between people of different races. There were often anti-miscegenation laws to prevent marriage between couples of different races.

SUFFRAGETTE

Suffragettes were women who campaigned for the right to vote.

FUNDAMENTALISM

A movement within religions to adhere rigidly to religious beliefs and dogma.

EVOLUTION

Scientific theory that all things (humans, animals and plants) have changed and evolved over time.

EUGENICS

A theory that genetics influences all aspects of life. Connected to ideas of improving society by deciding who should be allowed to breed.

ISOLATIONISM

Policy of focusing just on your country and your people to the exclusion of other people and other countries.

RACISM

Views that certain races are inferior or superior to others. Connected to ideas that a person's race shapes their personality characteristics.

NATIONALISM

Advancing the interests of one's nation, sometimes at the expense of others.

HISTORICAL INQUIRY: ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

The 'Roaring Twenties' and the Great Depression are usually characterised as very different periods, with people displaying markedly different attitudes, values and behaviours. These differences are reflected in the cultural products of both decades.

As you work through this chapter, think about the degree to which people had *really* changed, or whether their different responses and actions were just the result of changed circumstances.

Use the material and ideas that you gather to write an essay on the topic: 'The American people of the 1920s took a frivolous "live for today" attitude to life, while those of the 1930s faced life with grim determination and acceptance of hardship.'

To what extent do you agree? In your answer, use social and cultural evidence from both decades.

SKILLS FOCUS

ROARING TWENTIES

COLLEEN MOORE (ABOUT FLAPPERS): 'They were smart and sophisticated, with an air of independence about them, and so casual about their looks and clothes and manners as to be almost slapdash ... I shared their restlessness, understood their determination to free themselves of the Victorian shackles of the pre-World War I era and find out for themselves what life was all about.'¹

The USA in the 1920s was, on the surface, a prosperous, progressive and confident society. It was in the USA that the phrase 'Roaring Twenties' was coined. This upbeat attitude was reflected in the growth of a consumer culture and an increase in the importance of possessions such as cars and labour-saving household goods. Medical breakthroughs such as the development of the iron lung helped to increase life expectancy. Simpler clothing and hairstyles were outward reflections of an increase in women's rights, and many Americans had access to radio, 'moving pictures' and jazz music. This heady mix of prosperity and progress was reflected in the culture of the time, including the work of novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald and the new 'talkies' (movies with sound) coming out of Hollywood.

However, there was another, darker side to the America of the 1920s. Not everything was positive; this was also the era of Prohibition and its related gangland activity, limited rights for women and extreme poverty for those who did not have access to the American Dream. The period was particularly harsh for non-whites, especially African Americans, who suffered severe discrimination and segregation. Old prejudices were given a new life by the popularity of eugenics. Eugenics was a philosophy that suggested that people of 'inferior' races should be isolated from 'higher beings' so that the 'superior races' would continue to improve.

URBANISATION

One of the strongest features of the 1920s was increased urbanisation. This was partly driven by 'the great migration' of African Americans from the southern states, but also by improvements in technology and by the need for industrial workers. Immigration also swelled the numbers in the main cities, because most new arrivals found that work was more easily available in the factories, shops and houses of cities, especially along the eastern seaboard.

📌 SOURCE 7.01

By 1928, almost 20 per cent of Americans owned their own cars.



The move to the city was made easier by improved transportation, particularly trains and cars, for by 1928 almost 20 per cent of Americans owned their own cars. Industrial production more than doubled during the decade, leading to cheaper goods and allowing more people to buy into consumer culture. Increased advertising encouraged brand-awareness, and hire-purchase agreements allowed large-cost items to be paid off over time. Cities were depicted in advertising and in movies as glamorous metropolises, a far cry from traditional, 'backward' lives in rural areas. However, the reality of cities was often very different. Many workers experienced difficult working environments, little ability to unionise, cramped and unhygienic living conditions, and racism.

FASHIONS, FEMININITY AND FLAPPERS

After World War I, there were numerous changes in American society. One new development was the concept of the 'new woman' or 'flapper'. She challenged the role of women who stayed at home and focused on the domestic sphere. There had always been a small number of women who challenged the status quo, but in the 1920s larger numbers of women—especially young women—attempted to create a stronger place in society for themselves. The development of new office technology—such as the telephone switchboard and the typewriter—opened up new opportunities for women to work in offices, as using these machines was seen as 'women's work.'

The idea of the flapper as a confident, intriguing woman with short hair and short skirts, exploring the world on her terms, was marketed in films, songs, advertisements and magazines. Actresses such as Clara Bow, Louise Brooks, Evelyn Brent and Gloria Swanson epitomised the image of the flapper.

However, the position of women in the 1920s was rather more complicated than the popular image suggests. Women's experiences during World War I encouraged some of them to take more active roles in the family and in the workforce. Many women had moved into male roles during the war. At war's end they faced a dilemma: should they return to traditional roles to release jobs for male breadwinners, or should they continue in the roles that had given them freedom and independence?

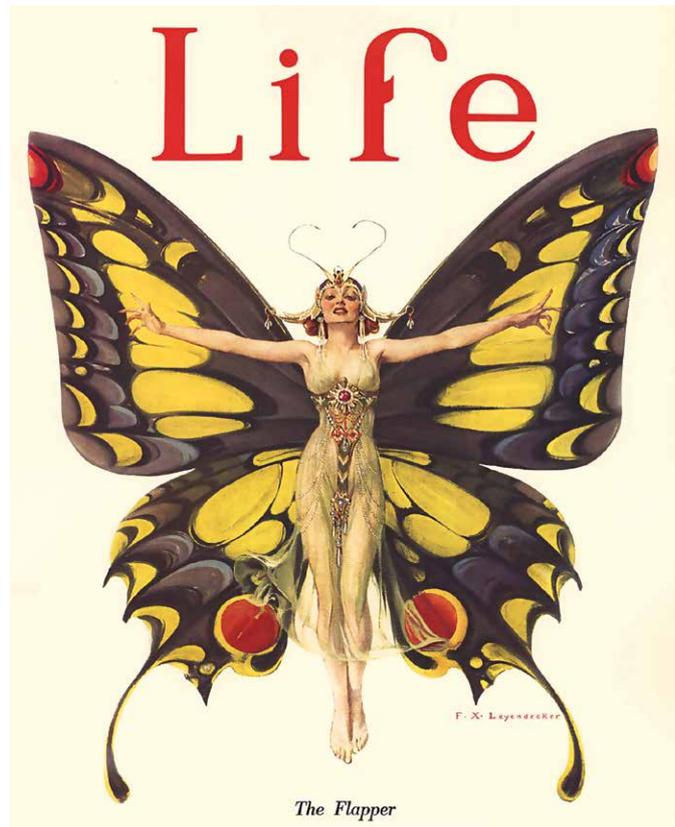
Women were aided in their endeavours by increased opportunities for birth control. Advocates such as Margaret Sanger campaigned for education about birth control and legalisation of birth control clinics. Information on how to control the size of their families—or prevent childbirth altogether—gradually became available to middle- and upper-class women, but poorer women, especially in rural areas, had little access to this information.

Despite considerable progress during the 1920s, women still faced discrimination, patriarchal expectations about female behaviour and a Constitution that, despite giving them the right to vote, did not necessarily give them equal rights.

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What are the features of a flapper?
2. How do these images of flappers connect to what you have learned about women of the 1920s and 'flappers'? How are they different?
3. Is the idea of the flapper being praised or mocked in these images? Give evidence to support your answer. Write a speech defending your views.

ACTIVITY

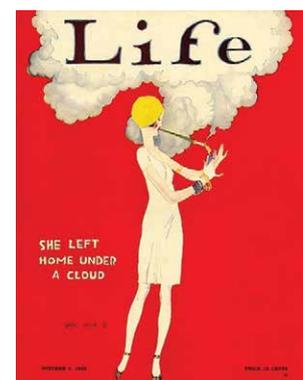


↑ SOURCE 7.02

'The Flapper.' Cover of *Life* magazine, 1922.

↓ SOURCE 7.03

'She left home under a cloud.' Flapper image on the front of US magazine *Life*, 1925.



SKILLS: HISTORICAL INQUIRY

1. Why do you think that using office machinery became regarded as 'women's work'?
2. Create a two-column chart. On one side, list evidence of progress for women during the 1920s. On the other side, list the evidence that suggest there was still a long way to go in the fight for equality. (You could conduct additional research to complete your chart.)

WHY PEOPLE WANTED TO MIGRATE TO THE USA

LAND AND WORK
MONEY AND WEATHER
UPWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY
RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL AUTONOMY
EQUALITY

SOURCE 7.04

The World's Work. vol. 41. 1921. Reprint. London: Forgotten Books, 2013. 205–6.

SOURCE 7.05

The World's Work. vol. 41. 1921. Reprint. London: Forgotten Books, 2013. 206–7.

LAND OF OPPORTUNITY

JAMES TRUSLOW ADAMS: 'That dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement ... a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable ... regardless of the ... circumstances of birth or position.'²

America has long been seen as a land of opportunity. During the nineteenth century, immigrants were drawn to America by the promise of freedoms and benefits that they could not hope to achieve in their own countries. By the early twentieth century, patterns of immigration were changing. Migrants were still drawn from Britain and Western Europe but there was an increasing influx of people from Southern and Eastern Europe. Migrants were attracted by the promise of prosperity—and also by the opportunities for religious and political freedom. Many Jews fled persecution in Russia and Poland to settle in the USA around the turn of the twentieth century.

STEFANO MIELE, 'AMERICA AS A PLACE TO MAKE MONEY', 1921

If I am to be frank then I shall say I left Italy and came to America for the sole purpose of making money ... I was not seeking political ideals: as a matter of fact, I was quite satisfied with those of my native land. If I could have worked my way up in my chosen profession in Italy, I would have stayed in Italy. But repeated efforts showed that I could not. America was the land of opportunity, and so I came, intending to make money and then return to Italy. This is true of most Italian emigrants to America.

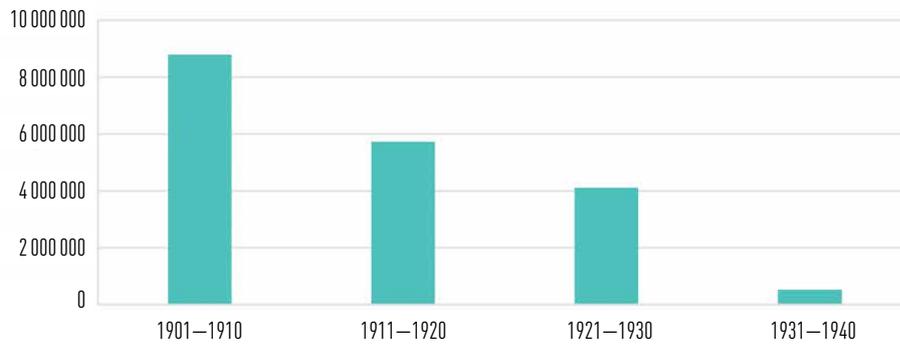
BERTALAN BARNÁ, 'FROM HUNGARIAN BANKER TO AMERICAN PASTRY MERCHANT', 1921

It was economic and social conditions that wrought the change ... I didn't know much about America ... because it was a new country, I thought it would be crude and underdeveloped ... I also heard that it was rich and big ... But there was something else—the spirit of America. I had heard that in America a man could start as a boot-black, as a street sweeper, could start in the lowest position, and if he had the ability, could work his way up to the highest, that it's not where a man starts but his ability that counts.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Identify the common ideas shared by Miele and Barna about migration to the USA.
2. In what ways do the attitudes of the two differ? Support your answer with quotations from the two sources.
3. Use the information shown to explain why people wanted to migrate to the USA.



SOURCE 7.06

IMMIGRATION TO AMERICA 1901–1940

US Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1999, 872. Available from <https://www.census.gov/prod/99pubs/99statab/sec31.pdf>

ISOLATED AMERICA

Although America had supported the Allies at the start of World War I, it was not until April 1917 that the USA actually became involved in the war. This decision followed Germany's resumption of submarine attacks on civilian ships, and the revelation of a German plan to invade the USA from Mexico. However, at the end of the war, the US public showed little interest in the outside world, turning away from membership of the League of Nations in 1919 despite President Wilson's best efforts. Part of this attitude was due to war-weariness; however, US isolationism was also linked with increased negativity about immigration.



During the 1920s, there was an increasing tendency to question the merits of large-scale immigration. There was a perception that the 'land of opportunity' was becoming overcrowded and that only 'suitable' immigrants should be accepted.

Many of those who had come in search of the American Dream now believed that others should not be given the same opportunity. When immigrants arrived in New York, they were sent to Ellis Island and subjected to a difficult and searching census to determine whether they fitted the ambiguously defined criteria of a 'true' American. If migrants didn't fit these expectations, they were sent back to their countries of origin at the expense of the shipping lines.

This isolationist attitude became entrenched with the introduction of the Immigration Act of 1924, which reduced immigration according to country of origin. In order to maintain 'desirable' immigration, the US government only allowed only 2 per cent of people of any one nationality to migrate, based on their proportion of the population in the 1890 US census. This greatly reduced immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe and excluded Asian immigration altogether.

SOURCE 7.07

Russian family travelling to the USA on the *Orbita*, 1921.

DID YOU KNOW?

Immigrants at Ellis Island were given a census that asked if they were deformed, if they had at least US\$30 and if they were polygamists. If immigrants gave answers the Inspectors didn't approve of, they could be sent back to their home country.

SKILLS: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Explain how immigration and immigration policies changed in the 1920s. How did this reflect attitudes at the time?

SKILLS: BELIEFS AND VALUES

1. Explain what values might be connected to isolationism and promotion of 'suitable' immigration.
2. To what extent do you believe the move to restrict immigration in the 1920s was driven by racial considerations?

SKILLS: HISTORICAL QUESTIONS

Use the information you have read to create two questions: one simple and one complex.

Example:

1. Simple: Who was concerned about immigration?
2. Complex: What was the relationship between immigration and isolationism?

Attempt to answer both questions.

EXTENSION

Research an individual or family that migrated to the USA during this time period: identify why they moved to America, what they hoped to accomplish and whether they were successful.

This material could be presented in the form of a eulogy or an obituary to mark the death and celebrate the life of someone who brought their family to America.



PROHIBITION
PRIMARY SOURCES

PRIM AND PROPER PROHIBITION

During the nineteenth century, there were many groups opposed to the sale and consumption of alcohol. This movement, known as the Temperance Movement, began by campaigning on the dangers of alcohol, before moving on to support a total prohibition on selling alcoholic drinks. Many of these temperance societies were church groups concerned about social issues, such as health problems, destitution and crime. There were also women's temperance groups, such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). Their main concerns were domestic abuse—physical, sexual and economic—that resulted from the overuse of alcohol. Women's temperance societies had also opposed slavery in the decades before the Civil War and supported women's suffrage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

DID YOU KNOW?

The 18th Amendment to the US Constitution became law in 1920, making it illegal to buy, make or sell liquor. This law ushered in the era known as Prohibition between 1920 and 1933. Some people stockpiled huge supplies of alcohol before the law came into effect, while others drank patent medicines that were still allowed to have alcohol in them in order to keep drinking.

PROHIBITION

Temperance groups helped create Prohibition through slogans, and with support from groups as varied as churches and the Ku Klux Klan. They emphasised the waste of resources in alcohol production and even tapped into anti-German sentiment by highlighting the fact that many brewers were German. In January 1919 the 18th Amendment was added to the US Constitution. In January 1920, the amendment was implemented and became law. It banned the sale and purchase of alcohol, except for sacramental wine and medicinal alcohol; however, it didn't ban people from drinking alcohol.

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What figures are being represented in this image?
2. Discuss the purpose of using a genie in this image. (Consider symbolism, racism or the socio-historical context).
3. Consider why the cartoonist might have thought that women's temperance unions were making a dangerous alliance between Prohibition and women's suffrage (the right to vote).

ACTIVITY



SOURCE 7.08

'The genie of intolerance: A dangerous ally for the cause of women's suffrage.' Political cartoon from the satirical magazine *Puck*, 1915.

AMENDMENT XVIII

Section 1.

After one year from the ratification of this article, the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.

SOURCE 7.09

The 19th Amendment Act 1920. *Legal Information Institute, '18th Amendment Act'* <https://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/amendmentxviii>

BOOTLEGGING AND SPEAKEASIES

The great intentions of Prohibition quickly faded. Although some people stopped drinking, many others turned towards illegal methods: overbuying sacramental wines, getting fake prescriptions for medicinal whiskey or brandy, or drinking in speakeasies. Criminal groups manufactured bootlegged whiskey and sold it in their speakeasies, and the profits helped to make crime bosses and gangsters hugely powerful. It has been argued that the amount of alcohol consumed during Prohibition exceeded the amount consumed in the decades before or after the period of restriction. However, this claim is difficult to verify. In the end, Prohibition lasted from 1920 to 1933 and was generally seen by historians as ineffective as it did not necessarily reduce alcohol consumption—but it did increase the crime rate. In *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920s*, published in 1931, Frederick Lewis Allen argued that there was a strong link between Prohibition and the activities of gangsters such as Al Capone.³

DID YOU KNOW?

Bootlegged whiskey was the name for illegal whiskey. Sometimes it was also called 'moonshine' whiskey. This illegal alcohol was drunk in 'speakeasies', which were hidden bars where drinkers could buy alcohol during Prohibition.

SOURCE 7.10

Confiscated materials for making bootleg whiskey.



The Prohibition period coincided with the Jazz Age and inspired many popular songs such as *Kentucky Bootlegger*, *Moonshine*, *Prohibition is a Failure* and *Intoxicated Rat*, which ridiculed Prohibition or celebrated the ways in which it was contravened.

ACTIVITIES

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Who wanted Prohibition in America? Why?
2. Discuss three problems that arose once Prohibition was in place.
3. To what extent did the criminalising of alcohol have an impact on criminal behaviour? What impact might Prohibition have had on ordinary people?

EXTENSION

Debate the topic: 'Prohibition was a serious attempt to make life better for ordinary Americans.'

STEREOTYPES AND SEGREGATION

DID YOU KNOW?

The song 'Strange Fruit' was originally written as a poem by Abel Meeropol in response to the lynch murders of Thomas Shipp and Abram Smith. It was published in 1937. Meeropol then put it to music and Billie Holiday sang it in 1939.

'STRANGE FRUIT,' SONG BY BILLIE HOLIDAY IN 1939:

'Southern trees bear strange fruit,
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,
Black bodies swaying in the Southern breeze,
Strange fruits hanging from the poplar trees.'⁴

JIM CROW LAWS

While many people were living the American Dream during the 1920s, the African American population saw little of the progress and prosperity of the post-war era. Since the 1870s, most African Americans—particularly in the southern states—were subject to laws of segregation known as 'Jim Crow' Laws. These

MEDIA TASK

Listen to 'Strange Fruit,' sung by Billie Holiday. Discuss how the song connects to the social context, especially the historical time period, discrimination in southern states, and racism.

ACTIVITY



LISTEN TO 'STRANGE FRUIT'

were laws created between 1877 and the 1960s to segregate African Americans from the Caucasian population. Until the 1920s, approximately 90 per cent of all African Americans lived under Jim Crow Laws because they resided in the South.

In 1896, a part-African American man named Homer Plessy brought a case against the state of Louisiana over segregation on trains. Plessy argued that segregation violated the Constitution, which guaranteed all Americans equality under the law. The panel of judges found that segregation was legal as long as facilities were 'separate, but equal.'¹⁵ This decision enshrined segregation practices, with separate facilities for non-whites, including water taps, toilets, hospitals, schools, railway cars and restaurants. Although facilities were separate, they were rarely equal.

SEGREGATION
PRIMARY SOURCES

left SOURCE 7.11

A restaurant for 'colored' cotton workers, 1937.

right SOURCE 7.12

A theatre for 'colored people.' Mississippi, 1937.



SOURCE 7.13

A man drinking at a 'colored' water cooler. Oklahoma City, 1939.

➔ SOURCE 7.14

Ulrich B. Phillips, 'The Central Theme of Southern History,' *The American Historical Review*, vol. 34, no. 1 (Oct., 1928), 31.

DID YOU KNOW?

There is some confusion about the origins of the term 'Jim Crow.' The most common explanation is that Jim Crow was a character in a popular song performed by a white minstrel entertainer Daddy Rice, who performed in black face. The character Jim Crow was depicted as a silly, clumsy African American and was an object of ridicule. 'Jim Crow' became a derogatory term for African Americans. As segregation laws were introduced throughout the south, they became known as 'Jim Crow' Laws.

WHITE PEOPLE IN THE SOUTH

Yet it is a land with a unity despite its diversity, with a people having common joys and common sorrows, and, above all, as to the white folk a people with a common resolve indomitably maintained that it shall be and remain a white man's country. The consciousness of a function in these premises, whether expressed with the frenzy of a demagogue or maintained with a patrician's quietude, is the cardinal test of a Southerner and the central theme of Southern history.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Find definitions for these words: resolve, frenzy, demagogue, indomitably, patrician, quietude, cardinal.
2. What is Ulrich B. Phillips saying in this quote?
3. Do you think this statement is an accurate reflection of views of the South in the 1920s and 1930s? Discuss with reference to sources 7.11, 7.12 and 7.13.

NORTH AND SOUTH

The difficulties of life for many African Americans led to the 'Great Migration,' where large numbers of people moved from their segregated rural lives in the South to the urban cities of the North. It started during World War I when African Americans began to work in factories in northern states, and continued well into the 1970s. By the 1920s, the New York suburb of Harlem was home to over 200 000 African Americans. In the northern cities, there were more opportunities for African Americans to become involved in political, financial, social and cultural life.

Racism was still a facet of life, but it wasn't as institutionalised as in the southern states. Segregation in southern states still applied to black entertainers, who were becoming increasingly popular in bars and casinos. They could perform on stage but they were banned from drinking with the guests or sitting in the audience to watch other performers. They were not even allowed to walk through the front doors of the venues where they performed. As Sammy Davis Junior said of performing in Las Vegas, even in the 1950s, 'we had to leave through the kitchen with the garbage.'

➔ SOURCE 7.15

African-American men in the lobby of the 'Chicago colored YMCA', 1915.



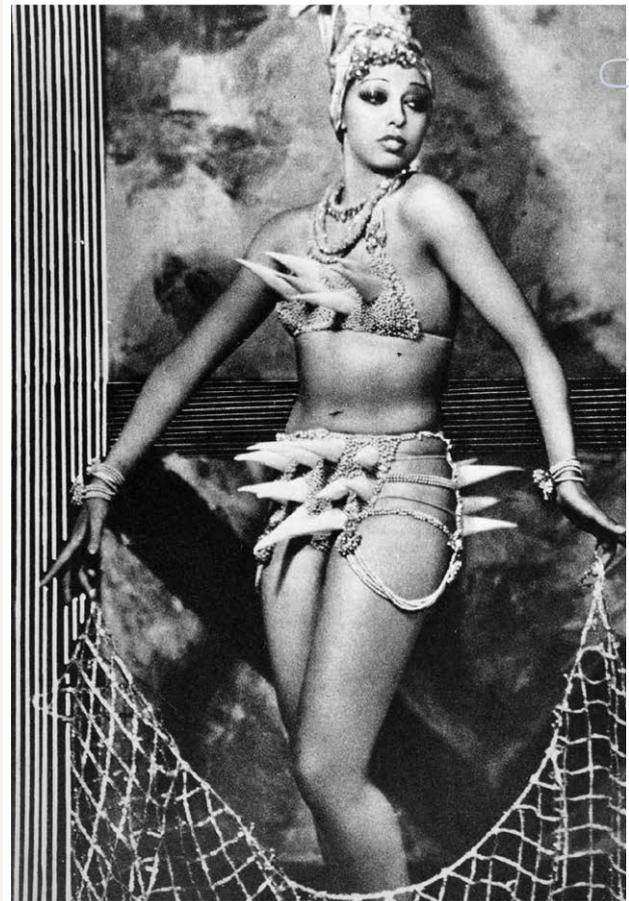
HARLEM RENAISSANCE MOVEMENT

There was a flowering of black culture among the many African Americans who gathered in Harlem in the 1920s. This was called the 'Harlem Renaissance' or sometimes 'the New Negro movement' after the book by Alain LeRoy Locke.

Harlem was a popular destination for African Americans migrating north and they often ended up exploring avenues of cultural expression that had previously been closed to them. Plays were written and performed without 'blackface' stereotypes; jazz musicians such as Duke Ellington became popular and celebrated for their musical ability; dancers such as Josephine Baker became well known; and there was an increase in the range of books and magazines being published.

However, some African Americans were concerned that much of this cultural development was for white people—for example, books published through white publishers, and music performed for white audiences—who saw the African Americans as 'other' and 'primitive' rather than treating them as cultural equals.

 **SOURCE 7.16** Josephine Baker.



ACTIVITY

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. Use the material above and further research to explain the significance of the Harlem Renaissance. Why was it so important? Consider the time period in writing your answer.

SKILLS: BELIEFS AND VALUES

African Americans were not equal to whites in the northern states, but they were treated with more tolerance and respect than in the southern states. Can you explain the reasons for this different treatment? Why do you think so many African Americans remained in southern states despite this difference?

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What were some of the main features of American life during the 1920s?
2. How were these features reflected in popular forms of entertainment?
3. Imagine that you were alive during this time. Pick the cultural area from that era that you would be most interested in. Write a diary entry about it, explaining why it is so important to you.



DID YOU KNOW?

D.W. Griffith's film about the Ku Klux Klan, *Birth of a Nation*, was the first twelve-reel film made in the USA. It goes for 133 minutes, with each reel lasting eleven minutes. It was also the first film to be shown at the White House, under president Woodrow Wilson.

THE KU KLUX KLAN

Life for African Americans who stayed in the southern states was made more difficult by the renewed popularity of a white supremacist organisation called the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). The KKK had first gained prominence in the 1860s but declined in strength once the governments of southern states took back control of their states after the end of the post-Civil War Reconstruction period. The KKK movement revived and became more open in the early twentieth century, helped by Thomas Dixon Jr's 1905 book *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan* and the 1915 silent film version of it by D.W. Griffith, called *Birth of a Nation*.

The new movement started in Georgia in 1915 and used recruitment drives in the 1920s to increase numbers and power. This version of the KKK was not just anti-black—it was also anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish and anti-foreigner. The KKK used threats and violence to ensure the status quo, including leading lynch mobs and planting burning crosses near the homes of people they wanted to intimidate. Their numbers began to dwindle during the Great Depression and their decline continued after World War II. However there are still groups today who call themselves the KKK and promote racist agendas.

➔ SOURCE 7.17

In 1930, Abram Smith and Thomas Shipp were accused of murdering a white man and raping a white woman. They were dragged out of jail, beaten and lynched. A boy named James Cameron was also accused of the crimes but escaped lynching (see Source 7.18).



⬇ SOURCE 7.18

'Man who was almost lynched',
Ebony, 35.6 (April 1980) 154.

JAMES CAMERON RECALLING HOW HE WAS ALMOST LYNCHED

One end of the rope snaked out and sailed up out of the mob and fell across the limb of the tree. But before the crowd could hang me, it happened! A voice rang out above the deafening roar of the mob. It was an echo-like voice that seemed to come from some place far, far away. It was a feminine voice, sweet, clear, but unlike any voice ever heard ... 'Take this boy back. He had nothing to do with any raping or killing!' That was all the voice said. Abruptly, impossibly, a deadening, deafening, shattering quiet settled down over the mob as if they had been struck dumb ... I could feel the hands that had beaten me unmercifully removing the rope from around my neck.

CREATIVE WRITING

Imagine that you are the member of the lynch mob who said James Cameron wasn't involved. Write a short monologue explaining your actions and how you felt at this event. Make reference to specific laws, attitudes and conditions that related to African Americans in the South in the 1930s.

ACTIVITY



THE KU KLUX KLAN

THE FIGHT FOR RIGHTS

From the period before the Civil War, there had been African American voices—and some white voices—raised against the unequal treatment of black and white Americans. Support for a challenge to the segregation laws increased early in the twentieth century. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded in 1909 by W.E.B. Du Bois and Ida B. Wells-Barnett to fight for civil rights. Their first focus was a race riot in Springfield in 1908, spurred on by the (unsuccessful) attempt of a mob of white men to lynch two African Americans accused of a violent attack. NAACP membership grew quickly from 9000 in 1917 to 90 000 by 1919. Unlike their opposition, who used violence to enforce segregation and discrimination, the NAACP was largely non-violent, although still determined to create a more equal society. The NAACP used lobbying, legal cases, peaceful protests and publicity in order to make small incremental changes during the 1920s and 1930s, which paved the way for bigger civil rights changes later.

Black leaders such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay and Zora Neale Hurston also used the written word to challenge the inequalities of American life and, specifically, to target segregation. Du Bois' 1924 book *The Gift of Black Folk: The Negroes in the Making of America* highlighted the achievements and contributions of African Americans to the economy and culture of the nation since the 17th century.

DID YOU KNOW?

Many southern states had anti-miscegenation laws. This meant that black and white people could not get married to each other. This didn't change until 1967 and the case *Loving v. Virginia*, which led to anti-miscegenation laws being overturned.

SOURCE 7.19

W. E. B Du Bois, 'Of Work and Wealth,' *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil*, 1920; EXCERPTS <http://americainclass.org/sources/becomingmodern/divisions/text2/duboisstlouis.pdf>

THE DARK REALITY OF RACISM

What did they see? They saw nine and one-half millions of human beings. They saw the spawn of slavery, ignorant by law and by devilry, crushed by insult and debauched by systematic and criminal injustice. They saw a people whose helpless women have been raped by thousands and whose men lynched by hundreds in the face of a sneering world. They saw a people with heads bloody, but unbowed, working faithfully at wages fifty per cent lower than the wages of the nation and under conditions which shame civilization, saving homes, training children, hoping against hope. They saw the greatest industrial miracle of modern days—slaves transforming themselves to freemen and climbing out of perdition by their own efforts, despite the most contemptible opposition God ever saw—they saw all this and what they saw the distraught employers of America saw, too.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Who are the nine and one-half millions described in this excerpt?
2. What conditions do they face in their working life?
3. Research the author of this piece, W.E.B Du Bois. Why might his background have influenced his writing?
4. Why is the phrase 'and what they saw the distraught employers of America saw too' so significant and so ominous?

DID YOU KNOW?

Although Charles Darwin wrote *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, many of the key controversies about his ideas—such as evolution through ‘natural selection’ and ‘survival of the fittest’—occurred in the USA in the 1920s and 1930s with the eugenics movement and the teaching of evolution.

OF MONKEYS AND MEN

CHARLES DARWIN: ‘We civilised men on the other hand, do our utmost to check the process of elimination; we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed, and the sick; we institute poor-laws... The weak members of civilised society propagate their kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man.’⁶

GENE GENIE

Social Darwinism, or eugenics, was the theory that societies were being damaged by allowing weak members to survive and breed. It had widespread currency in the USA during the 1920s and 1930s. The theory connected to the idealised American Dream and fears about undesirable immigration. Two prominent eugenics groups were the Eugenics Record Office and the American Breeders’ Association. Eugenics groups used surveys and researched family trees to investigate ‘bad’ genetics. Inferior genes were held responsible for pauperism, feeble-mindedness, alcoholism, rebelliousness, vagrancy, criminality and prostitution.

African Americans and Native Americans were the main targets for eugenicists, but they also targeted immigrants from southern and eastern Europe and from Asia. Eugenicians were concerned that poor uneducated people with bad genes were breeding freely, while the birth rate for intelligent wealthy families was falling.

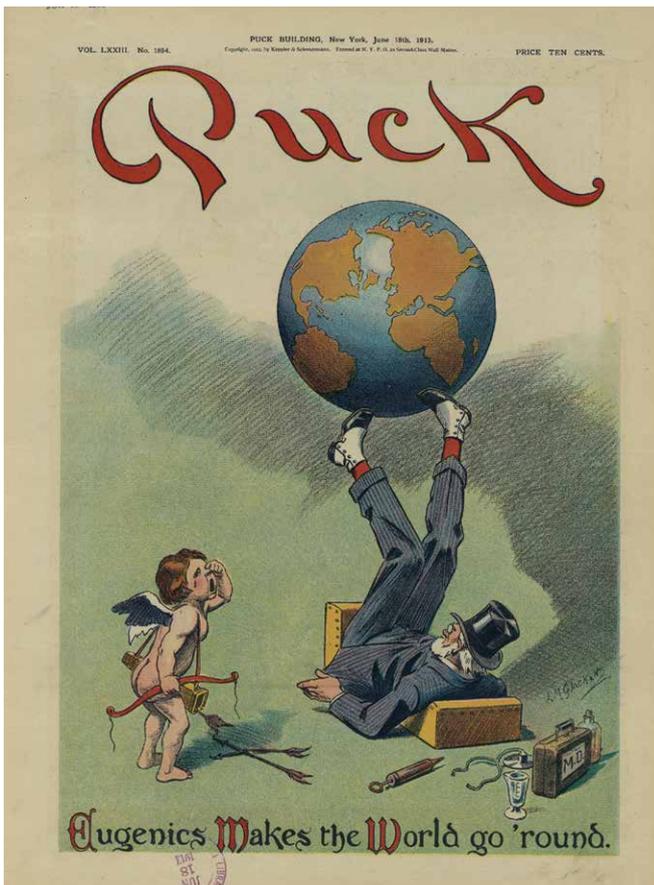
Eugenic research led to the legalisation of programs to sterilise the ‘unfit’—and eventually over 65 000 people in the US would be sterilised without their consent. Some eugenicists were also against interracial marriages and other ‘unsuitable’ marriages that mated ‘good’ and ‘bad’ genes, as it



EUGENICS ARCHIVE

SOURCE 7.20

‘Eugenics makes the world go ‘round,’ from *Puck* magazine, 1930.



FLAWS WITH EUGENICS RESEARCH

Skewed understanding of genetics.

Used anecdotal evidence rather than scientifically collected data.

FLAWS WITH EUGENICS RESEARCH

Misunderstood the roles of nature and nurture in child development.

Subjective rather than objective reports.

was believed that their children would be inferior. To promote 'good' families, eugenic groups had 'Fitter Family' competitions at local state fairs. By the late 1920s eugenics was a popular subject at most universities. However, by the late 1930s eugenics had been discredited. News that Nazi atrocities were being committed in the name of eugenics led to the disbanding of most US eugenics associations as World War II approached.

Writers, playwrights and filmmakers often reflected—consciously or unconsciously—the values of the period in relation to eugenics. The celebrated author William Faulkner often portrayed the evils of racism in his novels. However, in the novel *Go Down Moses*, he appears to oppose marriage between black and white Americans, and in practice he often supported segregation. In *Tobacco Road*, novelist Erskine Caldwell drew on eugenics in his portrayal of the hopeless situation of poor white farmers in the state of Georgia during the Depression.

➔ SOURCE 7.21

Physical Culture magazine, 1930s. The heading at bottom left reads 'Shall We Breed or Sterilize Defectives?'



BUCK V. BELL

Sterilisation

Seventeen-year-old Carrie Buck was chosen to be the first person sterilised under Virginia's new Eugenic Sterilization Act of 1924. The state turned this into a legal case to confirm the constitutional validity of the Act. Carrie was chosen because both she and her mother, Emma, were in an asylum—the Virginia Colony for Epileptics and Feeble-Minded—and her daughter Vivian was illegitimate, making Carrie look both feeble-minded and promiscuous.

The case

Carrie Buck and her mother were described as feeble-minded by experts who hadn't even met them, while her daughter Vivian was labelled 'feeble-minded'⁷ at seven months of age. Carrie's alleged 'promiscuity' was based on the fact that she had an illegitimate child; however, she actually became pregnant after being raped by the nephew of her foster parents. Carrie's lawyer, Irving Whitehead, called no witnesses for her defence and gave her no opportunity to defend herself. She was forcibly sterilised in 1927.

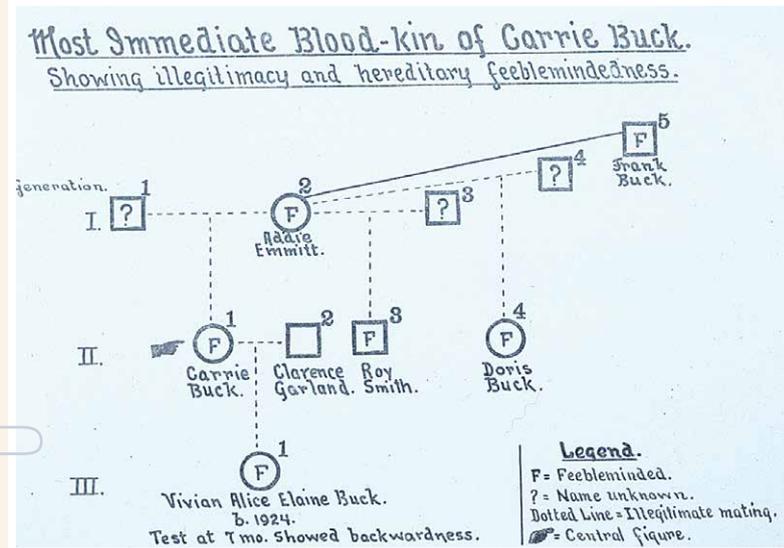


⬆ SOURCE 7.22

Carrie Buck and her mother Emma Buck at the Virginia Colony for Epileptics and Feeble-minded, 1924.

SOURCE 7.23

Carrie Buck's family tree showing 'illegitimacy and feeble-mindedness,' 1924.



SOURCE 7.24

Buck v. Bell Legal Information
Institute <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/274/200>

MR JUSTICE HOLMES OPINION IN *BUCK V. BELL*

Carrie Buck is a feeble-minded white woman ... She is the daughter of a feeble-minded mother in the same institution, and the mother of an illegitimate feeble-minded child ... the Commonwealth is supporting in various institutions many defective persons who, if now discharged, would become a menace, but, if incapable of procreating, might be discharged with safety and become self-supporting with benefit to themselves and to society ... Three generations of imbeciles are enough.

Right or very, very, wrong?

Both Carrie and Emma Buck were in an asylum for the feeble-minded, not because of their intelligence, but because Carrie was an unmarried mother—which was considered shameful—and Emma had been abandoned by her husband. Vivian, Carrie's daughter—who was described as feeble-minded when she was a baby—was later a B-grade student, which suggests that she wasn't 'feeble-minded' at all. There was also no sign of Carrie's alleged promiscuity, and she later married when she was released from the asylum.

ACTIVITIES

SKILLS: CONSEQUENCES

Explain the consequences of sterilisation, focusing both on the *Buck v. Bell* case and the wider issue. Write a short paragraph of 100–200 words.

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Explain the significance of Source 7.23. Given what we have read about *Buck v. Bell*, how accurate is it?
2. Write a paragraph of 200–300 words analysing Justice Holmes's perspective in Source 7.24. Consider his argument (for or against sterilisation), his reasons why, and what values he is demonstrating through his opinions.

EXTENSION

Using the Eugenics Image Archive Website, write a report on the history of the eugenics movement in America. Do you believe that support for eugenics in the 1920s and 1930s was predominantly stimulated by racism or by economic insecurity?

CREATIONISM V. EVOLUTION

The growing acceptance of Darwin's theories challenged the deeply religious values of many Americans. The theory of evolution was taught in many American universities and included in textbooks; however, schoolteachers in fifteen states were banned from teaching it. In 1925, this ban was challenged by John Scopes, a science teacher in Dayton, Tennessee, assisted by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). It became a battle between the lawyers: Prosecutor William Jennings Bryan, a three-time presidential candidate who thought evolution went against the Bible, and Clarence Darrow, a renowned agnostic. Darrow's aim was for Scopes to plead guilty and appeal to a higher court so the Supreme Court of the United States could remove the ban in all states. Although their appeal was unsuccessful, this case was a setback for anti-evolutionists, as ultimately only two states kept the ban.

It is ironic that many of the people who opposed the teaching or preaching of the theory of evolution were also the same people who accepted the ideas of eugenics and Darwin's theory of survival of the fittest.

WOMEN AND THE VOTE

Women had been campaigning for the right to vote in the United States since 1848. The key suffragette group was the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union was also active in the campaign. The pressure for women's votes was often associated with the temperance movement, as both ideals were related to the welfare of women and children.

Despite the work of these organisations, there was considerable opposition to women getting the vote. Patriarchal males feared that giving the vote to women would bring unwelcome change and undermine the social order. The liquor lobby feared the influence of suffragettes on Prohibition, and some wealthy women were concerned that the vote would take women outside the boundary of 'proper feminine behaviour'. The National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS), created in 1911, campaigned against giving the vote to women on the grounds that they would be less likely engage in charity and community work if they had the vote. NAOWS published a newsletter called 'Woman Patriot,' which challenged progressive ideas about women's roles.

During World War I, many suffragettes stopped protesting to help the war effort, and some historians believe that this demonstration of nationalistic spirit led to women being given the vote. On 26 August 1920 the Nineteenth Amendment was added to the US Constitution, allowing women to have the vote. NAWSA disbanded as a suffragette movement, but reformed as the League of Women Voters, for although women now had the vote they were still restricted in many ways: wages, marital rights, sexual discrimination and legal protection.

Several of the most active suffragettes were also writers or journalists who used their pens to spread the cause for the female vote. Among them were Alice Stone Blackwell, author of *Lucy Stone: Pioneer of Woman's Rights* (published 1930), and Harriot Stanton Blatch, a major contributor to *History of Women's Suffrage* (published 1922).

ACTIVITY

SKILLS: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

1. Explain how Darwin's ideas on evolution were approached in the 1920s and 1930s. Discuss continuity (how ideas stayed the same) and change (how they differed).
2. How can you explain how some people supported Darwin's 'survival of the fittest' theories yet also opposed evolutionism?



WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE
PRIMARY SOURCES



↑ SOURCE 7.25

Lucy Branham, suffragette, 1919.

SKILLS: PERSPECTIVES

The National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS) was created by women. In 200 words, compare and contrast their views and values with those of the suffragettes

Why do you think many suffragettes put protesting aside during World War I? How did this help their cause?

EXTENSION

Create a poster about the Suffragettes. Include a timeline of the women's suffrage movement, biographies of two key figures, and a flowchart showing key ideas and actions.

Create a dialogue between a woman committed to the idea of votes for women and a member of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage. Each woman should speak five times and should present the arguments used by 'her side.'

SOURCE 7.26

The Kid was a 1921 silent comedy directed by and starring Charlie Chaplin.



SOURCE 7.27

The Sheik was a 1921 silent romance starring Rudolph Valentino, directed by George Melford.



MUCH ADO ABOUT THE MASSES

JACK ROBIN IN *THE JAZZ SINGER*, 1927: 'We in the show business have our religion too—on every day, the show must go on!'⁸

RADIO AND CINEMA

Radio broadcasting began in the United States in 1920 with station KDKA, but quickly spread throughout the country, encouraging the mass adoption of radios in homes. Radios allowed people to listen to a range of music, plays, news reports and sporting events within the comfort of their own homes. Cinema was almost as popular, with audiences for screen idols such as Rudolph Valentino, Mary Pickford and Charlie Chaplin growing rapidly. Cinema began as the era of silent films, where the action was accompanied by live piano music played in movie halls. It was only in 1927 with *The Jazz Singer* that there were 'talkies' for the first time: movies with sound.

This was also the era of the Charleston dance, and the increasing popularity of jazz. Jazz was primarily an African American style of music that incorporated pianos with the traditional brass orchestra.

FAVOURITES AND FAME

New technology was also allowing adventurous people to test the boundaries of human endeavour. The Indianapolis 500 was already an important event on the car-racing calendar, and ocean liners were crossing the Atlantic at record speeds. Charles Lindbergh was immortalised for his solo flight from New York to Paris in 1927. His widespread fame was made possible through the new technology of radio, with millions of listeners following his every move.



SOURCE 7.26

Charles Lindbergh.

HIGH CULTURE

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD IN *THE GREAT GATSBY*: 'Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then but that's no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms further... And one fine morning—'

ART

In the 1920s, the US artistic landscape was influenced by a number of key movements: Dadaism, Surrealism and Art Deco. Dadaism, the earliest form, popularised in New York in 1915, was a criticism of former styles and challenged the conception of what was art. Surrealists also challenged artistic norms by including increasingly bizarre images in their artworks. Art Deco was the style most strongly connected to the Roaring Twenties, with its focus on machine-age technology combined with older patterns to show luxury, glamour and futuristic elegance. Among the painters who represented different approaches to painting in this period were Grant Wood—famous for his rural scenes and characters—and exponents of American Realism such as George Bellows and William Glackens.



📍 SOURCE 7.28

Young Lady with Gloves by Tamara de Lempicka, 1930. An example of Art Deco.

📍 SOURCE 7.29

Fountain by Marcel Duchamp, 1917, is an example of Dadaism.

📍 SOURCE 7.30

The Treachery of Images by Rene Magritte, 1928–29, is an example of Surrealism. The French writing translates as 'This is not a pipe.'

LITERATURE

Americans were becoming increasingly well educated and literate and many people read classical literature, as this was seen as a key element of a good education. However, magazines were also very popular with their serialised stories and advertisements. This period, with its emphasis on luxury, glamour and living the American Dream was epitomised in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, although whether Fitzgerald was praising or satirising this lifestyle is still open to debate. The Newbery Medal to celebrate children's literature was first awarded in 1922, and the evergreen title *The Voyages of Dr. Dolittle*, by Hugh Lofting, won the award in 1923.

Other writers provided a bleaker vision of the era, depicting the world's loss of values after World War I. *The Waste Land*, by poet T.S. Eliot characterised the disillusionment of the post-war period, as did Ernest Hemingway's anti-war novel *A Farewell to Arms*, published in 1929.

ISADORA DUNCAN, DANCER

Life

Angela Isadora Duncan was born in California on 27 May 1877. She joined Augustin Daly's dance company but was unhappy with the structured



moves and ended up travelling around Europe teaching her own dance style and starting small dance schools. She lived an unconventional life, having three children out of wedlock. She was bisexual, an atheist and supported communism. She died on 14 September 1927 when her long scarf got caught in a car tyre and broke her neck.

Dance style

Isadora Duncan is famed for her different approach to dance. When she first started performing, dance styles had a very structured choreography, such as in ballet with stiff formalised moves. Her dance style focused on naturalised dance movements, inspired by classic Greek art and American freedom.

SOURCE 7.31

Dancer Isadora Duncan.

ACTIVITY

SKILLS: CONSTRUCTING ARGUMENTS

Many artists—such as Isadora Duncan, Alain LeRoy Locke and Charlie Chaplin—seem to have been controversial in some way or another. Was this key to their success, or was it something that held them back? Construct an argument in 100–200 words that considers their cultural and historical context.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Identify the three different art movements from the 1920s and 1930s, and explain their key features.
2. Compare and contrast the three art movements. Look at Sources 7.28–7.30 for ideas about similarities.
3. Consider the importance of Isadora Duncan in changing the dance scene. Why was she so important?

CREATIVE RESPONSE

Choose one of the art movements and create your own piece of art to reflect it. Annotate your piece to explain how it fits within the chosen art movement.

OSCAR MICHEAUX: FORGOTTEN FILMMAKER

OSCAR MICHEAUX, *THE HOMESTEADER* (BELIEVED TO BE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL): ‘He had no heritage, had Jean Baptiste. His father had given him only the French name that was his, for his father had been poor—but this instant belongs elsewhere. His heritage, then, had been his indefatigable will; his firm determination to make his way; his great desire to make good.’¹⁰

Life

Oscar Devereaux Micheaux was born to a farming family descended from slaves in Metropolis, Illinois, on 2 January 1884. Micheaux left home early and moved to the city to start a number of small but profitable businesses, raising enough money to buy some land and live self-sufficiently as a homesteader. He married Orlean McCracken and they had a child, but the marriage didn’t last.

Micheaux moved into writing, and wrote seven novels. One of his books attracted interest from a movie studio, but the film wasn’t made. This inspired him to create his own company: Micheaux Film and Book Company of Sioux City, Chicago. Micheaux made his first film, *The Homesteader*, based on his novel and then went on to create over forty films, both silent and talkies. He died on 25 March 1951.

Black Hollywood

While the fledgling movie industry in Hollywood easily gave in to stereotypes about African Americans—belittling them as inferior, using white actors in blackface or indicating their status as slaves or threats—there were other groups working to challenge these ideas. ‘Black Hollywood’ was made up of black filmmakers, performers and writers who wanted to express



SOURCE 7.32

Oscar Micheaux.

DID YOU KNOW?

Oscar Micheaux was awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1987.

their own view of African Americans on the screen. As mentioned above, one of the key figures was Oscar Micheaux, who wrote, produced, directed and acted in his own films. Black filmmakers were often able to distribute their films to segregated theatres, as these 'race films' were usually shown solely to black audiences. Normally, race films would only be shown at matinees or after midnight, but the appeal of seeing heroic, interesting, educated black characters on screen made the films popular and profitable.



WITHIN OUR GATES

Within our Gates

D.W. Griffith's 1915 film *Birth of a Nation* depicted the Ku Klux Klan as heroes who defended white women from sexually predatory black men. African Americans were played in blackface by white actors and the sexually threatening scenes usually involved black males suggesting marriage, which the white females rebuffed. Their white male protectors dealt with the suggestion with beatings, intimidation and lynching. In response to this and other racial violence, Micheaux created *Within our Gates* in 1920. This showed the more realistic situation of Sylvia Landry, whose adoptive father was falsely accused of murder and lynched along with his wife. Sylvia herself was almost raped by a man, played in whiteface, until he realised she was his biological daughter.

SOURCE 7.33

A newspaper advertisement for *Within our Gates*, 1920.

NOT MERELY A COMMON MOVING PICTURE
A SCREEN MASTERPIECE

"Within Our Gates"

ONE DAY ONLY FEATURING, EVELYN PREER SPECIAL MUSIC
SUPPORTED BY AN ALL STAR COLORED CAST

UNION HALL, KENT & AURORA AVES-
"THE LYNCHING EVIL"
WHO KILLED PHILIP GIRDLSTONE? MANAGEMENT, J. HOMER GOINS
8000 FEET OF SENSATIONAL REALISM 8000

There was a roar, a blinding flash—and it was done! The planter lay dead at his feet, while his quivering hand held a smoking revolver! And yet he had fired no shot! It was all so sudden, so vague—but who killed the man? He raised his eyes after a time and chanced to look toward the window—and therein stood "Eph," "the tattler," whom the blacks called a "white folks nigger," eyes wide, lips accusing. "You did that," said he—and the next moment was gone. The black man on the inside heard his footsteps die in the distance as he sped toward the village to tell the townspeople that he, Jasper Landry, had killed the planter! And this being Mississippi, he knew there would be no trial—only the rope, the torch, the flames of Hell—and death!

Two hours later Jasper Landry and his family were hid away in the swamp while bloodhounds and a thousand men were scouring the neighborhood, crying out in diabolical tones for their blood. Two weeks passed—and starvation compelled one to venture out in quest of food—then the capture, and—
Can you imagine the fate of the Landrys? And after you have visioned the very worst fate you can think of, you have not imagined the half that you will see in, "WITHIN OUR GATES."

Monday Evening
SPECIAL NOTICE! Owing to the peculiar nature of this picture no theatre could be secured that would exhibit it, therefore we were forced to do the next best thing and use our own building.

ADMISSION 50 CENTS

THE PLAY OF THE HOUR
ALL RECORDS BROKEN
DONT MISS IT

Oscar Micheaux's
**Within
Our Gates**
A Story of the
Negro

July 12, 8:30 p. m.

ACTIVITIES

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What cultural achievements did Oscar Micheaux accomplish?
2. Why was Black Hollywood so significant?
3. Watch a short section of *Birth of a Nation* and *Within our Gates* (both of them are available online). Make a table comparing the different representations of white and black people.

ESSAY

'The popular culture of the USA during the 1920s was a direct reflection of the social and economic situation during this period.'

To what extent do you agree? (Your answer should reflect material in this chapter but also additional research on American society and culture during the 1920s.)

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

E.Y. HARBURG, LYRICIST: 'We thought American business was the Rock of Gibraltar. We were the prosperous nation, and nothing could stop us now. A brownstone house was forever. You gave it to your kids and they put marble fronts on it. There was a feeling of continuity. If you made it, it was there forever. Suddenly the big dream exploded. The impact was unbelievable.'¹¹

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

The Wall Street Crash on 29 October 1929 is generally accepted as the beginning of the Great Depression. The glory days of the 1920s ended with a bang. The New York Stock Exchange on Wall Street crashed and the economic situation in America went downhill rapidly as the country headed into depression. The glamour, opportunities and economic prosperity fizzled, with unemployment hitting record levels and thousands of people losing their homes. Banks foreclosed on businesses and farms, and those that survived suffered sharp declines in profits.

The impact of economic disaster certainly became apparent after October 1929, but the seeds of the Great Depression had been sown from the mid-1920s, when over-borrowing and speculation in land and shares had built an economy based on shaky foundations. The impact of the Great Depression continued well into the 1930s, and the US economy only truly became healthy again during World War II.



DID YOU KNOW?

E.Y. Harburg found the Great Depression a relief as he turned from working in business to selling songs and poems. He wrote the lyrics for the songs in *The Wizard of Oz*, as well as the hugely successful song 'Brother, can you spare a dime?' which became an 'anthem' of the Great Depression.

📍 SOURCE 7.34

Photo by Dorothea Lange showing an ex-tenant farmer on relief grant in California, 1937.

WHY DID IT HAPPEN? COMPARING HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

There have been many reasons put forward about why the Great Depression occurred.

➔ SOURCE 7.35

David Kennedy, Freedom from Fear (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 20.

DAVID KENNEDY

Economic disparities between the agricultural and industrial sectors.

➔ SOURCE 7.36

Milton Friedman and Anna Jacobsen Schwartz, A Monetary History of the United States 1867–1960 (Princeton University, 1963), 306.

MILTON FRIEDMAN AND ANNA SCHWARTZ

Partly ... the stock market crash was a symptom of the underlying forces ... But, partly also, its occurrence must have helped deepen the contraction ... It is commonly believed that it reduced the willingness of both consumers and business enterprises to spend ...

➔ SOURCE 7.37

Peter Temin, Lessons from the Great Depression (Hong Kong: MIT Press, 1989), 1.

PETER TEMIN

The origins of the Great Depression lie largely in the disruptions of World War I. Its spread owes much to the hostilities and continuing conflicts that were created by the war and the Treaty of Versailles ... It is instructive to see the thirty years following 1914 as one long conflict with an uneasy truce in the middle.

➔ SOURCE 7.38

Michael A. Bernstein, The Great Depression: Delayed Recovery and Economic Change in America 1929 – 1939 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 19.

MICHAEL A. BERNSTEIN

Growing incidence of oligopoly [brought] about a misdistribution of funds by shifting profits to those industries which [were] reluctant to use them. To escape stagnation, capital had to be redistributed.

ACTIVITIES

SKILLS: HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

1. Define the following words and phrases: economic, disparities, contraction, enterprises, Treaty of Versailles, oligopoly, misdistribution, stagnation. Put them in your glossary.
2. Summarise what each of the historians is saying in simple language. What do they believe started the Great Depression? Place the information in a table to compare and contrast their views.
3. Which historian's view offers the best explanation for the Great Depression? Support your answer with evidence.

PRACTICE EXAM

'If it hadn't been for the Wall Street Crash, the progress and optimism of the Roaring Twenties could have continued for years.'

To what extent do you agree? In your answer you should consider the Wall Street Crash and other influences on the economic collapse.

DEEP IN THE DUSTBOWL

JOHN STEINBECK, *THE GRAPES OF WRATH*, 1939: ‘... and in the eyes of the people there is failure; and in the eyes of the hungry there is a growing wrath. In the souls of the people the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, growing heavy for the vintage.’¹²

DIFFICULT DAYS

By 1931, over 10 million Americans were unemployed, but most could not receive any benefit money.¹³ The government struggled to deal with such an overwhelming problem and often left the problem of supporting unemployed people to local and state governments, which were quickly overwhelmed. Private and church charities also provided food, and sometimes shelter, for unemployed and homeless people.

Many people travelled from place to place searching for work and survived on handouts and meals from soup kitchens. In Louisiana, the governor Huey Long helped reduce unemployment by paying unemployed people to work on the roads, but most other states relied on shanty towns and soup kitchens as solutions.

Naturally, not everyone was negatively impacted by the Great Depression. Most people in government employment kept their jobs, and people with little debt were also able to cope better than those who had borrowed heavily. Certain occupations prospered. Shoe and clothing repairers, second-hand dealers and bookmakers (legal or not) remained comfortably off, as did producers and sellers of basic needs such as food. The movie industry prospered during this period because even people on the most meagre of incomes managed to afford a cheap seat at the cinema from time to time. For a couple of hours, it was possible for them to escape the day-to-day grind and be transported into another world.

The Great Depression also brought out the best in some Americans, who devoted their time to feeding unemployed people, raising funds and providing moral support for those who were struggling. Other people were more likely to take the attitude that the unemployed had brought their troubles upon themselves.

DROUGHT AND DUST

Among those who suffered most were people who lived on the plains of Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado and Kansas. In these fertile plains, trees had been removed to make more room for crops, and the prairie grass that had held in moisture during previous droughts had been ploughed. With the droughts of the early 1930s, there were no trees or grasses to keep the topsoil in place—and the area effectively became a dustbowl. The land was unusable for crops, and huge dust clouds travelled across the United States. Many farmers abandoned their farms and travelled to the cities in hope of finding work and food—but the cities were often no better than the farms. An Oklahoma family, drawn by the promise of rich and fertile land on the west coast, travels to California in John Steinbeck’s epic novel *The Grapes of Wrath*.

DID YOU KNOW?

President Hoover was blamed for many of the problems during the Great Depression. Shanty towns for the unemployed and homeless were called ‘Hoovervilles,’ and newspapers were called ‘Hoover blankets,’ suggesting they were used more for cover than for reading.



LOOKING FOR ANSWERS IN THE DEPRESSION



DUSTBOWL PRIMARY SOURCES

➔ SOURCE 7.39

From Studs Terkel, *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression* (New York: New Press, 1987) 192

OSCAR HELINE, IOWA FARMER

The farmers became desperate. It got so a neighbour wouldn't buy from a neighbour, because the farmer didn't get any of it. It went to the creditors ... The farmers were almost united. We had penny auction sales [for their farms being sold by the creditors]. Some neighbour would bid a penny and give it back to the owner.

➔ SOURCE 7.40

From Studs Terkel, *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression* (New York: New Press, 1987) 202

RUTH LORIK, WIFE OF A DAKOTA FARMER AND SENATOR

This neighbour woman lost her husband, and, of course, he was owing the bank. So the auctioneers come out there, and she served lunch, and she stood weeping in the windows. 'There goes our last cow...' And the horses. She called 'em by names. It pretty near broke our hearts.

➔ SOURCE 7.41

From Studs Terkel, *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression* (New York: New Press, 1987) 202

CLYDE T. ELLIS, FORMER CONGRESSMAN FROM ARKANSAS

The Dirty Thirties—the phrase was coined where we had the dust storms ... Everything dried up ... the springs, the wells, the ponds, the creeks, the rivers. We saw bank failures everywhere. In my county all but three of perhaps a dozen failed. The most valuable thing we lost was hope.

➔ SOURCE 7.42

Children of Oklahoma drought refugees in California. Family of six with no shelter, no food and almost out of petrol. The child has bone tuberculosis. Dorothea Lange, 1935.



ACTIVITIES

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Identify some of the problems created by the Great Depression.
2. What impact did the Great Depression have on ordinary people? What were some of the positives and some of the negatives?
3. Write a paragraph analysing Source 7.42 using CHIPS (Caption, Historical context, Interrogate the source, People, Symbols) or ADAMANT (Author, Date, Audience, Message, Agenda, Nature and Technique).

ESSAY: FILM RESPONSE

During the Great Depression, many films tapped into the desire of Americans to escape from the harsh realities of life. Movie theatres were also fantasy palaces, often decorated with ornate gilt ceilings and heavy red velvet curtains. Watch *42nd Street* or *Anything Goes*. Explain what impact either musical might have had on the morale of people suffering as a result of the Great Depression.

NEW LEADER, NEW DEAL

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT ON THE INAUGURATION: ‘very, very solemn and a little terrifying ... because when Franklin got to that part of his speech when he said it might become necessary for him to assume powers ordinarily granted to a President in war time he received his biggest demonstration ... One has a feeling of going into it blindly ... because we are in a tremendous stream, and none of us knows where we are going to land.’¹⁴

FAILED PROMISES

President Hoover’s approach to dealing with the Great Depression was to encourage hard work and sacrifice. He placed emphasis on self-help and on businesses working together, rather than on government handouts. This was reminiscent of the idealistic American Dream—if a person worked hard, they would succeed. This had been true for much of the nineteenth century but it was unable to solve the problems of the Great Depression. Hoover kept power for his presidential term, but when the election came up in 1932, Hoover was easily defeated by the Democrat candidate Franklin D. Roosevelt. Some historians have argued that Roosevelt won not because he provided better solutions during his campaign, but because Hoover was seen as failing his constituents.

NEW DEAL

Roosevelt looked for practical solutions to the problem of the Great Depression. Unlike Hoover, Roosevelt believed that government money had to be spent to stimulate the economy and create jobs. He started with a number of measures that became known as the New Deal. This New Deal worked on solutions for 1933 to 1935. During this period Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to help employ men on public works, such as reforestation. One of Roosevelt’s major projects, ensuring the employment of thousands, was the implementation of the Tennessee Valley Authority project. He also sent aid to farmers in order to help them keep their farms and continue producing crops.

SECOND NEW DEAL

The Second New Deal, which ran 1935–1938, created several programs that helped those left destitute by the Great Depression and ensured that others in the future would not be left unsupported. Roosevelt introduced unemployment insurance, old age pensions and public housing for the unemployed and elderly. These changes were funded by increasing the tax burdens on the wealthy. Roosevelt also attempted to protect workers by introducing an Act making it illegal for a boss to fire an employee simply for joining a union. He also supported many businesses through tax benefits.

The popular cartoon strip, *Little Orphan Annie*—which inspired the musical *Annie*—reflected many of the events of the late 1920s and the Depression, commenting on poverty and inequality, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal.

DID YOU KNOW?

After an election, the newly elected US president usually has to wait for one hundred days until he is formally made president. But when Franklin D. Roosevelt won the 1932 election, he asked to be given presidential powers during this time, just as he would have been given them if the United States were facing a war. The situation was so bad he was given these powers.



NEW DEAL PRIMARY SOURCES



GREAT DEPRESSION AUDIO

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1921, Roosevelt caught polio, an incurable disease that left his legs paralysed; it was only after months of rehabilitative therapy and support from his family that he regained some use of his legs. Roosevelt hid this disability as much as possible through the use of staged photographs, and by arriving at meetings early so others would not see him struggling to walk.

CONTROVERSY

Not everyone was happy about Roosevelt's changes. One of his most vocal opponents was Robert A. Taft, a Republican Senator who thought the New Deal was 'largely revolutionary', made by 'sinister bureaucrats' to create a 'totalitarian tyranny' in free constitutional America.¹⁵ Other groups—including African Americans, immigrants and some groups of women—did not receive great benefits from the New Deal. This led to a perceived discord between what Roosevelt promised and what he actually delivered.

ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Can you explain why Roosevelt had a greater appeal to Americans than Hoover?
2. What changes did the two New Deals introduce for Americans?
3. Conduct some further research into the ideas and policies of Robert A. Taft. Explain why he disagreed with Roosevelt.

DID YOU KNOW?

Many characters in Hollywood movies were played by people of different nationalities. Many white people were made-up to play Asian or black characters rather than hiring people from those nationalities.

TECHNICOLLOUR AND TALKIES

AUNT EM IN *THE WIZARD OF OZ*, 1939: 'Almira Gulch, just because you own half the county doesn't mean that you have the power to run the rest of us. For twenty-three years I've been dying to tell you what I thought of you! And now ... well, being a Christian woman, I can't say it!'¹⁶

POPULAR CULTURE

The Great Depression meant that most people didn't have much money, but what money did have they often spent on popular culture to escape the difficulties of their life. Many films in this period focused on underdogs fighting back, to connect with their audiences. The film industry worked hard to keep interest and profits in this difficult economic time, using new technology to entertain and stay viable. Sound had been introduced in 1927 and by the late 1930s most films were made as 'talkies.' This was followed by the introduction of colour and, although most films were still made in black and white, two of the biggest movies of 1939 were made in Technicolor: *The Wizard of Oz* and *Gone with the Wind*. Comic books were also a powerful medium of escape; characters such as Superman, Captain America, Wonder Woman, Captain Marvel and Batman were all introduced in the late 1930s as idealistic superheroes in a struggling world. This period is often described as the Golden Age of Comic Books.

SOURCE 7.43

The *Wizard of Oz* movie poster, 1939.



ACTIVITY

FILM STUDY

Both *Gone with the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz* are escapist movies, in completely different ways. *Gone with the Wind* romanticises the way of life in the pre-Civil War South, showing African Americans as compliant and childlike. *The Wizard of Oz* is a fantasy with an underlying theme of the battle between good and evil.

Examine one of these films and suggest ways in which the film reflects the events, attitudes and values of the United States in the 1930s.

HAYS CODE AND MISCEGENATION

The Hays Code, as the Motion Picture Production Code became known, was introduced to control the moral values shown and expressed in Hollywood films. It was introduced in 1930, but only strictly enforced after 1934.



1930S CULTURE

SOME ELEMENTS FROM THE HAYS CODE, 1930

Bedrooms. In themselves they are perfectly innocent. Their suggestion may be kept innocent. However under certain circumstances they are bad dramatic locations. (a) Their use in comedy or farce (on the principle of the so-called bedroom farce), is wrong, because they suggest sexual laxity and obscenity.

Religion

(1) No film or episode in a film should be allowed to throw ridicule on any religious faith honestly maintained.

MISCEGENATION (sex relationship between the white and black races) is forbidden.

SCENES OF ACTUAL CHILDBIRTH in fact or in silhouette, are never to be presented.

SOURCE 7.44

Hays Code, <http://www.und.edu/instruct/cjacobs/ProductionCode.htm>

ACTIVITIES

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. What were three things that the Hays Code did not allow in films?
2. What values are suggested by these restrictions?
3. Which two groups are being marginalised by the code? What impact does this have on their representation within motion pictures?

MEDIA TASK

Watch a film clip of Anna May Wong on YouTube (e.g. *Toll of the Sea*, 1922); discuss how the film connects to the social context: historical time period, Hollywood and the Hays Code, and racism.

ANNA MAY WONG: ACTRESS

Anna May Wong was born Wong Liu Tsong on 3 January 1905 to Chinese-American parents. She started in silent films but—unlike many other actors in silent films—made the transition to ‘talkies.’ Anna faced racist attitudes that led to her being typecast as a retiring ‘butterfly lady’ or an evil ‘dragon lady.’ She was a well-respected actress, with a large fan base following her acting and her fashion sense. Due to miscegenation laws, Anna was often prevented from playing main roles

as she would have to kiss someone of another race. However, she stood out as an Asian actress in a Hollywood dominated by white actresses.

SOURCE 7.45

Anna May Wong, 1932.

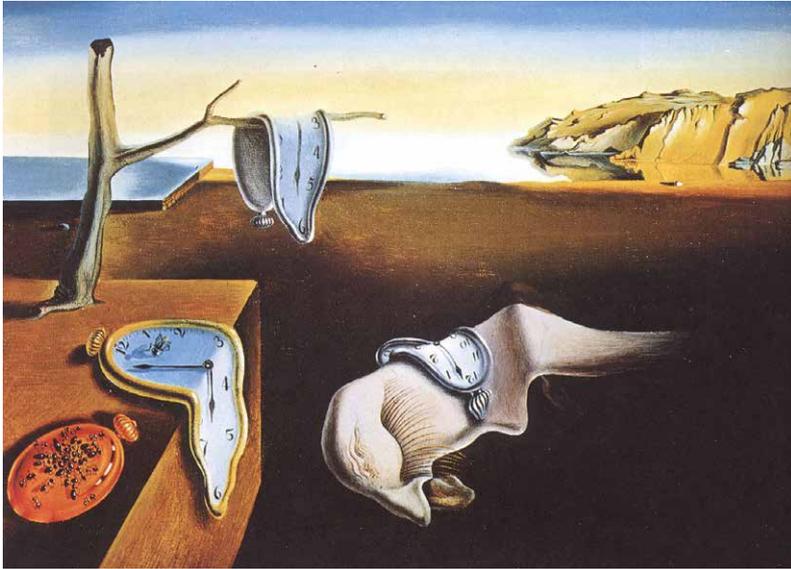


▼ SOURCE 7.46

The Persistence of Memory, Salvador Dali, 1931. Although Dali was Spanish, his Surrealist art became popular in the United States in the 1930s.

▼ below SOURCE 7.47

Migrant Mother, 1936, by Dorothea Lange, is an example of Social Realism.



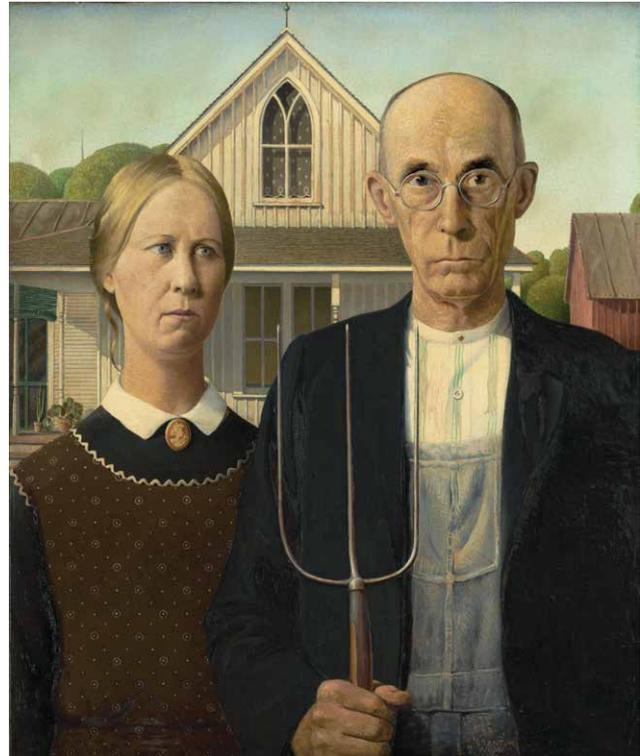
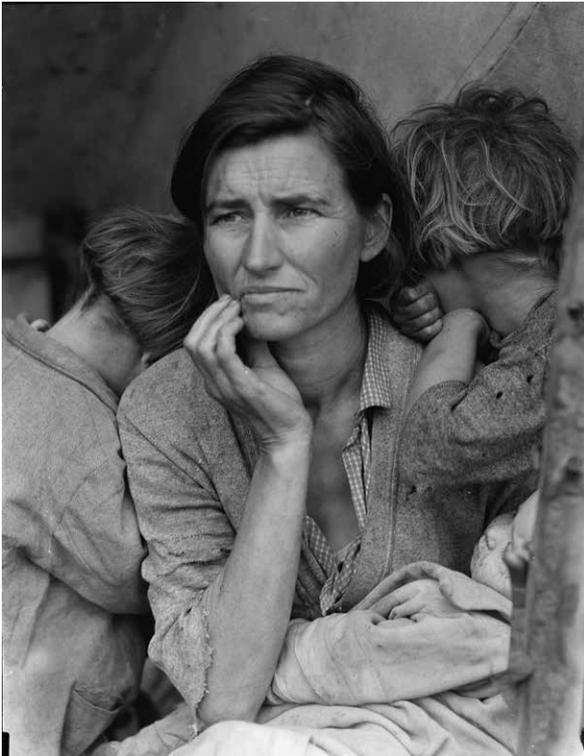
CULTURE AND CHANGE

ART

Art in the 1930s was still vibrant. Surrealism remained a key movement; however, in the United States there was also a move towards Social Realism. Social Realists focused on depicting the lives of poor and working class people, and reflecting changes in society caused by the Great Depression. The movement is remembered for the photographs commissioned by the government body Farm Security Administration (FSA). FSA commissioned photographers to take photos of rural need and desperation, to support economic plans for assistance. Over 80 000 photographs were taken, showing farmers and sharecroppers, run-down farms and barren, dusty landscapes.

▼ SOURCE 7.48

American Gothic by Grant Wood, 1930, is an example of Social Realism.



LITERATURE

The literature of the 1930s turned away from the optimism of earlier writing and instead focused on either social criticism or escapism. Many books, such as John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, were inspired by the real stories of dust bowl migrants; they identified working class lives and criticised the world that abandoned them to their fate. Nathanael West's novels, especially *The Day of the Locust*, exposed the hollowness of the American Dream. There was also much escapist literature, such as Margaret Mitchell's historical fiction *Gone with the Wind* and detective novels such as *The Maltese Falcon* by Dashiell Hammett which, although diverting, still focused on a key Great Depression idea of persisting through adversity.

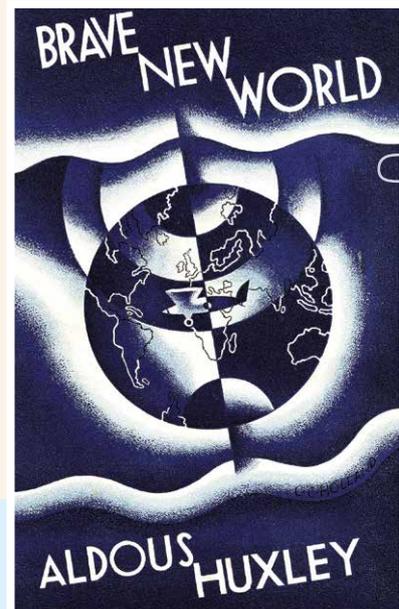
The American book industry was invigorated in 1939 when publisher Robert de Graff created the Pocket Book range. De Graff's books were small paperback editions, designed to be sold in newsagents and railway stations as well as bookstores. Pocket Books provided access to a wide range of books to people who had not previously been readers.

BRAVE NEW WORLD BY ALDOUS HUXLEY

Brave New World was a novel set in futuristic London, in the year AF 632 (After Ford), written by English author and screenwriter Aldous Huxley. This satirical novel criticised both capitalism and communism. Capitalism was explored through the almost religious worshipping of its founder, Henry Ford, the real-life industrialist who created the Ford Model T car. Communism was attacked through the constant declarations that 'every one belongs to every one else.'¹⁷ The novel questioned and mocked contemporary understandings of the world through the frame of a futuristic world.

➔ SOURCE 7.49

Brave New World by
Aldous Huxley, 1932.



ACTIVITIES

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What was the focus of Social Realism? How was this a change from former art movements?
2. Why were some of the books and artworks in this period so critical of society? Discuss with reference to literature, art and the socio-historical context.
3. Compare and contrast the ideas and images shown in Wood's *American Gothic* and Dorothea Lange's *Migrant Mother*. Write a paragraph discussing how they are both influenced by Social Realism.

CREATIVE RESPONSE

Read a chapter from *Brave New World* and use the ideas to write your own dystopian futuristic narrative that questions contemporary events.



THE DISNEY DREAM

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1937:

Queen: Yes! One bite, and all your dreams will come true'

Snow White: Really?

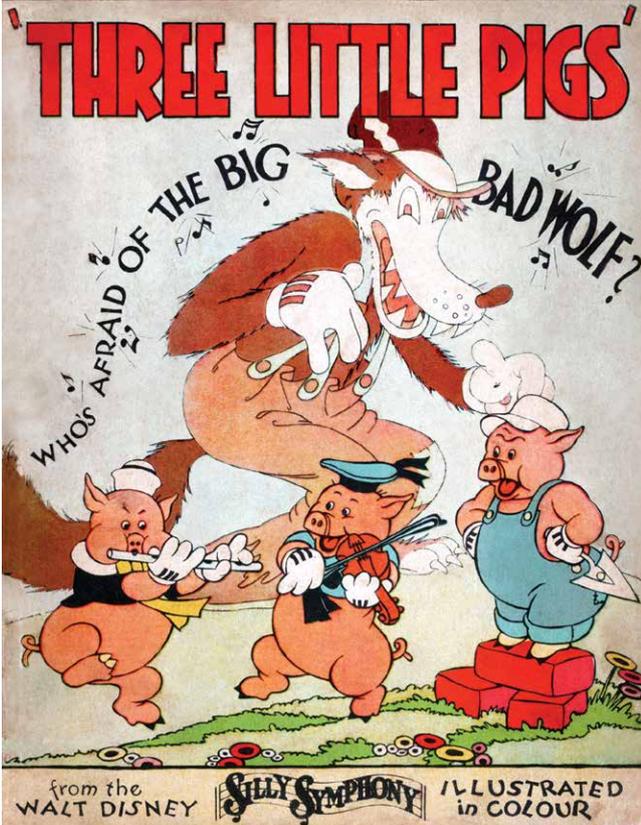
Queen: Yes, girlie. Now, make a wish, and take a bite.'¹⁸

WALT DISNEY

Walter Elias 'Walt' Disney was born in Chicago on 5 December 1901. He developed an interest in art and vaudeville at a young age, taking evening classes in art while still at high school. He became interested in animation after working on animated commercials. He started Laugh-O-grams Studio, which failed, then moved to Hollywood with his brother Roy to try again with Disney Studios. While there he met and married Lillian Bounds. Disney continued to work on animations and other projects until his death on 15 December 1966.

DISNEY AND THE DEPRESSION

The first major Disney animated character was called Oswald the Rabbit, but when Walt Disney lost the rights to that character he created Mickey Mouse to replace him. Mickey Mouse was a popular character; however, he had serious competition from other popular characters such as Betty Boop and Felix the Cat. Walt Disney sought to gain more attention for his animations by being the first animator to use sound in the 1928 film *Steamboat Willie*. He became one of the first animators to use Technicolor when he made his 1932 film *Silly Symphony: Flowers and Trees*. When the Great Depression hit the industry, studios had to keep innovating to keep audience interest. Disney studios worked hard to market Mickey Mouse with toys, clothing and other paraphernalia, and this approach helped to keep the studio going. In 1933, Disney made a short, animated film called *Three Little Pigs*. This film, in which three little pigs fight against the big bad wolf, really grabbed public attention as it seemed to epitomise the spirit of the Great Depression.



FOLLY OR FAME

Walt Disney decided to be the first animator to create a full-length animated film. The project was considered such a ridiculous idea by the rest of the film community that it was called ‘Disney’s Folly.’ Nobody believed a full-length animation could be made, thinking it would bankrupt any studio that tried. Disney worked on the project from 1934 to 1937, when he ran out of money and had to call in investors to finish the film. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* became a blockbuster hit and was so popular that it was awarded an honorary Oscar at the Academy Awards. This film dramatically changed the animation landscape with its engaging full-length story, well-developed characters with different personalities, animation and physicality. This promoted Walt Disney and his studio far beyond his competitors, leading the way for Disney Studios to become an animation powerhouse. It also started the ‘Disneyfication’ of traditional fairytales. The antidote to the poison was a ‘kiss, symbolic of true love,’ rather than the arranged marriage characteristic of the original stories.¹⁹



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What were some of the characters that Walt Disney created?
2. What made Walt Disney’s works more significant and memorable than his competitors’ works?
3. How do the ideas shown within his films reference the United States during the Great Depression? Compare and contrast *Three little Pigs* with *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

SKILLS: BELIEFS AND VALUES

What beliefs and values are being constructed by films like *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*?

ACTIVITIES

🔍 SOURCE 7.50

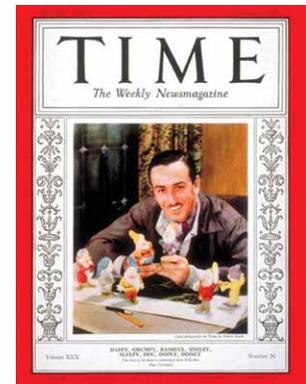
Walt Disney, 1946.

🔍 SOURCE 7.51

Three Little Pigs by Disney, 1933.

🔍 SOURCE 7.52

Walt Disney with the seven dwarfs on the cover of *Time* magazine, 1937.



🔍 SOURCE 7.53

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs by Disney, 1937.

DID YOU KNOW?

Mickey Mouse was originally going to be called Mortimer Mouse.

CONCLUSION

We Can Do It!



The excesses and glamour of the 1920s quickly turned to the frugality and realism of the 1930s with the Great Depression. The US economy did not make a full recovery until 1939 with the beginning of World War II, when there was renewed demand for US industries. World War II—which the United States became involved in after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941—led to the development and redefinition of many of the social changes begun in the 1920s and 1930s. Nazi Germany's eugenics programs and persecution of people considered inferior—including Jews, the mentally and physically impaired, gypsies and Slavs, non-whites and homosexuals—made many of the Allies question their own views. Although a complete revolution didn't take place, there were changes in the way that different races, genders and religions were considered.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations in 1948. It set out the basic rights that all human beings,

regardless of nationality, race, colour, creed or ability, should be entitled to enjoy. Many of the ideas had been circulating for over a century, but it was the atrocities committed by the Nazis in World War II that galvanised the UN into formalising these rights.

During the 1950s and 60s, the movement to improve civil rights for African Americans gained strength and the NAACP gained some significant wins against segregation. Developments in the women's rights movement also accelerated in this post-war period.

World War II also had a big impact on the American cultural landscape with many artistic movements reflecting the horrors of war. The introduction of television in the 1940s brought a new medium of entertainment, as well as a way of informing people about what was going on in the US and the wider world. The controversies, concerns, developments and issues of the 1920s and 1930s were the stepping stones to the social revolt and changes of the 1950s and 1960s.

J. Howard Miller



POST FEB. 15 TO FEB. 28

WAR PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

CHAPTER REVIEW

Write a summary on:

- how cultural life changed from the 1920s to the 1930s. (Consider art movements, movies, literature and popular culture.)
- how social life changed. (Consider the position of women, the life of the poor, different races, mentally/physically unwell, and eugenics)
- how political life changed. (Consider the Republicans and Democrats and what they offered: isolationism, responsibility for morality, government assistance, responses to the Great Depression, the American Dream.)

EXAM PRACTICE

Using three or four points:

1. Discuss the impact of segregation on American society. Provide evidence to support your answer.
2. Discuss aspects of life in the United States in the 1920s or 1930s that were either reflected in or influenced by popular culture.
3. Explain some of the key features of one artistic or literary movement within its historical context. Provide evidence to support your answer.
4. Examine the degree to which the position of women in society changed during the 1920s and 1930s. Provide evidence to support your answer.

ESSAY

Write an essay, based on evidence, on one of the topics below.

- 'The excesses of the 1920s meant that the Great Depression was bound to happen.' Discuss with reference to historians' views.
- 'Often it is the marginalised and "other" who make the most significant impact on the cultural landscape.' To what extent do you agree? Use evidence to support your response.
- 'The American Dream was flawed as it only catered to the white middle class.' To what extent do you agree with this statement? Use evidence to support your response.
- 'The artistic movements of the 1920s and 1930s were very much a product of their social and economic context.' Discuss how these movements were shaped by the time period.

EXTENSION



RESEARCH: SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUALS

TEST



QUIZ – CHAPTER 7

FURTHER READING

Susan Currell, *The March of Spare Time: The Problem and Promise of Leisure in the Great Depression*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

Currell's book looks at leisure and recreational activities during the 1930s, giving a stronger understanding of social life during that time.

William Chafe, *The Rise and Fall of the American Century 1890–2009*, Oxford University Press, 2009.

This text has an in-depth analysis of the events in the United States from

the 1890s to the 2000s, providing an understanding of the events of the 1920s and 1930s in the context of events that happened before and after.

Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan*, Oxford University Press, 1994.

MacLean sets out a detailed portrait of the Ku Klux Klan, using a rich collection of primary sources, in order to consider the motivations, actions and beliefs that brought together the second Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s.

Ulrich B. Phillips, 'The Central Theme of Southern History,' *The American Historical Review*, vol. 34, no. 1 (October, 1928), 30–43.

Ina Rae Hark, *American Cinema of the 1930s: Themes and Variations*, Rutgers, 2007.

This book has a range of essays discussing the historical time period as well as themes and key ideas of 1930s cinema.

← *World War II poster boosting morale of American women contributing to the war effort.*



ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Timelines

Glossary

Who's Who

Endnotes

List of web resources

Index

TIMELINE / 1914–1921

POLITICAL

1917

Revolution in Russia
Abdication of Tsar Nicholas II
Provisional Government formed
Bolsheviks seize power

28 JUNE 1914

Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand

1 AUGUST 1914

Germany declares war on Russia

4 AUGUST 1914

Germany invades Belgium; Britain declares war on Germany

22 APRIL 1915

German army uses mustard gas for the first time in Ypres

25 APRIL 1915

ANZAC troops land at Gallipoli

6 APRIL 1917

US President Wilson declares war on Germany

5–6 JANUARY

Newly elected Constituent Assembly formed in Russia

8 JANUARY

Woodrow Wilson delivers Fourteen Points

3 MARCH

Treaty of Brest-Litovsk sets out peace terms between Germany and Russia

17 JULY

Romanov family of Russia assassinated

3 OCTOBER

Wilhelm II of Germany handed authority on military decisions

9 NOVEMBER

Wilhelm II abdicates



MILITARY

FEBRUARY

Red Army formed in Russia

APRIL

Civil War begins in Russia

9 NOVEMBER

German delegation begins formal armistice negotiations at Compiègne

11 NOVEMBER

Germany signs armistice, formally ending World War I

BEFORE 1918

1918

ECONOMIC

SOCIAL

NOVEMBER 1918–JANUARY 1919

Street fighting, attempts at communist revolution in Germany

CULTURAL

1905

Die Brücke art movement begins in Dresden

1910

Beginning of German film industry



America refuses to join the League of Nations; pursues an isolationist policy

JANUARY

DAP founded by Drexler in Germany

Elections for National Assembly for Weimar Republic

25 JANUARY

Plenary session of Paris Peace Conference accepts proposal for creation of League of Nations

28 JUNE

Treaty of Versailles signed in the Hall of Mirrors

JULY

Weimar Constitution adopted

10 SEPTEMBER

Treaty of Saint Germain En Lay (Austrian treaty with Allies)

SEPTEMBER

Hitler joins DAP

21 JUNE

German Navy sinks seventy-four of its own ships at Scapa Flow, Scotland

16 JANUARY

First session of the League of Nations, Paris

24 FEBRUARY

DAP renamed NSAP

13 MARCH

Kapp Putsch attempted in Germany

18 AUGUST

19th Amendment ratified, giving American women the right to vote

1 NOVEMBER

The seat of the League of Nations moves to Geneva

15 NOVEMBER

First assembly of League of Nations convenes in Geneva by President Wilson

15 DECEMBER

Austria admitted to the League of Nations

8-16 MARCH

10th Communist Party Congress in Russia

JULY

Hitler becomes leader of Nazi Party



NOVEMBER

The SA is formed in Germany

POLITICAL

MILITARY

1919

1920

1921

JANUARY

Grain requisitioning introduced in Russia

Famine conditions in parts of Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan

MARCH

End of War Communism in Russia; Lenin ushers in NEP

4-15 JANUARY

Spartacist uprising in Germany

16 JANUARY

Prohibition laws come into force in the US

MARCH

Kronstadt Rebellion in Russia

30 JUNE

International Conference on the Traffic in Women and Children, Geneva

JULY

Bauhaus Art School founded in Weimar

20 AUGUST

Radio station KDKA broadcasts in the US

2 SEPTEMBER

The Permanent Court of International Justice established

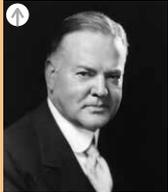
ECONOMIC

SOCIAL

CULTURAL

TIMELINE / 1922–1931

	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926
POLITICAL	<p>FEBRUARY Cheka retitles as GPU (Russian initials for State Political Administration)</p> <p>18 SEPTEMBER Hungary admitted to the League of Nations</p> <p>DECEMBER Formal constitutional inauguration of USSR (Soviet Union)</p>	<p>12 APRIL 12th Communist Party Congress approves <i>korenizatsia</i> ('taking roots') policy which allows for the implementation of 'Ukrainisation' in Ukraine</p> <p>JULY GPU becomes OGPU in Russia</p> <p>1 SEPTEMBER First Nazi Party rally held at Nuremberg</p>	<p>21 JANUARY Lenin dies after a series of strokes</p> <p>10 JUNE Italian socialist leader Giacomo Matteotti is kidnapped and killed by Fascists</p>	<p>FEBRUARY Hitler released from prison</p> <p>APRIL Hindenburg elected president</p> <p>17 JUNE Geneva Protocol bans mustard gas and chemical weapons in international armed conflict</p> <p>DECEMBER Stalin announces doctrine of 'Socialism in One Country'</p>	<p>25 FEBRUARY Francisco Franco becomes General of Spain</p> <p>8 SEPTEMBER Germany admitted to the League and given permanent membership of the assembly</p> <p>14 SEPTEMBER Locarno Treaties ratified and come into effect</p>
MILITARY	<p>28 SEPTEMBER Benito Mussolini and the Blackshirts march on Rome to demand government authority</p> 			<p>NOVEMBER SS formed</p>	
ECONOMIC		<p>Hyperinflation</p> 			
SOCIAL		<p>8-9 NOVEMBER Munich Beer Hall putsch</p>		<p>JULY Scopes trial: A science teacher is taken to court for teaching evolution</p>	
CULTURAL	<p>14 NOVEMBER British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) begins radio service in the UK</p>		<p>Zamyatin's novel, <i>We</i>, is published</p>	<p>Bauhaus art school moved to Dessau</p> <p>10 APRIL <i>The Great Gatsby</i> published</p>	

		<p>20 MAY Nazi party gains 2.6% of votes in Germany's elections</p> <p>6 NOVEMBER Herbert Hoover elected president of the US</p> 	<p>Stalin begins reversal of the 'Ukrainisation' policy</p> <p>FEBRUARY Trotsky deported from USSR; Stalin becomes undisputed leader</p> <p>DECEMBER Stalin demands acceleration of collectivisation process and liquidation of kulaks</p>	<p>14 SEPTEMBER Nazi Party gains 18.3% of votes in Germany's elections</p>	POLITICAL
				<p>19 SEPTEMBER Japan invades Manchuria</p>	MILITARY
1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	
	<p>OCTOBER First month of Five Year Plan; abandonment of NEP in USSR</p>	<p>29 OCTOBER Black Tuesday; Wall Street Stock Market crashes and starts the Great Depression</p>			ECONOMIC
<p>20-21 MAY Charles Lindbergh flies solo from New York to Paris in 33 hours</p> <p>6 OCTOBER First 'talkie' film <i>The Jazz Singer</i></p>		<p>NOVEMBER Writing in <i>Pravda</i>, Stalin declares full-scale collectivisation of agriculture</p>	<p>Famine strikes grain-growing regions; particularly severe in Ukraine, hence Great Famine (known as Holodomor)</p>		SOCIAL
			<p>31 MARCH The 'Hays Code' is introduced as a moral guide for Hollywood</p>	<p>NOVEMBER Al Capone jailed</p>	CULTURAL

TIMELINE / 1932–1939

	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936
POLITICAL	<p>10 APRIL Hindenburg reelected president of Germany</p>  <p>31 JULY Nazi Party gains 37.3% of votes</p>	<p>30 JANUARY Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany</p> <p>27 FEBRUARY The Reichstag fire</p> <p>13 MARCH Ministry of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment established</p> <p>22 MARCH First concentration camp established at Dachau, near Munich</p>	<p>30 JUNE Night of the Long Knives</p> <p>2 AUGUST Death of German President Hindenburg. Germany Army swears oath of loyalty and Hitler declares himself Führer</p>	<p>25 NOVEMBER Anti-comintern Pact signed by Germany and Japan</p>	
MILITARY	<p>6 NOVEMBER Nazi Party gains 33% of votes</p> <p>8 NOVEMBER Franklin D. Roosevelt wins the US election</p>	<p>27 MARCH Japan withdraws from League</p> <p>14 JULY The Law against the formation of Parties</p> <p>21 OCTOBER Germany withdraws from Geneva Disarmament Conference and announces intentions to leave the League of Nations</p>		<p>13 JANUARY Saar plebiscite</p> <p>MARCH German rearmament begins, conscription introduced</p> <p>OCTOBER Italy invades Abyssinia</p>	<p>7 MARCH German remilitarisation of the Rhineland</p> <p>JULY Start of Spanish Civil War, Italy and Germany send troops to support General Franco</p>
ECONOMIC	<p>DECEMBER Completion of first Five Year Plan in the USSR</p>	<p>In the US drought creates dust bowl regions; New Deal introduced by Roosevelt to combat Depression</p>		<p>JANUARY Second New Deal is introduced by US President Roosevelt</p>	
SOCIAL		<p>5 DECEMBER Prohibition ends in the US</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER Nuremberg Laws released, outlawing marriage between Jews and non-Jewish Germans, and restricting Jews from certain employment</p>		
CULTURAL	<p>Enabling Act gives Hitler total control over media and the arts; Bauhaus school closed by Nazis</p>		<p>Hays code starts to be rigorously enforced</p> <p>5-10 SEPTEMBER Leni Riefenstahl filmed the Nuremberg Rally that became the <i>Triumph of the Will</i></p>		

<p>MAY Chamberlain becomes prime minister of Great Britain</p>	<p>22 MAY Pact of Steel signed between Mussolini and Hitler</p>		<p>POLITICAL</p>
<p>6 NOVEMBER Italy joins the Comintern Pact - becomes known as the Axis Powers Agreement</p>	<p>23 AUGUST Nazi-Soviet Pact signed</p>	<p>18 APRIL 1946 League of Nations transfers all its assets to the United Nations</p>	

<p>JULY Japan invades China</p>	<p>MARCH Anschluss announced after German troops march into Austria</p> <p>29-30 SEPTEMBER Czechoslovakian Crisis and Munich Agreement</p>	<p>15 MARCH Hitler invades the rest of Czechoslovakia</p> <p>1 SEPTEMBER Hitler invades Poland</p> <p>4 SEPTEMBER Britain and France declare war on Germany</p>	<p>1940 France, Belgium, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands fall to Germany</p> <p>JUNE 1941 Germany attacks Soviet Union</p> <p>JULY 1941 Japanese occupy French Indo-China</p> <p>DECEMBER 1941 Japan bombs Pearl Harbor and attacks Singapore; America declares war on Japan; Germany declares war on America</p>	<p>MILITARY</p>
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<p>1937</p>	<p>1938</p>	<p>1939</p>	<p>AFTER 1939</p>
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<p>ECONOMIC</p>	
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<p>9-10 NOVEMBER <i>Kristallnacht</i> (Night of the Broken Glass)—Jewish businesses and synagogues attacked by Nazis</p>	<p>SOCIAL</p>
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<p>18 JULY Exhibition of German Art opens in Munich</p> <p>19 JULY 'Degenerate Art' exhibition opens in Munich</p>	<p>CULTURAL</p>
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GLOSSARY

A

Absolute Monarchy

System of government where a monarch has complete and total power over his or her people and territory. No laws, constitution or opposition exist to limit the power of the monarch.

Abstract

Abstract art is not representational. It does not aim to show reality accurately, but to show feelings, often through the use of blocks of bright colours. The Russian-born Wassily Kandinsky was one of the first artists to use abstraction when he lived in Germany prior to World War I.

Agrarian Society

A society that is dependent upon agriculture and farming as its major means of survival and sustenance.

Anschluss

The annexation of Austria by Germany in 1938.

Anti-Semitism

An ideology that stresses hostility to Jews as an imagined racial group, rather than on the basis of their religion.

Appeasement

The policy of negotiating and conceding to demands in order to avoid war. This policy was followed by Britain and France; they gave in to the demands of dictatorial powers—such as Hitler in Germany—in the hope of avoiding further conflict.

Armistice

A truce; an agreement from opposing sides to stop fighting.

Arms Race

Nations increase their spending on military resources in competition with a rival or rivals. In response the rivals

increase their own spending and an escalation of military spending begins.

Aryan

Used initially to describe a family of languages of Indo-European origin, from the mid to late nineteenth century the term was adopted to describe the racial characteristics of peoples who spoke such languages. These understandings of racial character were widely accepted in scientific circles in the early twentieth century. Nazism applied these ideas to the political sphere, arguing that the Aryan races were creators of all culture and civilisation. The aim of Nazism was to preserve and protect Aryan civilisation.

Autobahn

German freeways. The first autobahns were planned in the 1920s, and the first one was opened in 1932, before Hitler came to power. Once in power, the Nazis used the construction of autobahns as a major propaganda tool: newsreels showed Hitler 'turning the first piece of ground' for new autobahns and officially opening completed autobahns.

Autocracy

A system of government in which supreme power lies in the hands of one person, an autocrat, such as the tsar. This person can rule according to their own wishes, and is not limited by the law.

Avant-garde

Derived from the French, meaning front or advance force, this military term was adopted in the arts to describe the role of 'advanced' or progressive artists associated with Modernism and artistic revolution.

B

Balkans

A culturally and ethnically diverse region of south-east Europe that, in 1914, included parts of Austria-Hungary and Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and Albania.

Bank Run or 'Run on the Bank'

When a large number of customers try to withdraw their deposits from a bank or financial institution at the same time. It creates a spiral of more panicked customers, and may lead to the bank being forced to default on payments.

Bauhaus

A highly influential German design school first established in the city of Weimar. Due to political pressures it later relocated to Dessau and then Berlin and was eventually closed in 1933. The influence of the Bauhaus is evident in many fields of the arts, most notably architecture, interior and graphic design.

Blitzkrieg (lightning war)

A German military tactic of coordinated air and land forces with an emphasis on mechanised formations, such as massed tanks and speed.

Bolsheviks

A small revolutionary group of communists led by Lenin; the Reds.

Bourgeoisie

The owners of the means of production, e.g. land, mines, factories and businesses.

C

Capitalism

An economic system in which the means of production are privately owned and operated for profit.

Chancellor

The head of the legislative body in the Weimar Republic; similar to a prime minister.

Cheka

Soviet secret police service.

Classicism

A style in painting and architecture derived from ancient Greek and Roman architecture. Painters and architects during the nineteenth century modelled many of their works on these ancient models. Modified forms feature as an aspect of Nazi architecture and in other twentieth century examples of building.

Collectivisation

A Soviet program initiated in the late 1920s to consolidate small peasant farm holdings into large scale collective farms.

Collective Security

Assurance of peace based on member nations' compliance with the decisions and arbitration of a supervisory organisation such as the League of Nations.

Colony

Foreign territory ruled by another country.

Colonialism

The act of occupying and governing the territories of usually less developed parts of the world, either through settlements or through creating dependencies. Africa and Asia were targets of European colonialism where native populations were displaced or directly ruled.

Comintern

The Communist International, established in 1919, was an umbrella organisation for communist parties.

Communism

Political ideology that seeks to establish a future classless, stateless social organisation.

Concentration Camp

Generally used to denote a facility for holding political opponents of a regime. The term is most generally applied to those established in Germany during the Third Reich.

Constitution

A written document that outlines how a government will function and who is permitted to participate.

Constitutional Monarchy

A form of government that recognises a monarch, a king or queen, as the head of state. The powers of the monarch are limited by a form of constitution.

Consumerism

A society is a consumer society where goods are produced for enjoyment and pleasure rather than necessity.

Cubism

An art style, especially in painting, in which objects are presented in several superimposed views, almost as if the viewer is seeing the object from more than one side. Pablo Picasso's 1907 painting *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)* is considered the earliest example of this art form, which became one of the most important art forms of the twentieth century.

D**Dadaism**

A movement in art and literature that rejected conventions and intended to shock. Dadaism began during World War I, which influenced the movement's anti-war, anti-bourgeois and radical left-wing philosophy. In Germany, George Grosz and Max Ernst were early Dadaists.

DAP

Stands for Deutsche Arbeiterpartei or German Workers' Party. Formed by Anton Drexler in 1919.

Deflation

General decrease in the price of goods and an increase in the value of money. This may be associated with higher unemployment, when jobs are scarce and people have less money to spend on goods.

Duma

The Russian Parliament which was established in 1905.

E**Economic Depression**

A prolonged and sustained period of low economic activity, with high and rising unemployment and low demand for goods.

Empire

A group of states or countries ruled over and owned by another country.

Enabling Act

Also called the 'Law to Remedy the Distress of the People and the Reich', the Enabling Act was passed on 23 March 1933. It suspended the powers of the Reichstag for the duration of the Third Reich and provided the quasi-legal basis for the Third Reich.

Entartete

A German term for supposedly inferior racial, sexual or moral types. In art, the term means 'non-art.' This concept was the basis of the Nazis' 1937 exhibition of Entartete Kunst or 'Degenerate Art.'

Eugenics

A theory that genetics influences all aspects of life. Connected to ideas of improving society by deciding who should be allowed to breed.

Evolution

Scientific theory that all things (humans, animals and plants) have changed and evolved over time.

Expressionism

A style of art or music that subordinates realism to the expression of the artist's inner experience. The likeness is distorted to express the artist's feeling about the object. Among the first artists to explore Expressionism were Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890) and Edvard Munch (1863–1944).

F

Fascism

When used as Fascism (with a capital 'F') it refers specifically to the Italian political movement established by Mussolini in 1919. More generally, as fascism, it refers to a range of political movements that shared a radical political philosophy featuring extreme nationalism, anti-communism and anti-liberalism. It is also characterised by a militarised aesthetic and revolutionary outlook. Varieties of fascism emerged in most European countries during the period before 1918 and 1939.

Final Solution

A National Socialist euphemism for the physical extermination of European Jews.

Five Year Plan

The program of industrialisation and collectivisation initiated by Stalin in 1928 in the Soviet Union.

Fordism

A production method pioneered by car manufacturer Henry Ford whereby the production moved past the worker who performed a few or single repetitive tasks all day. This method of assembly line production significantly increased the rate of manufacturing.

Four Year Plan

A National Socialist program that stressed economic self-sufficiency and rearmament. It was launched in 1936 under the leadership of Hermann Göring.

Freikorps

Volunteer groups of ex-soldiers formed at the end of World War I that put down communist uprisings in Germany.

Führer

German for 'leader.' The title adopted by Hitler as leader of the NSDAP and, later, of Germany.

Fundamentalism

A movement within a number of different religions to adhere rigidly to religious beliefs and dogma.

G

Gender

The presentation of male or female. The connection of physical identity to personal characteristics and attributes.

Genocide

From the Greek *genos* (family/tribe/race) and *cide* (to murder). The term was first utilised in 1943 to describe the destruction of particular ethnic, racial or cultural groups.

Great Depression

Used to describe the economic collapse of many developed countries between 1929 and 1933. 'Black Tuesday' on Wall Street in 1929 is normally regarded as providing the trigger for the subsequent Great Depression.

Great Powers

A term used to describe the major nations of Europe up until World War I. They included Great Britain, Germany, France, Russia and Austria-Hungary.

Gulag

A Soviet forced labour camp.

H

Hitler Youth

A German youth movement. Boys aged 14 to 18 were encouraged to join Hitler Youth, which emphasised army drills and elements of soldiering. There was a lot of outdoor activity, including camps and athletics, and a strong emphasis on belonging. In 1939, it became compulsory for boys to join the organisation.

Holocaust

A term used since World War II to describe the murder of some six million European Jews by National Socialist Germany and other Europeans between 1940 and 1945.

Holodomor

A Ukrainian expression referring to the 'manufactured' famine of 1932–33, meaning 'death by forced starvation.'

Hyperinflation

An economic situation when the value of a currency declines extremely rapidly due to overprinting. Prices soar and wages fail to keep up.

I

Ideology

A collection of closely related ideas that forms a worldview that permits an interpretive analysis of human society and behaviour.

Imperialism

A policy to increase a nation's influence by expanding beyond its own territories and acquiring and creating an overseas empire.

Inflation

A general increase in prices and a fall in the purchasing value of money. The opposite of deflation. People may have work, but their wages buy less and less.

Interbellum

The period between two wars, especially that between World War I and World War II.

International Style

An umbrella term first used in the 1930s to describe Modernist architecture.

Isolationism

The policy of isolating one's nation from involvement with other countries. By not becoming involved in politics, joining alliances or making economic commitments, countries sought to serve their own interests. America followed this policy during the 1920s and 1930s.

K

Kaiser

The German term for 'emperor.' Wilhelm II was the kaiser of Germany at the end of World War I.

L

Laissez-Faire

A government policy of not interfering with or attempting to control the economy.

League Of German Maidens (Bund Deutscher Mädel)

Similar to the Hitler Youth, this organisation was designed to train girls to be successful young women in a Nazified society—especially to prepare them for motherhood.

Lebensraum (Living Space)

Hitler used *lebensraum* to describe his desire to expand Germany's territory into Eastern Europe.

Liberal Democracy

A form of government where, under the rule of law, elected representatives exercise decision making powers. The rights and freedoms of individuals are usually defined in a constitution or founding document. A liberal democracy may be a republic or a constitutional monarchy.

Luftwaffe (Air Arm or Air Weapon)

German air force during the Nazi era.

M

Marxism-Leninism

The official ideology of the USSR, which was a synthesis of Marx's original ideas and Lenin's further theoretical development.

Mensheviks

A moderate communist group opposed to the Bolsheviks.

Militarism

When military commanders exert excessive influence on government and policy, and when civilians, even elected representatives, have limited control. Japan in the 1930s had a militaristic government.

Miscegenation

Intermarrying between people of different races. There were often anti-miscegenation laws to prevent marriage between couples from different races.

Modernism

A term used to describe the common characteristics of a number of movements in the creative arts from the start of the twentieth century.

N

Nationalism

Championing of one's country over others. At an extreme level, it often means that a country sees itself and its people as better, more important than, or deserving of more rights than other people and other countries. As a political movement, it often means that a country wants to assert its superiority over others—often by force.

Nazi Party

Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei or the National Socialist German Workers' Party. Led by Hitler, the Nazi Party governed Germany between 1933 and 1945.

Nazism

The form of fascism and militarism adopted by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party in Germany in the 1930s. Nazism is characterised by secret police, territorial expansion, extreme nationalism and a lack of personal freedom. Nazism had, as its dark side, an intense and brutal discrimination against anyone who did not fit the 'ideal' German image. The main victims of this discrimination were Jews.

Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity)

A variety of Expressionism particularly significant in Germany. The most well known form stressed political sentiments.

New Deal

An ad hoc series of measures begun in 1933 under the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt that was intended to lift the United States out of the Great Depression.

New Economic Policy (NEP)

Lenin's pragmatic compromise to promote economic recovery by allowing concessions to the market economy.

New World

Countries such as Australia and the United States of America, which were not bound by old customs and traditions.

New World Order

A political situation in which the countries of the world are no longer divided because of their support, as they were in their support for the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente before World War I. The phrase has repeatedly been used at times of change; it originated in the late nineteenth century from the British Fabian Society, who argued there would be no need for war if the entire world was under the control of Britain.

NSDAP

An abbreviation of Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, or National Socialist German Workers Party. Commonly shortened to the Nazi Party.

O

Old World

The countries of Europe, which were considered to have old customs and traditions.

P

Proletariat

Working class, wage earners; people without capital. Marx believed the proletariat were exploited by capitalists.

Propaganda

An organised means of spreading a particular doctrine or practice. It uses art, literature, radio, film, media releases, education and other forms of communication to transmit a message that a government or organisation wishes to relay.

Provisional Government

The temporary government established to administer Russia after the abdication of the tsar.

Putsch

The German word for 'thrust' or 'knock.' An attempt to overthrow a government by force.

R

Racism

Views that certain races are inferior or superior to others. Connected to ideas that a person's race shapes their personality characteristics.

Raw Resources

The basic materials from which goods are made, such as oil is refined to produce petrol.

Reichstag

The German Parliament.

Reichstag Decree

Issued on 28 February 1933 in response to the Reichstag fire, the decree suspended many of the civil rights embodied in the Weimar Constitution and provided the legal basis for Nazi Germany's persecution of political opponents.

Reichswehr

The title of the German Army from 1919 to 1935; translates as 'Reich Defence'.

Reparations

A set amount of money one nation has to pay another to cover the damage caused during a war.

Repatriations

The process of returning a person to their place of origin. This includes the process of returning refugees or military personnel to their place of origin.

Revolution

A series of drastic political and social changes that take place within a short space of time.

S

Schlieffen Plan

A German blueprint for war against both France and Russia formulated in 1905. German forces would attack and invade France through Belgium while holding Russian forces off in the east.

Schutzstaffel (SS Protection Squad)

Originally Hitler's personal bodyguards, the SS became the main instrument of policing in Nazi Germany. As an organisation the SS also controlled the process of the Holocaust. Subsidiary formations included its military arm, the Waffen SS and concentration camp guards, Totenkopfverbände.

Segregation

Separating groups in society. In the USA in the 1920s and 30s, racial groups were often separated on the basis of race and colour. There were different schools and churches, different restaurants and movie theatres, even different toilets and water fountains. Segregation was the law in most of the southern states.

Self-Determination

The process by which a country determines its own statehood and forms its own government. The concept originated in ancient Mesopotamia and ancient Greece, but it was particularly important at the end of the 'war to end all wars.'

Shares

Shares are bought and sold on the stock exchange or sharemarket. Shares give the buyer a part ownership of a company.

Socialism

An economic system in which the economy is guided more by the state than by private enterprise, and in which cooperation, not competition, guides economic activity.

Socialism in One Country

Stalin's doctrine stressing the Russian Revolution's self-sufficiency and focusing on rapid industrialisation and collectivisation to fortify the political security of the Soviet state.

Social Darwinism

A concept that has evolved from Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. Based on biological traits, the process of natural selection has been applied to explain the survival and dominance of certain human societies or groups over others.

Soviet

A council or committee of the Soviet Union. The term emerged from the various revolutionary councils of workers and soldiers during the period of the Russian Revolution

during 1917. When used as Soviets, it refers to the Soviet Union of Socialist Republics.

Speculation

When people borrow money to buy stockmarket shares, gambling or 'speculating' that the price of shares will rise and they will get a return that covers the original money borrowed plus a profit from the sale of their shares.

Stalinism

Joseph Stalin's mode of totalitarian rule over all spheres of Soviet life.

Strategic Positioning

Ensuring a country is in a place to achieve their long-term aims and interests. This could be territorial or economic.

Sturmabteilungen (SA Storm Troops)

The National Socialist paramilitary formation established in 1921 to protect National Socialist meetings in Germany. The SA was very important in the electoral campaigns of the late 1920s and early 1930s but its significance reduced following the 'Night of the Long Knives' in June 1934.

Sudetenland

The German-speaking area of Czechoslovakia.

Suffragette

Suffragettes were women who campaigned to get the right to vote.

Surrealism

Surrealism is art and literature that transforms the material world to a 'marvellous' or 'surreal' level. The movement began in 1924, when the poet André Breton published his first Manifesto of Surrealism, in which poetry and the visual arts were described as the way to Surrealism. René Magritte (1898–1967) and Salvador Dali (1904–1989) were key proponents of Surrealism.

'Susso'

An Australian slang term for 'sustenance': welfare support provided by governments. Unemployed men could apply for this relief, which often involved waiting in long queues and strict means testing.

Swastika

The symbol used by the Nazi Party that, they believed, represented the pure, Aryan race.

T

Tariff

A duty or custom imposed on imports or exports. A tariff on imports is designed to protect local industry or production.

Terror

The name for the brutal Bolshevik policies aimed at putting down counter-revolution after 1917.

Third Reich

The name given to Germany when Hitler came to power and wanted to establish an empire under his Nazi regime (1933–1945).

Total War

Used as a tactic in war for centuries, in the middle to late 1800s it was recognised as a separate class of warfare during which a country will use all its resources to destroy another's ability to engage in war.

Totalitarianism

A state in which a single party holds power through the use of propaganda and terror, real or implied. The ruling party also seeks to intervene in and regulate all aspects of public and private life. Examples of totalitarian regimes include Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia and Fascist Italy.

Treaty

A formal agreement between one or more nations related to peace, alliance, commerce or other international matters.

Triple Alliance

A treaty signed in 1882 by Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy that tied all three nations together in a military pact. Italy made a similar secret treaty with France in 1902.

Triple Entente

Formed in 1907 by Britain, France and Russia, the Triple Entente formed a counter-balance to the Triple Alliance.

V

Völkisch

A term meaning 'art of and for the people.' The term was popularised by Alfred Rosenberg, the chief architect of Nazi cultural policy in the 1920s and 1930s. The völkisch movement emphasised simple and traditional themes and was a reaction against many new aspects of Weimar culture.

Volksgemeinschaft (People's Community)

Refers to the idea of a national community that transcended class, religious and regional differences. Although it predated the Nazis, on taking power they developed it as an exclusive racist, anti-Semitic, Social Darwinian concept.

W

War Communism

A series of economic policies serving the militaristic and political objectives of the Bolshevik Party in civil war conditions.

Wehrmacht (Defence Force)

Refers specifically to the German armed forces between 1935–45.

Weimar Republic

The name given to the republican government that ruled in Germany from 1919 to 1933; named after the city where it first sat in 1919.

WHO'S WHO

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN (1869–1940)

Arthur Neville Chamberlain was a British Conservative Party politician. He was British prime minister May 1937–May 1940. Chamberlain became a Member of Parliament in 1918, serving as minister of health and chancellor of the Exchequer before replacing Stanley Baldwin as prime minister. His determination to avert war led to a policy of appeasement towards Hitler, which culminated with the Munich Agreement. Chamberlain famously declared 'peace in our time' on his return from Munich, in September 1938.

GEORGES CLÉMENTEAU (1841–1929)



Georges Clémenceau was born in 1841. His father was a staunch republican and Georges grew up with ideals about a republic. Upon graduating as a doctor, Clémenceau travelled and lived in the United States, where he was impressed with the political freedoms. When he returned to Paris he focused on a career in journalism. In 1902, Clémenceau was elected senator, and in 1906 became prime minister. He was nicknamed 'The Tiger' for his fierceness. In 1909 his government fell to Aristide Briand. In opposition, he vigorously attacked Germany and argued for greater military defence in the event of war. In 1917, Clémenceau was appointed prime minister again and formed a coalition cabinet. At the Paris Peace Conference, he insisted that Germany was punished. Despite the Paris Peace Treaty, Clémenceau was widely criticised by France and Belgium as being too lenient. He was defeated in presidential elections in 1920. In 1929, Clémenceau published his autobiography, *In the Evening of my Thought*, in which he correctly predicted a renewed war with Germany in 1940. He died in 1929, at the age of 90.

JOSEPH GOEBBELS (1897–1945)



Born in the city of Rheydt in the Ruhr region, Goebbels was rejected from military service during World War I because of his deformed right foot. He attended university instead, and gained a PhD in German literature in 1921. Goebbels joined the Nazi Party in 1924 and became Gauleiter of Berlin two years later, where his support helped Hitler gain dominance over the NSDAP faction. Upon Hitler's rise to power, Goebbels was appointed Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. His virulent anti-Semitism was evident in his speeches, and was also a feature of the Nazi propaganda posters and films whose production he oversaw. Goebbels fell out of favour with Hitler in the late 1930s because of a series of adulterous affairs. However, he regained his elevated position within the Party leadership late in World War II because of his steadfast loyalty to Hitler. Goebbels committed suicide, along with his wife, in the final days of World War II, after first poisoning their six children.

Born in Rosenheim, Bavaria, Göring joined the German army prior to World War I. He transferred to the German Air Force and became an ace pilot with twenty-two victories. After the war, Göring made a living as a pilot and joined the Nazi Party in 1922. After getting badly wounded in the leg during the Beer Hall putsch, Göring became addicted to morphine. He won a seat in the Reichstag for the Nazi Party in 1928 and was appointed minister of the interior in Prussia. He quickly blamed the Reichstag fire of February 1933 on communists, which helped Hitler pass the Enabling Act. Fearful of Röhm's growing influence, Göring pressured Hitler to strike at the leadership of the SA. In 1936, Göring became head of the Luftwaffe (Air Force) and during the war he called for the 'Final Solution' to the 'Jewish Question'. Captured by the Allies at the end of the war, he was found guilty of crimes against humanity at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials but committed suicide before he could be hanged.

HERMANN GÖRING (1893–1946)



Gropius was a German architect who founded the Bauhaus School. He is considered a pioneer of modern architecture and a key proponent of the style that combined function and beauty. After the rise of Nazism, Gropius moved to Britain and later to the United States. His family home, in Lincoln, Massachusetts, embodies the functional simplicity of modern architecture.

WALTER GROPIUS (1883–1969)

Heinrich Himmler was Hitler's Reichführer-SS, a title that meant he was head of the SS but held various other positions. He controlled the entire German police force, and ultimately had complete power over concentration camps, work camps and, later, extermination camps. Himmler's personality and personal appearance were at odds with his position: he was shy and almost unsocial, a meticulous bookkeeper, but also a fanatical follower of Hitler. He believed that 'the Führer is never wrong' and had a genuine belief in National Socialism's spiritual mission. He joined the Nazi Party in 1920, and took part in the failed putsch in 1923. In 1929, he became head of the SS, which at that time was small and apparently unimportant. Himmler transformed the SS so that its membership increased from 280 in 1929 to 50 000 by 1933; along with increased membership, the SS became an elite and powerful organisation. Under Himmler's leadership, the SS was responsible for the reign of terror that murdered millions of Jews, Poles, homosexuals, gypsies, people with disabilities and Russian prisoners of war.

HEINRICH HIMMLER (1900–1945)



At the end of the war in 1945, Himmler was arrested but committed suicide in prison.

**PAUL VON
HINDENBURG
(1847–1934)**

Paul von Hindenburg was born in 1847 in Posen, into an aristocratic German family. He joined the army and served in the Austro–Prussian War of 1866 and the Franco–Prussian War of 1870–71. During World War I, with the rank of Field Marshal, von Hindenburg commanded the German war effort. He retired from the army at the end of the war, but was persuaded to run for president in 1925. He won the election and was re-elected in 1932, beating Hitler by a clear margin. Amidst social and economic upheaval, Hindenburg appointed Hitler as Chancellor of Germany on 30 January 1933. Upon Hindenburg’s death on 2 August 1934, Hitler assumed the title of Führer.

**EMPEROR HIROHITO
(1901–1989)**

Hirohito became Emperor of Japan in 1926 and was the official leader of Japan through the 1930s and the World War II. There is controversy about the extent to which Hirohito drove Japan’s aggression and territorial expansion in this period. He came to the throne at the time of rising militarist power in Japan. It is said that while Hirohito did not approve of all of the aggressive tactics used by Japan’s military leaders, he also did little to stop them.

**ADOLF HITLER
(1889–1945)**

Born in Braunau am Inn in Austria in 1889, Hitler joined the German Army in 1914. He was wounded twice and earned the Iron Cross First Class for bravery. Hitler joined the DAP in 1919 and, after renaming the party the NSDAP in 1921, became its leader. After a failed coup in 1923, Hitler resolved to take power through legal means. Hitler’s ideology of nationalism, anti-Semitism and racial purity were expressed in his book *Mein Kampf*. The Great Depression brought electoral success for the Nazi Party, and on 30 January 1933 Hitler was appointed Chancellor. Within eighteen months, Hitler had consolidated his power as a dictator. He committed suicide in Berlin on 30 April 1945.

**HERBERT HOOVER
(1874–1964)**



Born in West Branch, Iowa, in 1874, Herbert Hoover became an orphan at the age of nine. He became a mining engineer after studying at Stanford University. He worked in many different countries before taking up a position in England, leading the Commission for Relief of Belgium during World War I. This increased his political profile and after returning to America, Hoover became Secretary of Commerce to the Republican presidents Warren Harding and Calvin Coolidge. Hoover was president of the United States 1929–1933, during one of the country’s most difficult periods. In October 1929, the stock market crashed and America slid into the Great Depression.

Hoover didn’t understand how bad the Great Depression would be, and felt the key to economic recovery was through restoring people’s confidence rather than through government intervention. Unfortunately this was not seen as the solution and Hoover lost the 1932 election to Franklin D. Roosevelt. Herbert Hoover died in 1964.

ALEXANDER KERENSKY (1881–1970)

Alexander Kerensky, a key revolutionary figure, was a career lawyer and politician. He is perhaps best known as the second and final prime minister of the short-lived Provisional Government. Prior to this, Kerensky had been an important member of the Socialist Revolutionaries group, a member of the Duma from 1912, and minister for war during the chaos and bloodshed of 1917. Prior to that, in 1905, Kerensky had been arrested for publishing a socialist newspaper, and sent into exile. A gifted speaker, he used his broad popularity when he was prime minister to bridge the gap between the government and the revolutionaries, but failed to fulfil the promises he had made to the Russian people. Kerensky went into hiding after the October Revolution, then fled to Western Europe in 1918, where he tried to get Western powers to intervene in Russia—without success.

FRIEDRICH 'FRITZ' LANG (1890–1976)

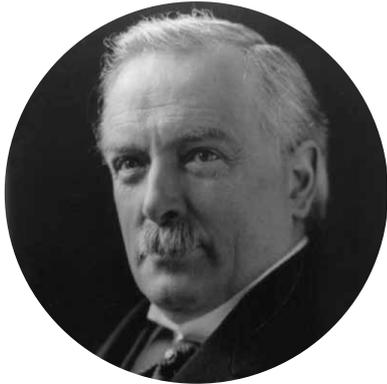
Fritz Lang was a filmmaker, one of the best-known German artists to emigrate when the Nazis took power in 1933. After World War I, in which he served in the Austrian army, he became a director for the German film studio, UFA, where he made the ground-breaking expressionist films *Metropolis* and *M*. In 1933, Lang, a Jew, migrated to Paris to escape Nazism, and then to the United States. He was a significant Hollywood director, especially in the development of film noir.

VLADIMIR LENIN (1870–1924)



Born Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, Lenin was unquestionably the driving force behind the Russian Revolution. Born into a wealthy family, he excelled at school. The death of his father in 1886, followed closely by the execution of his brother Aleksandr in 1887 for involvement in a plot to assassinate Tsar Alexander III, saw Lenin involve himself with radical Marxist groups. Lenin's actions as a revolutionary saw him expelled from university in 1887, and exiled to Siberia in 1897. Freed in 1900, he spent most of his time until 1917 travelling throughout Europe, inciting dissent and promoting his spin on Marxist ideas. He returned to Russia in April 1917 and played a vital role in undermining the Provisional Government and inspiring the Bolsheviks. After the success of the October Revolution, Lenin continued to lead the Bolsheviks, and the new Soviet Union, until his death in 1924 after a series of strokes. One of the twentieth century's most significant figures, Lenin's importance cannot be denied—yet his legacy is still debated.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE
(1863–1945)



David Lloyd George was born in Manchester, England, in 1863. The son of a schoolmaster, his father died a year after his birth and his mother moved to Wales. Lloyd George studied law and soon developed a reputation as a lawyer willing to defend people against authority. In 1888, he married the daughter of a wealthy farmer and, after joining the Liberal Party, he successfully stood for a seat in 1890 and entered the House of Commons, where he spoke out about British involvement in the Boer War. At the outbreak of World War I, Lloyd George was the minister for munitions and the secretary for war in the Asquith government. He questioned Asquith's handling of the war, and became prime minister on 7 December 1916. Lloyd George was a strong prime minister and at the Paris Peace Conference he moderated Wilson's idealism and Clémenceau's determination to make Germany pay—and to a large extent shaped the final agreements. The political handing of violence in the formation of the Irish Free State in 1920 led conservatives to distance themselves from Lloyd George and he resigned as prime minister in 1922. He went on to write *War Memoirs* (1936) and *The Truth about the Peace Treaties* (1938). Churchill invited Lloyd George to join the War Cabinet in 1940, but he declined because of his age and ill-health. He died 26 March 1945, before World War II was over.

BENITO MUSSOLINI
(1883–1945)

Benito Amilcare Andrea Mussolini was an Italian journalist who formed the Fascist Party in 1919. He was invited to form a government in 1922 and three years later made himself dictator of Italy, known as 'Il Duce'. Mussolini sought to rebuild Italy's power as a nation, invading Abyssinia in 1935 to distract Italians from the severe economic problems they were facing.

FRANZ VON PAPEN
(1879–1969)



Franz von Papen was born in Werl, Germany. He served as an officer in the German army during World War I and joined the Centre Party in 1921. A conservative politician with an aristocratic background, von Papen formed a close bond with president Paul von Hindenburg and was appointed Chancellor in May 1932. He was dismissed in December, largely at the instigation of General Kurt von Schleicher, who replaced Papen as Chancellor. Partly out of a desire to exact his revenge—and also because the Nazi Party was the biggest single party in the Reichstag—Papen suggested to Hindenburg that Hitler replace Schleicher as Chancellor. Papen served as Hitler's Vice-Chancellor, but was dismissed in 1934. He narrowly avoided being executed along with other prominent German politicians during the Night of the Long Knives. Papen was acquitted during the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, but was found guilty of crimes against peace by a West German denazification court. Papen was released upon appeal in 1949. For the next twenty years he wrote books and articles in an attempt to restore his political and personal reputation.

ERICH MARIA REMARQUE (1898–1970)

Remarque is best known as the author of *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929), a novel describing the World War I experience from a German soldier's viewpoint. Remarque had been conscripted into the German army and served on the Western Front. After the war, he was briefly a primary school teacher before becoming a novelist. His novels were banned and publicly burned after 1933, and he migrated to the United States and later to Switzerland. In 1943, Remarque's sister, Elfriede Scholz, was arrested for 'undermining morale' and executed. Remarque wrote numerous novels, and in 1955 he wrote the screenplay for an Austrian film about Hitler's final days.

LENI RIEFENSTAHL (1902–2003)

Riefenstahl was a German film director during the period of Nazi government and is particularly remembered for two documentary films she made during the 1930s: a film about a Nazi rally, *Triumph of the Will* (1935), and a film about the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, *Olympia* (1938). Both films made significant contributions to the development of documentary film. *Triumph of the Will* was a record of the 1934 Nuremberg Rally, and used dramatic film techniques that presented Hitler almost as a messiah. Riefenstahl always claimed that she was making a 'pure historical film' and denied that she was ever involved in promoting Nazism. After World War II, Riefenstahl was convicted of having been a 'fellow traveller' with the Nazi regime. She tried to relaunch her film career but was mostly blacklisted. In the 1960s, she became a photographer. She worked into her nineties and died at the age of 101.

ERNST RÖHM (1887–1934)



Born in Munich in 1887, Röhm joined the army in 1906. During his service in World War I, he was badly wounded in the face and carried the scars for the rest of his life. He joined the DAP in 1919, where he met Hitler and they quickly became close friends. Röhm played an important role in recruitment for the SA and, with his army connections, provided weapons and equipment. By 1934, Hitler feared that the SA, which now had over two million men, was a serious threat to his own position. On 30 June, in the Night of the Long Knives, Röhm and other leading members of the SA were executed.

**TSAR NICHOLAS
II / NICHOLAS
ALEXANDROVICH
ROMANOV
(1868–1918)**

Tsar Nicholas II ruled Russia from 1894 until 1917. He succeeded his father and married Alexandra in the same year. Despite a distaste for politics, he stayed committed to the principle of autocracy. The rule of Tsar Nicholas II was plagued with misfortune and disaster from the beginning—at his 1896 coronation, 1400 people were killed as the crowd surged towards the free gifts being handed out. He inherited a vast and backwards empire that he seemed unable to cope with. In just a few years as tsar, he had to deal with revolutions, economic disaster, plots, wars and the rising revolutionary tide. Tsar Nicholas II's decision-making was poor, and his heavy-handed approach to controlling discontent earned him the nickname 'Nicholas the Bloody'. He assumed control of the Russian Army in 1915 during WWI, a catastrophic error that ultimately led to his abdication in March 1917. Exiled to the wastelands of Siberia, he was brutally executed in 1918, along with his wife, four daughters and his son.

**FRANKLIN D.
ROOSEVELT
(1882–1945)**

Franklin D. Roosevelt was born into a wealthy New York family. He studied law at Harvard University and married his distant cousin Eleanor Roosevelt in 1905. In 1910, Roosevelt began his political career in the Democratic Party, following in the path of his cousin Theodore Roosevelt, who had been Republican president from 1901–1909. In 1928, Roosevelt became the Governor of New York, which helped boost his political career. When the Great Depression continued into the early 1930s, he used the familiar Roosevelt name to win the presidency by promising to fix the economy. He created the New Deal to help create work and stimulate the economy. Roosevelt was the president of the United States from 1933–1945, winning four consecutive terms. He died in office, shortly before the end of World War II. After his death, Eleanor Roosevelt became the first Chair of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

**JOSEPH STALIN
(1879–1953)**



Born Iosif Dzhugashvili to a peasant family in the Russian colony of Georgia, the young Stalin suffered poor health throughout his formative years. Involved in revolutionary groups from his teens, he discovered Marxism and started to spread his ideas—and was eventually expelled from the seminary where he was studying. Exiled to Siberia in 1902 for his involvement in strike action, he later changed his name to Stalin, meaning 'man of steel'. Stalin played a supporting role throughout the various stages of the 1917 revolutions, rising to the position of General Secretary of the Communist Party by 1922. Despite Lenin's distrust of him, Stalin successfully manipulated his opponents to become the supreme leader of the Soviet Union by 1924. Wielding dictatorial powers, he embarked on a ruthless process of modernising the Soviet Union, including large-scale industrialisation, collective farms, forced famines and purges that saw his country dragged into the modern era—but at the expense of tens of millions of lives. After Stalin's death in 1953, many aspects of his policies and ideologies were condemned by his successors—but his legacy lived on in the Cold War and in the totalitarian regime he had created.

LEON TROTSKY (1879–1940)



Born into a wealthy Jewish farming family, Trotsky (originally named Lev Bronstein) became involved in revolutionary politics as a teenager. The injustices of life in tsarist society—especially the harsh treatment of Jews—saw Trotsky join a Marxist group, where he helped to organise strikes and distribute radical writings. He was arrested and exiled to Siberia in 1900, where he continued to work on his revolutionary ideas. After taking the alias of 'Trotsky' and escaping in 1902, he met Lenin in London. Trotsky's involvement in the 1905 uprising saw him arrested and imprisoned again, but he escaped abroad and did not return to Russia until May 1917. He played a key role in the October Revolution and subsequent events, using his gifts as a skilled organiser, dynamic speaker and talented writer to further the Bolshevik cause. Trotsky headed the Bolshevik victory in the Civil War as leader of the Red Army. He was set to take over the leadership of Russia upon Lenin's death, but was outmanoeuvred by Stalin, expelled from the Communist Party in 1928 and exiled from the Soviet Union in 1929. Trotsky was executed in Mexico by Stalin's agents in 1940.

WOODROW WILSON (1856–1924)



Woodrow Wilson was born in Virginia, United States, in 1856. His father was a pastor in Augusta, Georgia, during the Civil War and later a professor in Columbia, South Carolina, when it was being rebuilt after the Civil War. These early years helped Wilson understand the complexities of war and the peace that followed. He graduated from Princeton and Johns Hopkins universities, and was encouraged to become a Democrats candidate. In 1912 Wilson won the presidential election, and passed laws prohibiting child labour. In 1916, he was re-elected with the slogan 'He kept us out of the war'. But following the sinking of the *Lusitania*, Wilson argued that the United States could not remain neutral and asked Congress to declare war on Germany. The US effort tipped the balance but he used his influence early in 1918 to plan for peace. Wilson proposed his Fourteen Points, which he believed would create a new world order. After Germany signed the armistice based on his Fourteen Points, Wilson spent six months in Paris. His time away from Washington cost him dearly and in the end both the US Congress and Senate rejected both the Versailles Treaty and joining the League of Nations. Against medical advice, Wilson made a national tour to convince Americans of the benefits of the Treaty of Versailles, but he had a stroke and nearly died. He never really recovered, suffering another stroke and dying in 1924, aged 67.

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