



EDX.WN1 Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918-1923: The Origins of the Republic and Early Crises

EDEXCEL 1HI0 · Calculators not allowed · about 75 minutes

Total Marks

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Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Answer ALL questions. Question 15 refers to Source A. Questions 17, 18 and 19 refer to Interpretation 1 and Interpretation 2. Write in full sentences for Questions 16, 17, 18 and 19. You are advised to spend about 75 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.

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 the date on which the armistice was signed, ending the fighting of the First World War.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

- 2 Name the first President of the Weimar Republic and the party he led.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

- 3 Give the date on which the Weimar Constitution was formally adopted.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

- 4 State one strength and one weakness of the Weimar Constitution.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

- 5 Give the date on which the Treaty of Versailles was signed.

(Total for Question 5 is 1 mark)

6 Name the clause of the Treaty of Versailles that forced Germany to accept blame for causing the First World War.

(Total for Question 6 is 1 mark)

7 Give the size to which the Treaty of Versailles reduced the German army.

(Total for Question 7 is 1 mark)

8 Name the two left-wing revolutionaries killed after leading the Spartacist Uprising of January 1919.

(Total for Question 8 is 2 marks)

9 State what the Freikorps were and how the government used them against the Spartacist Uprising.

(Total for Question 9 is 2 marks)

10 Give the name of the failed right-wing coup of March 1920, led by Wolfgang Kapp, that was defeated by a general strike.

(Total for Question 10 is 1 mark)

11 Give the month and year in which French and Belgian troops occupied the Ruhr industrial region.

(Total for Question 11 is 1 mark)

12 State what the German government's policy of "passive resistance" in the Ruhr in 1923 involved.

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

(Total for Question 13 is 4 marks)

14 Give two ways in which Gustav Stresemann brought the crises of 1923 to an end.

(Total for Question 14 is 4 marks)

15 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 15 is 4 marks)

- 16** Explain why the Weimar Republic faced serious threats to its survival in the years 1919 to 1923.

(Total for Question 16 is 12 marks)

- 17** 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 17 is 4 marks)

- 18** Suggest one reason 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 18 is 4 marks)

19 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 19 is 16 marks)

Mark scheme · EDX.WN1 Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918-1923: The Origins of the Republic and Early Crises

Question 1

- **B1** 11 November 1918
- **Answer: 11 November 1918**

Question 2

- **B1** Friedrich Ebert
- **B1** of the SPD (Social Democratic Party)
- **Answer: Friedrich Ebert, of the Social Democratic Party (SPD).**

Question 3

- **B1** 11 August
- **B1** 1919
- **Answer: 11 August 1919**

Question 4

- **B1** a strength, e.g. proportional representation gave every party a fair share of seats and universal suffrage extended the vote to all men and women aged 20 and over
- **B1** a weakness, e.g. proportional representation made coalition governments likely, causing political instability, or Article 48 let the President rule by emergency decree, bypassing the Reichstag
- **Answer: Strength: proportional representation and universal suffrage made the system fair and democratic. Weakness: proportional representation caused unstable coalitions, and Article 48 could be used to bypass the Reichstag.**

Question 5

- **B1** 28 June 1919
- **Answer: 28 June 1919**

Question 6

- **B1** Article 231 (the War Guilt Clause)
- **Answer: Article 231, the War Guilt Clause.**

Question 7

- **B1** 100,000 men
- **Answer: 100,000 men**

Question 8

- **B1** Karl Liebknecht
- **B1** Rosa Luxemburg
- **Answer: Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg**

Question 9

- **B1** the Freikorps were bands of armed ex-soldiers and volunteers, not part of the regular army
- **B1** the Ebert government used them to crush the Spartacist Uprising by force in January 1919
- **Answer: The Freikorps were armed ex-soldier volunteer units, used by the Ebert government to violently suppress the Spartacist Uprising in January 1919.**

Question 10

- **B1** the Kapp Putsch
- **Answer: The Kapp Putsch**

Question 11

- **B1** January 1923
- **Answer: January 1923**

Question 12

- **B1** workers in the Ruhr went on strike and refused to cooperate with the occupying French and Belgian forces
- **B1** the German government kept paying these striking workers' wages, printing extra money to do so
- **Answer: Ruhr workers went on strike and refused to cooperate with the occupiers, while the government printed money to keep paying their wages.**

Question 13

- **B2** 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
- **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 14

- **B2** as Chancellor from August 1923, he called off passive resistance in the Ruhr in September 1923, ending the policy that was driving the currency's collapse
- **B2** in November 1923 his government introduced a new currency, the Rentenmark, replacing the worthless mark and restoring confidence in German money
- **Answer: He called off passive resistance in the Ruhr in September 1923, then introduced the new Rentenmark currency in November 1923.**

Question 15

- **B1** 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'
- **Answer: Money lost value so fast that people spent it immediately; and hyperinflation harmed savers while it helped some debtors.**

Question 16

- **Level 1** (1-3): Identifies one or two general reasons why the Republic was threatened, with little or no supporting detail or explanation.
- **Level 2** (4-6): Identifies and begins to explain one or two reasons, supported by some accurate detail.
- **Level 3** (7-9): Explains two or three reasons for the threats to the Republic, each supported by accurate and relevant detail.
- **Level 4** (10-12): Explains three or more reasons in a well-developed, logically structured way, supported throughout by precise and accurate detail, showing how the reasons connect.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Resentment at the Treaty of Versailles: many Germans blamed the Republic itself, not just the army, for accepting the 'Diktat' of June 1919, its War Guilt Clause, reparations and loss of territory, weakening trust in the new democracy from the outset.
 - Political extremism from the left: the Spartacist Uprising of January 1919, led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, attempted a communist revolution and had to be crushed by Freikorps violence, exposing deep divisions in German society.
 - Political extremism from the right: the Kapp Putsch of March 1920 and Hitler's Munich Putsch of November 1923 both tried to overthrow the Republic by force, showing that significant numbers of Germans, including some in the army and police, were willing to support its violent overthrow.
 - Economic catastrophe: the French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr from January 1923 and the government's response of passive resistance triggered hyperinflation, destroying savings and confidence in the government's ability to manage the economy.
 - Constitutional weaknesses made the crises harder to contain: proportional representation produced fragmented coalition governments that struggled to act decisively, while Article 48 showed that even the constitution allowed for government by decree in an emergency.
 - These reasons connect: the humiliation of Versailles fed nationalist extremism on the right, while economic hardship from 1923 fed communist extremism on the left, so political and economic threats reinforced one another rather than acting separately.

Question 17

- **B2** 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
- **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 18

- **B2** 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
- **Answer: They may draw on different types of evidence (political/military events vs economic policy) or hold different general views about what most fundamentally keeps a state stable.**

Question 19

- **Level 1** (1-4): States a simple preference for one interpretation, with little or no supporting reasoning or own knowledge.
- **Level 2** (5-8): Describes the content of one or both interpretations and gives a limited reason for a preference, with some own knowledge.
- **Level 3** (9-12): Explains reasons for a preference between the interpretations, using relevant own knowledge to support or challenge each one.
- **Level 4** (13-16): 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.
- **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.