

KEY IDEAS

This section will:

- Look at politics and society in Germany at the end of the First World War.
- Raise understanding of the German reaction to the Treaty of Versailles.
- Examine the Weimar Republic to evaluate the reasons for its problems and achievements.
- Consider the reasons for the collapse of the German economy in 1923, the effects of this crisis, and how the crisis was overcome.
- Examine the reasons for the Nazis coming to power.
- Raise understanding of the impact of Nazi rule.
- Consider the Nazi economic policy and war economy, and the different experiences of people living in Germany.

Background

The armistice bringing the First World War to an end was signed on 11 November 1918. Shortly before the signing, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany abdicated and a democratic government, the Weimar Republic, was set up. This democracy lasted 14 years before it was destroyed by the establishment of Hitler's dictatorship.

The new Weimar Republic, led by Friedrich Ebert, was facing many problems. The war had been most severe on Germany and its people. The blockade of Germany by the Allies had contributed to the difficulties faced by creating severe food shortages. The new government became immediately unpopular by signing the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.

9.1 Was the Weimar Republic doomed from the start?

How did Germany emerge from defeat at the end of the First World War?

Germany was on the edge of revolution. German sailors at the port of Kiel had mutinied and councils, similar to soviets in Russia, were being set up around the country. There were severe food shortages because of the naval blockade by the British.

The Kaiser abdicated on 9 November 1918. This raised German hopes of a more lenient peace.

Germany was declared a republic on the day the Kaiser abdicated. Ebert, leader of the Social Democrat Party (SDP), became the first President. His first tasks were to restore law and order but he faced a number of challenges.

Challenges faced by the new government

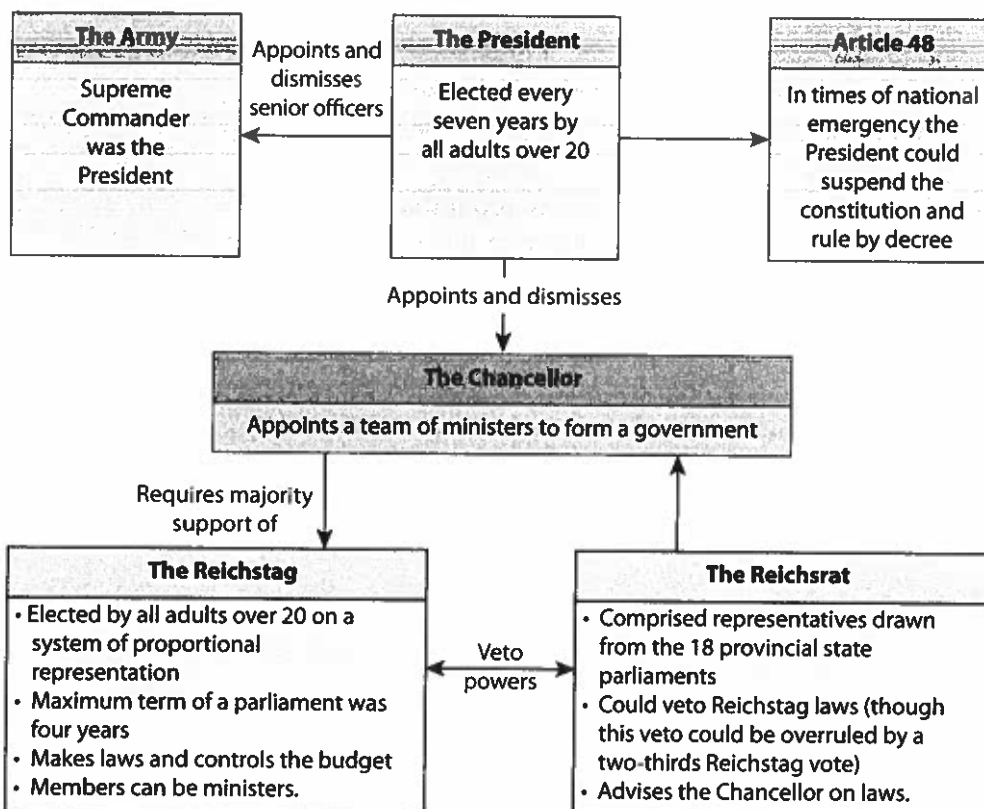
Anger at the Treaty of Versailles	It was the Republicans who made peace with the Allies. They became known as the "November Criminals". Most Germans were furious at the Weimar Republic for accepting the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. They thought their treatment was too harsh, especially as most did not believe that Germany had lost the war.
Weak coalition governments	The new government had a president as head of state and a chancellor. Elections to the Reichstag were decided by proportional representation. This made it unlikely that any party would form a government of its own.
The threat from extreme political groups	The communists in Germany, known as Spartacists, wanted a revolution similar to the one that occurred in Russia in 1917. In January 1919, the left-wing activists led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht seized power in Berlin. They were crushed by the Freikorps, who were ex-soldiers and bitter enemies of the communists. This showed the weakness of the new government as it had to rely on a military group outside its control. In March 1920, Wolfgang Kapp, an extreme nationalist, together with some Freikorps units, seized power in Berlin. This was known as the Kapp Putsch. The nationalists wanted a strong government. The army refused to intervene. Kapp was not supported by the Berlin workers who went on strike, refusing to cooperate. After four days Kapp and his supporters fled Berlin.

Source 1

The German nation is in grave danger. Law and order is in danger of collapsing. Hardship is increasing and starvation threatens. We are threatened by Bolshevism. We shall get rid of this weak republic and replace it with a strong government.

▲ Wolfgang Kapp speaking in 1920

▲ Table 9.1 Challenges faced by the Weimar Republic



▲ Fig. 9.1 Constitutional organisation of the new government

Disadvantages of the new constitution.

- Through proportional representation some extremist parties were represented in the Reichstag, giving them a voice and publicity.
- Proportional representation prevented overall control by one party. This meant coalition governments made up of representatives from a number of different political parties.
- Article 48 gave too much power to the President giving the opportunity for him to act undemocratically.

What was the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on the Weimar Republic?

Terms of the treaty	
Blame for the war	The Germans were furious at the harsh terms of the Treaty. They had believed the Treaty was to be based on Wilson's Fourteen Points. The Treaty was regarded as a "diktat", a dictated peace. The Germans were not allowed to attend the Conference to discuss the terms. Germany had to accept the blame for starting the war (War Guilt Clause) and therefore pay reparations. The reparations figure was fixed in 1921 at £6,600 million. This figure was about 2% of Germany's annual output.
Loss of territory	Germany lost a lot of territory including the industrial areas of the Saar and Upper Silesia, making it more difficult for them to pay the reparations.
The army	The disarmament clause, limiting the army to 100,000 men, was resented as it was argued that this number was too small to keep Germany safe from invasion. The clause also increased unemployment in a country already suffering serious economic problems. The Allies thought that those in the Freikorps should be included in this figure. An Allied request for the Freikorps to be disbanded caused the Kapp Putsch.

▲ Table 9.2 Terms of the Treaty of Versailles

Crisis in the Ruhr

The first instalment of reparations was paid by Germany in 1921. In 1922 the German government was unable to pay and asked for more time. While the British agreed, the French did not.

The French thought the Germans were bluffing and, together with the Belgians, decided to occupy the Ruhr and seize coal and iron as reparations. In January 1923 the occupation of the centre of German industry began. The results were disastrous for Germany.

The German workers used “passive resistance”. This meant the German workers would not work in the mines or accept orders from the occupiers. The result was that there would be nothing to take away.

Source 2

The greatest fraud in the history of the world is now being carried out in Germany, with the full support of its population. Germany is full of wealth. She is humming like a beehive. Poverty is almost non-existent. Yet this is a country that is determined not to pay its debts. Germany is a nation of actors. If it were not for the fact that the German has no humour, one might imagine the whole German nation was carrying out a great practical joke.

▲ A letter to a British newspaper, from a businessman who had just returned from Germany, published in 1922.

✓ Discuss in class. How far would the cartoonist in source 3 agree with what was published in the British newspaper in source 2?

Source 3



A TRANSPARENT DODGE.

GERMANY. "HELP! HELP! I DROWN! THROW ME THE LIFE-BELT!"
 MR. LLOYD GEORGE. }
 M. BRIAND } "TRY STANDING UP ON YOUR FEET!"

▲ A cartoon published in Britain in 1921

The French reacted harshly, killing over 100 workers and expelling over 100,000 protesters.

The halt in production caused the collapse of the German currency. The government decided to print money. This caused prices to rise out of control and resulted in hyperinflation. The German currency was virtually worthless.

People's savings became valueless and pensioners suffered as they were on fixed incomes. Prices rose faster than incomes. Shop prices were increasing almost every hour. People could not afford food and heating. The Weimar government was in danger of collapse.

In August 1923 Gustav Stresemann became chancellor. He introduced a rescue plan which:

- ended passive resistance in the Ruhr
- stopped the printing of money in November 1923
- stabilised the currency by introducing the temporary Rentenmark
- resumed reparation payments to the Allies
- resumed production in the Ruhr.

To what extent did the Republic recover after 1923 under Stresemann?

The next six years were characterised by economic recovery.

- Stresemann introduced a temporary currency, the Rentenmark, and the Ruhr industries restarted production. In 1924 this temporary currency was replaced by the permanent Reichmark.
- In 1924 Stresemann agreed the Dawes Plan with the USA. This linked Germany's reparations payments to economic performance. In addition US loans of 800 million gold marks helped to kick-start the German economy. German industry benefited from this investment, inflation and unemployment fell, industry expanded and exports increased. By 1928 German industrial production was greater than pre-war levels.
- The Young Plan of 1929, which reduced reparations, further helped Germany's economic recovery.

However:

- Some groups, including shopkeepers, farmers and small businessmen still struggled.
- Unemployment still remained too high.
- The economic recovery was based on American loans.

Stresemann aimed to get Germany accepted back into the international community

- As part of the Locarno Treaties of 1925, Germany agreed to accept the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and as a result Germany was accepted internationally being admitted into the League of Nations the following year.

What were the achievements of the Weimar period?

Political:

- In 1923 Germany was still regarded with distrust and suspicion. By the time of his death in 1929, Germany was engaging on equal terms with the major powers of the world.
- France left the Ruhr by 1925.
- The Locarno Treaties placed Germany on an equal level with signatories, providing guarantees for the frontiers of Germany, France and Belgium.
- In 1926 Germany was admitted to the League of Nations as a responsible member of the international community.

Cultural:

- The 1920s was a decade of cultural revival in Germany, especially Berlin.
- The new democratic republic was committed to civil liberties. It lifted censorship, encouraged artists, writers, film and theatre directors and designers. The rejection of traditional approaches resulted in the favouring of expressionism.
- At a popular level, night clubs, dance halls, cafes and restaurants increased, affording opportunities for cabaret artists, singers and dance bands.

However:

- Many of these developments were regarded with shock and disgust by the right-wing of German politics. Artistic development was seen a sign of decadence, corruption and moral decay.
- Under the Nazis many artists, writers and thinkers were forced to take refuge abroad.

Literature	Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill, <i>The Threepenny Opera</i> (1928) Thomas Mann, <i>The Magic Mountain</i> (1924) Herman Hesse, <i>Steppenwolf</i> (1927) Erich Remarque, <i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i> (1924)
Art	George Grosz, <i>Grey Day</i> (1921) Otto Dix, <i>Big City</i> (1928)
Film	<i>Metropolis</i> , directed by Fritz Lang (1927) <i>The Blue Angel</i> , directed by Josef von Sternberg (1930)
Architecture	The Bauhaus style founded by Walter Gropius

▲ Fig. 9.2 Examples of Germany's cultural revival, 1921–30.

Renewed economic crisis

- Following the Wall Street Crash of October 1929, the American economy went into recession and many of the loans offered to Germany since 1924 were recalled.
- The German economy suffered a double blow. It had to cope with a world depression and the consequent reduction in export orders but they had to repay substantial amounts of money to the USA. Unemployment rose to alarming levels. By 1932 the German unemployment figure stood at 6 million, one third of the workforce.

Political instability

- Support for the moderate parties that made up the coalitions of the Weimar governments began to decline.
- Support for the two extreme parties, the Nazis and the communists, rose from 13% in 1928 to 52% in 1932.

Exam-style questions

1. What problems faced Germany immediately following the end of the war in 1918?
2. Why was the Weimar constitution considered a weakness?
3. To what extent did Germany recover after 1923?
4. How important was the work of Stresemann to the recovery of Germany after 1923?

9.2 Why was Hitler able to dominate Germany by 1934?

What did the Nazi Party stand for in the 1920s?

The German Workers' Party (DAP, the forerunner of the Nazi Party) was established by Anton Drexler in January 1919. It was an extremist national party.

At the end of the war Hitler had stayed in the army working for the intelligence services. This is how he came across the DAP. In September 1919, he joined the Party. Soon he was taking responsibility for publicity, propaganda and public speaking.

In 1920 the Party published its 25-Point Programme and renamed itself the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazis). The Programme showed strong nationalist and anti-Semitic features. They used the swastika as the party badge.

In July 1921, Hitler replaced Drexler as leader. In August 1921, he founded the SA (Storm Troopers), who were noted for their violence against any opposition.

Key points from the Nazi Party objectives published in 1920

- The union of all Germans in a Greater Germany.
- The destruction of the Treaties of Versailles and St Germain (which would then allow the union of Germany and Austria).
- German citizenship exclusive to those of German blood (thereby excluding Jews).
- No more immigration of non-Germans.
- A strong central government in Germany.
- Generous provision for old age pensioners.

The Munich Putsch, 1923

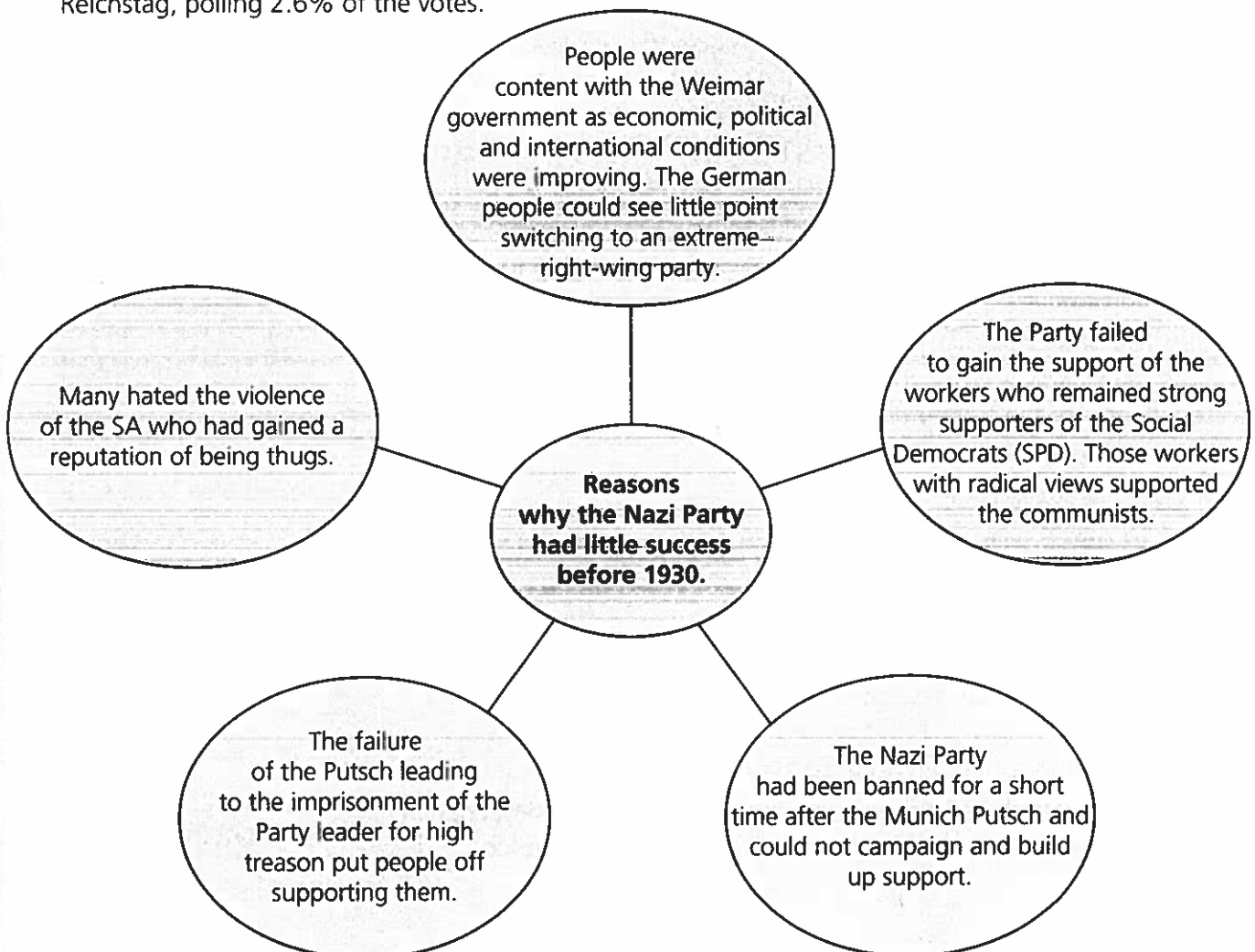
Chances of success	<p>Hitler wanted to achieve the violent overthrow of the unpopular Weimar Republic and replace it with a Nazi government. He thought this attempt would be successful as the Weimar government was unpopular for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ending of passive resistance in the Ruhr gave the impression of giving in to the French • hyperinflation was at its height • Germany had resumed paying reparations (the hated treaty). <p>Hitler was supported by the wartime leader General Ludendorff. It was thought this would increase the support for the putsch.</p>
Events	<p>On 8 November Storm Troopers forced their way into a political meeting in a Munich beer hall. They planned to take over Munich and march into Berlin. Kahr, the Prime Minister of Bavaria, was forced at gunpoint to give support to the revolution.</p> <p>On 9 November Kahr went back on his promise. Hitler marched through the streets of Munich to gain support. Armed police opened fire killing 16 Nazis.</p>

Reasons for failure	<p>The army remained loyal to the Weimar government.</p> <p>Hitler and Ludendorff were arrested and charged with high treason. This was an offence punishable with a death sentence.</p> <p>The loyalty of Bavarian politicians had been underestimated.</p> <p>Hitler miscalculated the mood of the German people. They did not rise to support him.</p>
Outcomes	<p>Hitler was sentenced to five years in prison. Ludendorff was acquitted.</p> <p>The trial gave Hitler the opportunity to gain publicity for his ideas.</p> <p>Hitler used his time in prison to write <i>Mein Kampf</i> (My Struggle). This emphasised the superiority of the German (Aryan) race, especially in comparison with Jews and Slavs; the dangers of communism; the need for "lebensraum" or living space; Germany's rise to be the dominant state in Europe. He realised that power could not be achieved by the use of violence.</p> <p>Hitler had sympathisers within the judiciary. He only served nine months and this was in great comfort at Landsberg Castle.</p> <p>The Nazi Party was banned but this restriction was lifted in 1925.</p>

▲ Table 9.3 The Munich Putsch, 1923

What was the status of the Nazi Party by the end of the 1920s?

In the general election of May 1928 the Nazis only won 12 seats in the Reichstag, polling 2.6% of the votes.



▲ Fig. 9.3 Reasons why the Nazi Party had little success before 1930

Why was Hitler able to become Chancellor by 1933?

In October 1929, Stresemann died. The economy he had built up was fragile, being dependent on German loans. In the same month disaster struck as the Wall Street Crash in America started the Great Depression.

As a result many US banks recalled their loans. German businesses began to close. Millions became unemployed. By 1930, unemployment had reached four million.

As unemployment increased many Germans felt let down by the Weimar Republic and turned to extremist parties. Support for the Nazis and communists increased. In the 1930 elections, the communists (KPD) gained 77 seats, the Nazis 107.

Why did the Nazis benefit from the Depression?

Germany was thrown into economic chaos and no government could solve the problems. President Hindenburg ruled by decree.

Unemployment had reached six million by 1932. Hitler and the Nazis promised to get these people back to work and provide food. They gained support from all areas of German society, including powerful industrialists.

There was fear of a communist revolution as some workers. This worried many industrialists and farmers. They turned to the Nazis who opposed the communists.

Why did the Nazis succeed in elections?

Goebbels introduced new campaigning methods to increase the Nazi share of the vote.

- The Nazis relied on generalised slogans rather than detailed policies.
- They talked about uniting behind one leader and returning to traditional values.
- If criticised for a specific policy, it would be dropped.
- They repeatedly accused the Jews, the communists and the Weimar politicians for the current difficulties.
- Posters and pamphlets were everywhere.
- Large rallies were held.
- The SA and SS gave an impression of discipline and order.
- The SA were prepared to fight the communists, disrupting meetings and rallies.
- The Nazis provided soup kitchens and hostels for the unemployed.
- Hitler was a powerful speaker. He travelled by plane to rallies all over Germany.
- Film, radio and records brought the Nazi message to everybody.
- People supported the Nazis not because they shared Nazi views but because they shared Nazi fears and dislikes ("negative cohesion").

- ✓ In small groups discuss the reasons for the success of the Nazis in elections. Place the reasons in order of importance with the most important first.
- Make a presentation to the rest of your teaching group to argue your choice of rank order.

What happened in the elections of 1932?

Presidential election	In 1932, Hitler opposed the elderly President Hindenburg. In his speeches he blamed the “November Criminals” and the Jews for Germany’s problems. He promised to build a better Germany. This was not enough to get him the support he needed and despite going to a second vote, Hitler was unsuccessful.
Elections for the Reichstag, July 1932	As a result of the 1932 elections the Nazi Party was the largest party in the Reichstag with 230 seats. It did not, however, have an overall majority. The election campaign had been a violent one with street battles between Nazis and communists. Nearly 100 people were killed. As the leader of the largest party, Hitler demanded the Presidency. Hindenburg was suspicious of Hitler and appointed von Papen.
Elections for the Reichstag, November 1932	Von Papen lacked support and called another election. The support for the Nazis dropped to 192 seats but still they remained the largest party.

▲ Table 9.4 The elections of 1932

	July 1932	November 1932	March 1933
Social Democrats	133	121	120
Centre Party	75	70	73
KPD (left wing)	89	100	81
Nazis (right wing)	230	196	288
Nationalists (right wing)	40	51	52

▲ Fig. 9.4 Results of elections for the Reichstag, 1932–33

How did Hitler become Chancellor in January 1933?

Von Papen found that it was still impossible to form a stable government and von Schleicher became Chancellor in early December. He experienced similar problems to von Papen.

Towards the end of January 1933, von Papen managed to persuade Hindenburg to agree a political deal. Hitler would become Chancellor with von Papen Vice-Chancellor. With only a few Nazis in the Cabinet they were confident that Hitler could be controlled. How wrong they were!

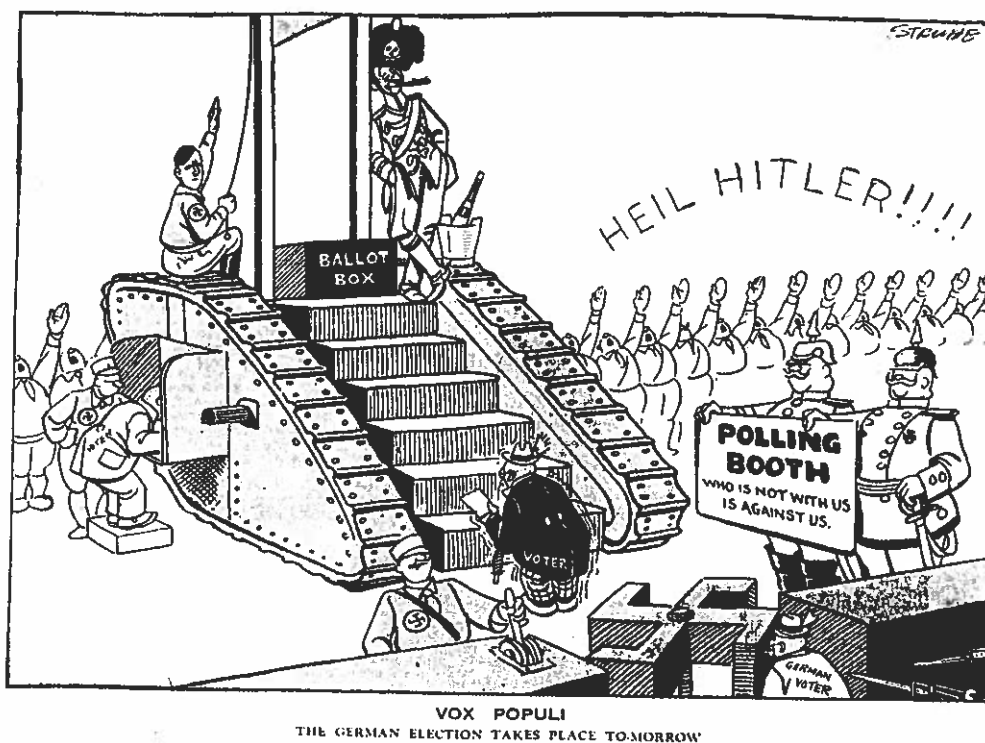
How did Hitler consolidate his power in 1933–34?

<p>The Reichstag Fire, 27 February 1933</p>	<p>On the evening of 27 February 1933 the Reichstag building burnt down. A Dutch communist, van der Lubbe, was arrested and charged with starting the fire.</p> <p>Hitler claimed it was proof of a communist plot against the state. Hitler took the opportunity to whip up public fear against the supposed communist threat.</p> <p>There were many theories as to how the fire started including that the Nazis might have started the fire themselves.</p> <p>President Hindenburg was persuaded by Hitler to issue an emergency decree.</p>
<p>Hitler's use of the emergency decree</p>	<p>The decree gave Hitler wide-ranging powers, including the power to deal with the "state of emergency" that had arisen following the Reichstag Fire.</p> <p>The decree curbed freedom of speech and the right of assembly.</p> <p>It gave the police an excuse to arrest communists. In Prussia over 4,000 were arrested in the days immediately after the fire.</p> <p>Hitler was now out of control.</p>
<p>The general election, 5 March 1933</p>	<p>Hitler aimed for full control of Germany. He banned the Communist Party and shut down their newspapers. The SA were used to intimidate political opponents.</p> <p>The Nazis won 288 seats.</p>

<p>The Enabling Act, 23 March 1933</p>	<p>Hitler still did not have enough elected support to have complete control of Germany. He needed to pass an Enabling Act, but to gain this required two-thirds of the votes of the Reichstag members.</p> <p>To gain this level of votes he expelled the 81 communist members from the Reichstag and ordered the SA to continue their intimidation of the opposition.</p> <p>Only the Social Democrats dared oppose the measure.</p> <p>The Act was passed by 441 votes to 94.</p>
<p>Consequences of the Enabling Act</p>	<p>Hitler was now dictator of all Germany.</p> <p>He could now pass laws for four years without consulting the Reichstag.</p> <p>He was able to ban all other political parties (which he did in July 1933). Germany was now a one-party state.</p> <p>In May 1933 the trade unions were abolished, their leaders arrested and funds confiscated. Strike action was made illegal. All workers had to belong to the German Labour Front.</p> <p>The civil service was purged of all Jews.</p> <p>The democratic Weimar Republic had been destroyed.</p>

▲ Table 9.5 Hitler's steps to power

Source 4



▲ A cartoon published 4 March 1933

✓ Study source 4. Why was this cartoon published in Britain at that time? Explain your answer.

The Night of the Long Knives, June 1934

By the early months of 1934 Hitler's power was nearly complete. Hitler was worried about the growing independence of Ernst Röhm, the leader of the SA. He decided to take action at the end of June.

Reasons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Hitler did not send a clear signal to the army that they were to remain a special highly-trained, professional body, central to his plans, then there was the danger that they would launch a coup against him. • Senior army generals had heard that Röhm was in favour of merging the army with the SA under his leadership. These generals were upset by such rumours: unsure as to how Hitler regarded the idea. • Hitler was beginning to see Röhm as a threat because he was expressing disappointment with Nazi achievements and arguing in favour of a "second revolution". This would have involved introducing radical policies such as nationalisation, upsetting business leaders. • Hitler needed to reassure the army and show the SA leadership who was in control.
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the night of 30 June 1934, Röhm and other SA leaders were arrested and shot. During the next two weeks several hundred senior SA men, other rivals and potential enemies, including von Schleicher, were also murdered by the SS.
Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The army could no longer be in any doubt that Hitler favoured them in preference to the SA. • The SA were brought firmly under the control of Hitler's leadership. • When President Hindenburg died on 2 August 1934, Hitler proclaimed himself Chancellor and Reich Führer. As such he was Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Army. Every soldier was required to swear an oath of personal loyalty to Adolf Hitler. Hitler's dictatorship was now a matter of fact as well as a matter of law. Hitler had achieved total power.

▲ Table 9.6 The Night of the Long Knives, June 1934

Exam-style questions

1. Describe the Munich Putsch of 1923.
2. Why was the Munich Putsch important for Hitler and the Nazi Party?
3. Why were the achievements of the Nazi Party limited before 1929?
4. 'Hitler was able to become Chancellor of Germany because of the work of Goebbels.' How far do you agree?
5. How important was the Reichstag fire as a reason for Hitler being able to establish a dictatorship?

9.3 The Nazi regime

How effectively did the Nazis control Germany, 1933–45?

It is difficult to assess fully the nature and strength of opposition to the Nazi state because of its secretive nature.

How much opposition was there to the Nazi regime?	
Religious opposition	<p>At first the Catholic Church agreed not to interfere in Nazi policies (Concordat of 1933). This was in return for the Nazis agreeing not to interfere in religion. However, Hitler broke his promise and the Nazis were denounced as anti-Christian by the Pope.</p> <p>Many churchmen spoke out against the Nazis including Pastor Niemöller who spent eight years in a concentration camp for forming a rival church to the Nazi Reich Church.</p> <p>Bishop Galen spoke out strongly against euthanasia, forced sterilisation and concentration camps.</p>
Opposition among the young	<p>Although many young people joined the Hitler Youth there were some who rejected this influence.</p> <p>Members of the "Swing" movement were condemned by the Nazis because they were interested in British and American popular music and dance, including banned jazz music. They also accepted Jews into their groups.</p> <p>The Edelweiss Pirates mocked the Nazis through song, attacked members of the Hitler Youth, distributed broadsheets and scrawled graffiti on walls. During the war they spread anti-Nazi propaganda and, in 1944, took part in an attack on the Gestapo during which an officer was killed. Twelve Pirates were publicly hanged in November 1944.</p> <p>The White Rose Group formed by university students in Munich was another group of young opponents. The leaders Hans and Sophie Scholl were executed in 1943 for anti-Nazi activities.</p>
Military opposition	<p>In 1944, a group of senior army officers planned to assassinate Hitler. This "July Bomb Plot" failed and led to 5,000 executions.</p>
Political opposition	<p>The Enabling Act had given Hitler power to ban all political parties. Many socialists and communists fled the country.</p>

▲ Table 9.7 How much opposition was there to the Nazi regime?

How effectively did the Nazis deal with their opponents?

To ensure absolute obedience to Nazi rule the favoured methods were persuasion and indoctrination. For persistent opponents the Nazis relied upon force and terror.

The Nazi police state enforced Nazi laws and dispensed Nazi justice in several ways.

- The SS led by Heinrich Himmler: the SS had extensive powers to arrest, detain without charge, interrogate, search and confiscate property. They were responsible for running the concentration camps and implementing Nazi racial policies including the Final Solution.
- The Gestapo: the Gestapo was under the general control of the SS. They were feared by the ordinary citizens as they had sweeping powers. They spied on Germans by tapping telephones, intercepting mail and accessing information through a network of informers which made it unsafe for anyone to express anti-Nazi views.
- Concentration camps: enemies of the Nazis were sent to the camps as well as gypsies, beggars and tramps. Camps were run by SS Death's Head units. Discipline was harsh with many deaths from beatings and torture. During the Final Solution these camps were used for the extermination of the Jewish population.
- The courts and judges: judges had to take an oath of loyalty to Hitler. Jewish judges and lawyers were sacked. Capital offences were increased to make, for example, telling anti-Nazi jokes and listening to a foreign radio station, punishable by the death sentence.

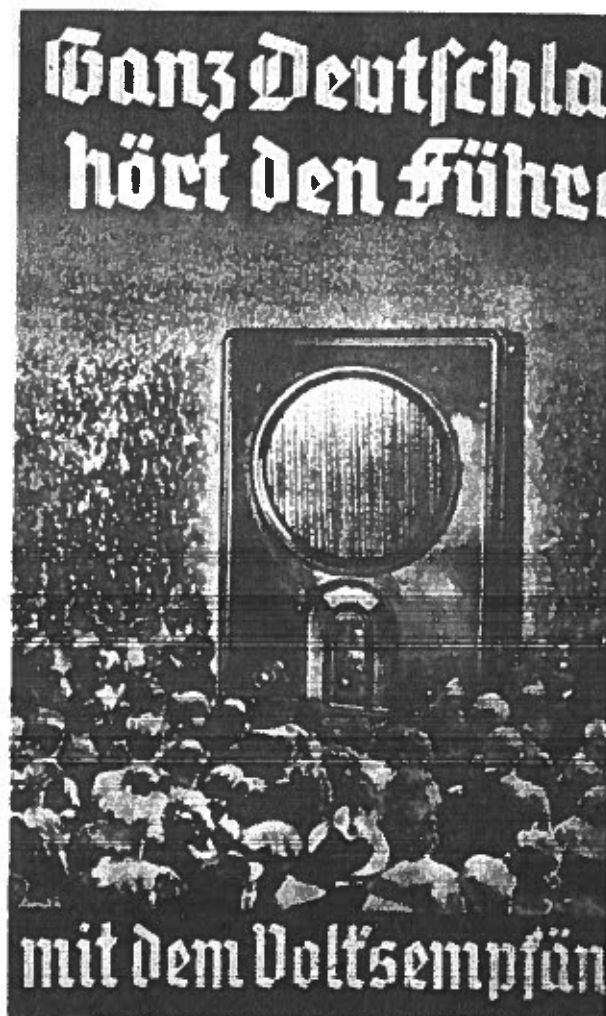
How did the Nazis use culture and the mass media to control people?

The Nazis believed in complete loyalty and obedience. One of the tools for this was propaganda.

Hitler appointed Josef Goebbels as Minister for Propaganda and Enlightenment. Goebbels' job was to spread Nazi ideas, creating loyal followers of Hitler. The ministry controlled the mass media, press and films.

- ✔ Study source 5. How useful is this poster to an historian studying the effectiveness of Nazi propaganda?

Source 5



▲ A German poster from the 1930s.

All newspapers were under Nazi control and only allowed to print stories favourable to the Nazis.

All radio stations were brought under Nazi control. Cheap radios were made available. These were unable to receive foreign broadcasts. Radios were installed in cafés, bars and factories, while loudspeakers were positioned in the streets so that important announcements and Hitler's speeches could be heard by everyone.

Nazi flags and posters were everywhere. Goebbels arranged mass rallies which included marches, torchlit processions, speeches and pageantry. The most spectacular was the annual rally at Nuremberg. These rallies emphasised power, control and order. They also brought colour and excitement into people's lives. At these rallies people could hear the extraordinary speaking abilities of Hitler.

The Nazis took control of the German film industry ensuring that what was presented reflected Nazi ideals and values.

All areas of culture were Nazified. This made it impossible to hear and read non-Nazi views. Literature, art and the theatre were affected. Public book burnings occurred to destroy unacceptable views and the work of Jews.

The 1936 Berlin Olympics presented Goebbels with the perfect propaganda opportunity to advertise the achievements of the Nazis including the superiority of the Aryan race. The Germans topped the medals table, however the black American Jesse Owens was the star athlete.

Why did the Nazis persecute many groups in German society?

In Hitler's view the German people constituted the Aryan race. They were the master race, superior in terms of intelligence, physique and work ethic. Eventually they would rule the world. To preserve the purity of the Aryan race, it was essential to maintain its separateness.

Hitler also believed that Germany was overburdened with undesirables. He regarded these as a drain on the resources of the state.

Nazi propaganda blamed the Jews for everything.

- This blame related to losing the First World War and the signing of the Treaty of Versailles.
- From 1933 Jews were banned from the professions and government employment.
- Boycotts of Jewish shops were put in place and those who dared to shop in them were intimidated. "Jews not wanted" signs were displayed in cafés and public places.
- The 1935 Nuremberg Laws removed German citizenship from Jews and forbade marriage between Jews and non-Jews.
- In November 1938, as a reprisal for the shooting of a German diplomat by a Jew, the Nazis organised Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass). Nazi mobs attacked and burnt Jewish shops, homes, businesses and synagogues. Over one hundred Jews were murdered.
- After Kristallnacht, Jews were forbidden to attend German schools and banned from theatres and concert halls.

The Nazis persecuted many other groups who were thought to be inferior.

- Gypsies violated the racial and efficiency requirements and were sent to concentration camps. Other undesirable groups suffered the same fate.
- Following the Sterilisation Law of 1933, mentally ill people were compulsorily sterilised. In 1939 such people were killed in euthanasia programmes.

Was Nazi Germany a totalitarian state?

In a totalitarian state the government controls all aspects of public and private life through propaganda and terror. This includes the political system, the economy, and social, cultural and religious activities.

Political system	Nazi Germany was a one-party state with a charismatic leader. Political opponents posed no threat. Virtually all aspects of political life in Germany were controlled.
Economy	Overall, Nazi control was far from complete as the economy was largely in the hands of private enterprise which enjoyed a measure of independence.
Society	Nazi control over German society was extensive but not complete. A significant minority of teenagers rebelled against conformity.
Mass media and culture	In this aspect Nazi control was more or less complete through the use of censorship.
Religion	The Nazis never managed to control the Catholic Church. Attempts to form the Reich Church were not successful.
Government machinery	Nazi government was defined by power struggles, inefficiency, inconsistency and improvisation. Hitler used "divide and rule" to protect his position and prevent alliances rising against him. Hitler was not hardworking, disliking paperwork.

▲ Table 9.8 Was Nazi Germany a totalitarian state?

What was it like to live in Nazi Germany?

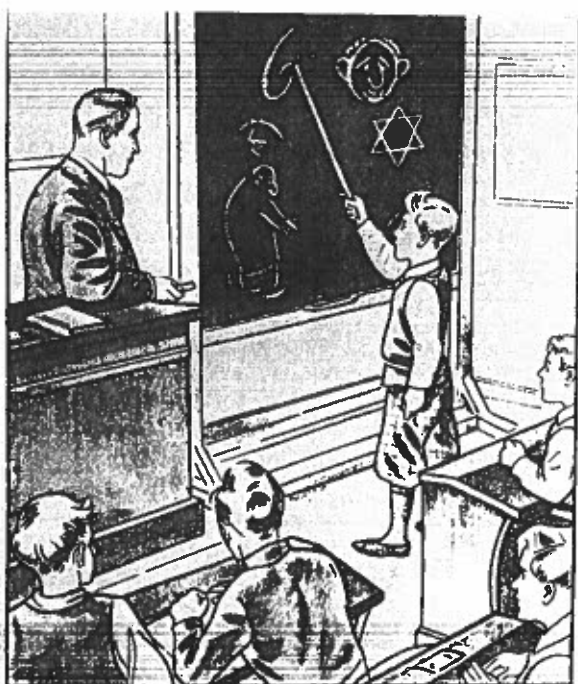
How did young people react to the Nazi regime?

The Nazi regime affected the lives of young people through formal education and the youth movement. This combination would ensure future generations of loyal Nazis.

Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools in Germany were controlled by the Nazi Ministry of Education. • Teachers had to take an oath of loyalty to Hitler and join the Nazi Teachers' League. • Jewish teachers were sacked. • All schools were to give a uniform message. • The curriculum was changed to ensure that Nazi ideas and racial beliefs were reflected in the teaching of subjects like biology, history and mathematics. • Religious education was scrapped. • Emphasis was placed on sport and physical education. • Girls were taught "home making" skills.
Youth movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hitler Youth was available outside of school. It was founded as a voluntary organisation in 1926. The Hitler Youth Law of 1936 made it compulsory. Other youth groups were banned. • There were separate sections for boys and girls and for different age groups. • Children were indoctrinated with Nazi ideas, learning about the evils of the Jews and the injustice of the peace settlement. • Boys were given basic military training and discipline including drill, campcraft, map reading and looking after a rifle. Running, hiking and tracking enhanced physical fitness. • Girls were prepared for motherhood, learning domestic skills such as cooking, sewing and managing the household budget. • Not all young Germans enjoyed the opportunities offered by the Hitler Youth. Some expressed themselves through the "Swing" movement and the Edelweiss Pirates. These groups believed in freedom of expression and values that often conflicted with those of the Nazis.

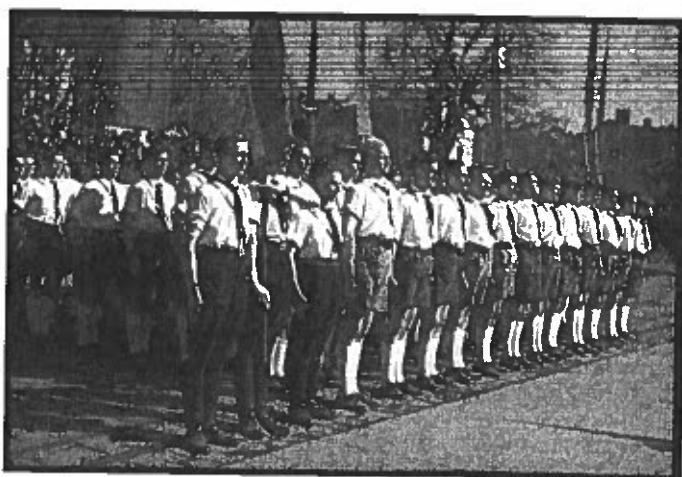
▲ Table 9.9 Education under the Nazi regime

Source 6



▲ A drawing of anti-Jewish studies in the classroom. It is taken from a youth magazine published by the Nazis.

Source 7



▲ A photograph of the Hitler Youth on parade

✓ Look at sources 6 and 7. Which of these two sources would be the more useful to a historian studying the youth of Nazi Germany?

How successful were Nazi policies towards women and the family?

Source 8

The Nazis believed in traditional Aryan family values including the important role of women as wives and mothers.

This belief was partly because it gave stability but more importantly it provided the best prospect of raising the birth rate. The birth rate needed to be boosted to provide men to fight for the military and to occupy defeated countries. Measures were introduced to encourage marriage and childbearing including loans, awards and family allowance welfare benefits. The birth rate had increased by 1939.

Women were forced out of work. They were expected to remain at home, raise children and provide for their husband. Not all women were happy at losing their job in a profession.

After 1937, there was a reversal in this policy as women were needed to work in the armaments factories as demand could not be met from the pool of unemployed men.



▲ A poster published by the Nazis.

✓ Study source 8. Why did the Nazis publish this poster?

Did most people in Germany benefit from Nazi rule?

<p>The recovery of the German economy</p>	<p>When Hitler came to power unemployment was at almost six million. By 1938 there was almost no unemployment.</p> <p>The Nazis introduced public works schemes, building autobahns, schools hospitals and houses.</p> <p>Rearmament created jobs as did the introduction of conscription to the armed forces. Increased opportunities came from an attempt at introducing self-sufficiency to reduce the need for imports of raw materials and food.</p>
<p>Workers' rights and conditions</p>	<p>Workers had to join the Nazi Labour Front.</p> <p>Wages were low while working hours increased.</p> <p>The availability of consumer goods was limited.</p> <p>The "Beauty of Labour" movement improved working conditions by introducing washing facilities and low-cost canteens.</p>
<p>Free time activities</p>	<p>Schemes such as "Strength Through Joy" gave workers cheap theatre and cinema tickets.</p> <p>Workers were offered cut price cruises on the latest luxury liners.</p> <p>Workers saved in a state scheme to buy a Volkswagen Beetle, although no worker ever received a car.</p>

How did the coming of war change life in Nazi Germany?

- Food rationing began in September 1939. Clothes rationing followed in November.
- Propaganda encouraged support of the war effort. The Gestapo watched for people who did not give their support.
- The gamble of invading the Soviet Union in 1941 resulted in civilians facing cutbacks, shortages and longer working hours. Labour shortages saw increasing numbers of women in the factories.
- From 1942 Albert Speer began to direct the war economy. Everything was focused on the armaments industry.
- In 1944 Germany directed all its resources in a "Total War".
- The cinemas remained open and were the only entertainment on offer. They showed propaganda films.
- There were massive bombing raids on German cities, undermining morale. One of the most significant was the bombing of Dresden.
- By the end of the war, three million civilians had died and people were short of food.

The Final Solution

As the German army captured huge areas of Eastern Europe millions of Jews came under Nazi control. The SS were responsible for shooting around 800,000 Jews.

At the Wannsee Conference in January 1942, the decision was taken to eliminate all European Jews. Captured Jews were taken to remote extermination camps in Poland. The death camps were equipped with gas chambers and crematoria.

The Nazis killed around six million Jews through gassing, shooting, working to death and starvation. They tried to cover up their murderous activities.

Exam-style questions

1. Describe the religious opposition to the Nazi regime.
2. Describe the education provided by Nazi schools.
3. Why did the Nazis persecute many groups in German society?
4. How successful was the Hitler Youth Movement?
5. 'Most people benefited from Nazi control of Germany.' How far do you agree with this statement?
6. How significant was the contribution of culture and mass media to the control of the German people?