5.2 Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918-1923: The Origins of the Republic and Early Crises: 30-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 1HI0 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Question 2 refers to Source A. Questions 3, 4 and 5 refer to Interpretation 1 and Interpretation 2. You are advised to spend about 30 minutes on this pack.

Source A, and Interpretations 1 and 2

Source A was written for Revision Library. It is an original text representative of a personal account of daily life in Germany during the hyperinflation crisis of autumn 1923. It is not a reproduction, translation or paraphrase of any surviving diary, letter or newspaper report, and no genuine individual's words are reproduced. Interpretation 1 and Interpretation 2 were also written for Revision Library, in the style of history textbook extracts discussing why the Weimar Republic survived the crises of 1919 to 1923; they are not the work of any real, named historian.

SOURCE A: a personal account written for Revision Library, representative of the experience of an ordinary German family during the hyperinflation crisis of autumn 1923.

By October my husband was being paid twice a day so that we could spend the money before its value fell again. We rushed to the shops in our lunch break, because bread that cost 2,000 marks in the morning could cost 4,000 marks by the afternoon. Neighbours who had saved carefully all their lives watched their savings become worthless in a matter of weeks, while others who owed money on their houses found their debts melted away to almost nothing. Some families burned banknotes for fuel rather than buy firewood, since the notes themselves were cheaper than wood. We began trading eggs and vegetables directly with the baker rather than trust money at all.

INTERPRETATION 1: from a history textbook written for Revision Library, discussing why the Weimar Republic survived the crises of 1919 to 1923.

The Republic survived chiefly because, at the critical moments, the key institutions of the German state chose to defend it rather than abandon it. When the Kapp Putsch attempted to seize power in March 1920, the regular army did not actively support the coup, and Berlin's workers brought the city to a standstill with a general strike that made the putsch impossible to sustain. A similar pattern held in 1923: neither the Spartacist rising of the far left in 1919 nor Hitler's Munich Putsch of November 1923 could win over the army or the civil service, without whose cooperation no seizure of power could succeed.

INTERPRETATION 2: from a history textbook written for Revision Library, discussing why the Weimar Republic survived the crises of 1919 to 1923.

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Loyalty from institutions explains why individual coups failed, but it does not explain why the Republic did not simply collapse under the weight of economic disaster in 1923. What mattered most was the speed and decisiveness of the government's response once Gustav Stresemann became Chancellor in August 1923: calling off passive resistance in the Ruhr in September, then replacing the worthless mark with the new Rentenmark in November, brought the hyperinflation to a rapid end. Without this economic stabilisation, continued economic collapse would eventually have destroyed public confidence in the Republic altogether, whatever the institutions chose to do.

1 Give two consequences of the hyperinflation crisis of 1923 for ordinary Germans.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 Give two things you can infer from Source A about the effects of the 1923 hyperinflation on ordinary German families. Support each inference with a detail from the source.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

3 What is the main difference between Interpretation 1 and Interpretation 2 about why the Weimar Republic survived the crises of 1919 to 1923? Explain your answer, using details from both interpretations.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

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4 Suggest two reasons why the authors of Interpretation 1 and Interpretation 2 might have different views about why the Weimar Republic survived its early crises.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

5 Which interpretation do you find more convincing as an explanation of why the Weimar Republic survived the crises of 1919 to 1923? Explain your answer, using Interpretation 1, Interpretation 2 and your own knowledge.

(Total for Question 5 is 16 marks)

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Mark scheme · 5.2 Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918-1923: The Origins of the Republic and Early Crises: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

people's savings became worthless almost overnight, ruining many who had saved carefully, particularly those on fixed incomes such as pensioners **B2**

everyday life was disrupted as prices rose several times a day, so wages had to be spent immediately and many people resorted to bartering goods instead of using money **B2**

Answer: Savings became worthless, ruining savers and pensioners, and prices rose so fast that people had to spend wages immediately or barter instead of using money.

Question 2

inference 1, e.g. the value of money was falling so fast that people had to spend it immediately **B1**

supporting detail for inference 1 from the source, e.g. wages were 'paid twice a day' and bread 'that cost 2,000 marks in the morning could cost 4,000 marks by the afternoon' **B1**

inference 2, e.g. hyperinflation had winners and losers, harming savers while helping some debtors **B1**

supporting detail for inference 2 from the source, e.g. 'savings become worthless' while others' 'debts melted away to almost nothing' **B1**

Answer: Money lost value so fast that people spent it immediately; and hyperinflation harmed savers while it helped some debtors.

Question 3

Interpretation 1 argues the main reason was the loyalty of key institutions, such as the army and civil service, who refused to support the coups of 1919, 1920 and 1923 **B2**

Interpretation 2 argues the main reason was the speed of the government's economic response in late 1923, ending passive resistance and introducing the Rentenmark, without which economic collapse could have destroyed the Republic anyway **B2**

Answer: Interpretation 1 sees institutional loyalty (the army and civil service refusing to back coups) as decisive; Interpretation 2 sees Stresemann's swift economic action in late 1923 as decisive.

Question 4

the authors may focus on different kinds of evidence: Interpretation 1 draws on political and military events (the putsches, the army's response), while Interpretation 2 draws on economic evidence (the currency, government financial policy) **B2**

the authors may hold different views about what makes a state's survival most fundamental, e.g. one emphasising political and institutional loyalty and the other emphasising economic stability, leading them to weigh the same period differently **B2**

Answer: They may draw on different types of evidence (political/military events vs economic policy) and hold different general views about what most fundamentally keeps a state stable.

Question 5

Level 1 States a simple preference for one interpretation, with little or no supporting reasoning or own knowledge. **1-4**

Level 2 Describes the content of one or both interpretations and gives a limited reason for a preference, with some own knowledge. **5-8**

Level 3 Explains reasons for a preference between the interpretations, using relevant own knowledge to support or challenge each one. **9-12**

Level 4 Evaluates both interpretations critically, using precise own knowledge to reach a sustained and well-supported judgement about which is more convincing, or how far each is convincing. **13-16**

Indicative content:

- Evidence supporting Interpretation 1: the Kapp Putsch of March 1920 collapsed once the army declined to actively suppress it and a general strike by Berlin's workers and civil servants made the city ungovernable, and Hitler's Munich Putsch of November 1923 similarly failed to win the army's backing.
- Evidence supporting Interpretation 2: hyperinflation had reached its most destructive point by autumn 1923, and it was Stresemann's decisions as Chancellor from August 1923, ending passive resistance in September and launching the Rentenmark in November, that halted the collapse within months.
- A convincing answer might note the two views are complementary: institutional loyalty explains why individual coups in 1919, 1920 and 1923 failed to seize power, but that loyalty alone would not have prevented collapse if the economic disaster of 1923 had been left unaddressed.
- Own knowledge of the sequence of events, political threats recurring from 1919 to 1923 but each one failing, economic collapse reaching its peak only in late 1923 and being resolved within weeks of Stresemann taking office, could be used to argue that both factors were necessary at different moments.
- A full answer reaches a supported judgement, using the timing and dependency of these events to argue for one interpretation over the other, or for their combination.

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