

What conditions gave rise to authoritarianism in Germany?

L/O – To identify and examine the historical conditions that enabled Hitler to rise to power



The Rise of Authoritarian States

1. Authoritarian governments are states in which power is concentrated in the hands of the few, who rule without consent.
2. Totalitarian states differ in that the state tries to control ALL aspects of public and private behaviour with their own 'ideology'.
3. Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski define an Authoritarian state as a 'crisis state' – they have arisen during periods of conflict, division or confusion in a society.
4. The emergence of authoritarian states can be analysed and compared by examining the historical conditions (1) that weakened the opposition (2) and enabled leaders to rise (3) that took advantage of socio-political uncertainty.

Emergence of Authoritarian States

- As 'crisis states', 20th century authoritarian states arose out of specific historical conditions, in which leaders used legal and illegal methods to take advantage of chaos and upheaval to eliminate opposition and take power.
- For your exam, you will need to think of the historical conditions and crisis environments in each state, that enable authoritarian leaders to take power.
- What historical conditions can create a crisis state?



Historical Conditions

Authoritarian states DO NOT emerge in times of peace and prosperity. Crises states are induced by:

- War, including the aftermath of war
- Economic Crisis
- Political Instability
- Lack of leadership
- Unpopular or tyrannical governments
- Fear of revolution
- New ideas introduced in politics
- Nationalism, independence movements



Historical Conditions in Germany

- Between 1918-1933, Adolf Hitler and his NSDAP took advantage of the crisis conditions created by the aftermath of WW1, the failures of the Weimar Republic, and the impact of the Great Depression.
- It was in this period of social, economic, and political instability that Hitler's NSDAP grew to become the largest political party in the Weimar Republic, with 43.9% on the vote.
- He was then appointed Chancellor in January 1933, consolidating his regime into a dictatorship by 1934.



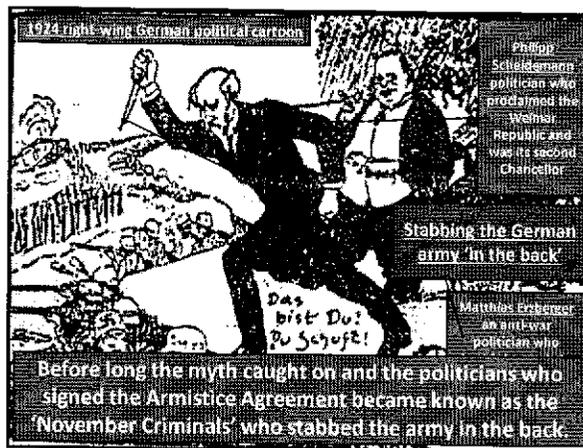
Historical Conditions in Germany

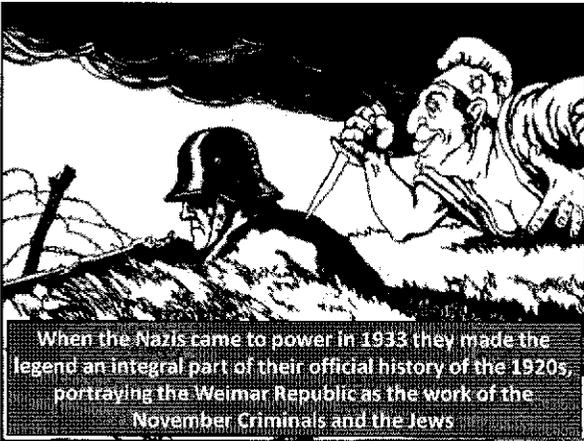
- Hitler's rise to power was helped by the failure of the post-war Weimar Republic to govern Germany. Need to consider why Weimar failed.
- The analysis of historical conditions can be divided into four stages:
 - Stage 1: 1918-19 – German Revolution
 - Stage 2: 1919-23 – The Crisis Years
 - Stage 3: 1924-29 – The Golden Age
 - Stage 4: 1930-33 – Decline



Stage 1: 1918-19 – German Revolution

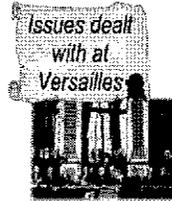
- The November Revolution occurs on 9th November with abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II after a series of mutinies by soldiers and sailors.
- A Republic declared by Philip Scheidemann of the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Armistice then signed with Allies on 11th November, ending WW1.
- Military leaders Hindenburg and Ludendorff claimed the army had been 'stabbed in the back' by the SPD, but in reality the war was lost. They sought to install a democracy, hoping this would reduce punishment on Germany, and deflect blame onto the democratic system if not.



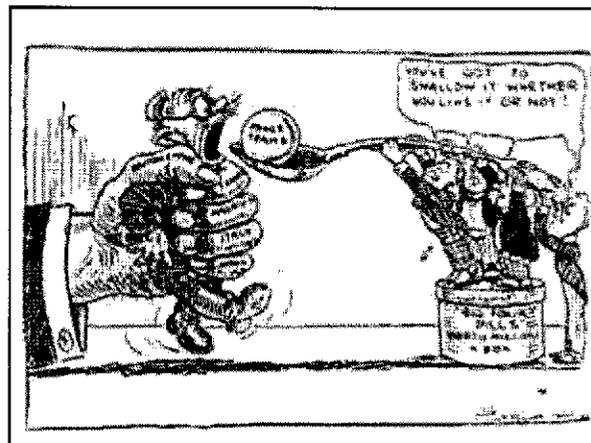


Stage 1: 1918-19 – German Revolution

- These changes became known as a 'revolution from above', being imposed on Germany by political and military elites who were weary of democracy. This provided a fragile base for its success.
- Scepticism of this new democracy was compounded by the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919 which punished Germany severely. Article 231 blamed Germany for war, it lost 12% of landmass, all colonies, army reduced to 100,000, reparations bill £6.6 billion! Seen as 'Diktat' and was a national shame for Germany, undermining new democratic system – 'November Criminals'.



- The ToV was **unpopular** and became a focus of **resentment** for the next 20 years. Walter Rathenau, the foreign minister, was **assassinated** in 1922 for signing the treaty!



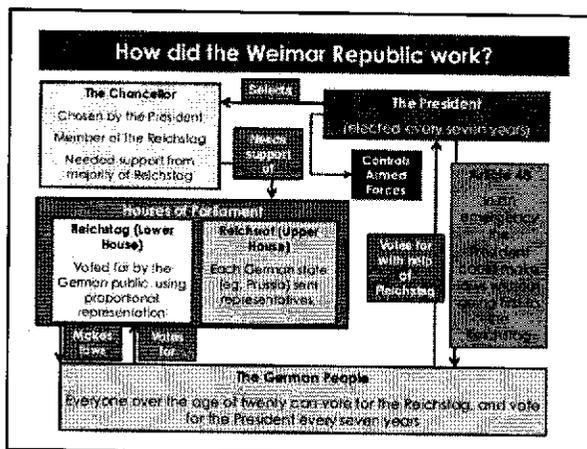
Stage 2: 1919-23 – The Crisis Years

- Even before a new Republican Constitution was formed in Weimar in August 1919, the new government led by Friedrich Ebert of the SPD faced threats to its survival.
- Weimar lacked support of military, November 1919 agreement with General Groener allowed military to remain independent of government.
- Meant that military support was conditionally. Army helped put down Spartacist Uprising in 1919, but refused to move against Kapp Putsch in 1920.



Stage 2: 1919-23 – The Crisis Years

- The Weimar Constitution itself was also blamed for weakening democracy. Article 41 enabled the President to override the Constitution when he liked.
- Proportional Representation as an electoral system also led to weak coalition governments.
- Compounded by fact that only the SPD, DDP, DVP, Z, BVP supported Weimar. The KPD, DNVP and NSDAP were openly hostile!



Stage 2: 1919-23 – The Crisis Years

- This lack of unity between the political parties led to outright street fighting between communist and nationalist factions, and those that wanted the Kaiser back.
- Communist attempted armed uprisings in Berlin, Munich, the Ruhr, and Hamburg between 1919-23. Right-wing extremists attempt to takeover Berlin in the 1920 Kapp Putsch, and Hitler attempted to take power in the 1923 Munich Putsch.



Stage 2: 1919-23 – The Crisis Years

- The legitimacy and credibility of the government was further tested by economic crisis.
- In 1923, French and Belgian troops had invaded the Ruhr after Germany failed to pay its reparations in 1922.
- The government attempted to respond by forcing workers to go on strike. Government printed money to pay workers, leading to hyperinflation that destroyed economy and middle class savings.



Stage 3: 1923-29 – The Golden Years

- The 1923 economic crisis was solved by a new coalition government under Gustav Stresemann. As Chancellor and foreign minister, he is credited with rescuing the Weimar Republic.
- Dawes Plan of 1924 provided US loans, Locarno Pact 1925 reconciled with France, LoN in 1926, Kellogg-Briand Pact 1928, Young Plan in 1929.
- During these years extremists parties support declined, as many enjoyed the fruits of economic growth.



Stage 3: 1923-29 – The Golden Years

- Yet despite the successes of Weimar, less attractive developments were bubbling under the surface.
- The right-wing General Hindenburg elected President in 1925, an overreliance on US loans, weak coalition governments, agrarian distress in countryside, low industrial productivity, a reorganised Nazi party after 1926.
- Finally the Wall Street Crash and Great Depression hit in October 1929, sending shockwaves around the world.



Stage 4: 1930-33 – Decline

- German economy plummeted as US loans were withdrawn. Stresemann died on 3 October 1929. Unemployment soared from 1.3 million in Sep 1929 to 3 million in Sep 1930 and over 6 million in 1933.
- The inability of Weimar governments to deal with crisis led to increase in support for extremists and rich industrialists began to abandon democracy.
- Exacerbated by shift to 'presidential cabinets' as Hindenburg appointed Heinrich Brüning, Franz Von Papen, and Kurt Schleicher as Chancellors with Article 48 being used to push through legislation. This ended all democratic accountability.



Stage 4: 1930-33 – Decline

- New elections in July 1932 and November 1932 led to huge rise in support for NSDAP and KPD. This pressured Hindenburg into appointing Hitler as Chancellor in January 1933.



- Hindenburg was persuaded by Von Papen that Hitler could be 'controlled' in a coalition government. Rich industrialists also supported the appointment as the best defence against communism.



1932-33: The 'Backstairs Intrigue'

- June 1932 – Hindenburg sacks his Chancellor, Brüning, and appoints his unpopular friend, Franz von Papen, in his place. Creates tension.

- July 1932 – Elections. Nazis win 230 seats. Become largest party. Hitler demands to become Chancellor. Hindenburg refuses. He allows Papen to carry on, getting his measures passed by Article 48.

- Nov 1932 – Elections. Hindenburg replaces Papen as Chancellor with Schleicher, but Papen remains a close advisor. Nazis still largest party although they lose 34 seats as depression starts to fade.

1932-33: The 'Backstairs Intrigue'

- Dec 1932 – Schleicher resigns. He had no support in Reichstag, and is fed up of being Papen's mouthpiece.



- Jan 1933 – Hindenburg is desperate to appoint a Chancellor who has Reichstag support, and avoid the possibility of violence from the SA. Hitler is therefore appointed with Papen as vice chancellor. They felt Hitler can be controlled in a coalition. They were wrong.



1. Make a table summarizing your notes on the historical conditions in Germany between 1918-1933. Use the headings, 'social, political, economic, and military' to organize information on the different conditions faced.

Social	Political	Economic	Military